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A Critical Interpretation of Olivier Roy: On Globalization, the Cosmopolitan and Emerging Post-Secular Religiosities

Abstract

My thesis is that secularization transforms religion into religiosity. In other words, the secular breaks apart religion, or rather, 'deculturates' religion from a cohesive, collective body embedded within a particular society and within a traditional culture towards an individuated, and existential experience of faith within the autonomous religious subject. There are various reasons for this shift, as there are various consequences. Globalization, which is modernization writ large, is the dominant paradigm through which I conceptualize these changes. The theorist whose work I use as a lens to interpret secularization, religion and societal transformation is Olivier Roy. Roy's theories are of significance within the contemporary debates of globalization, the post-secular, and what is known as the 'return of religion', in that his theories provide a strong explanatory effect of the conditions of contemporary religion and societal change. Roy stands in the tradition of secularization theory that supports transition towards religious decline. He does not advocate the model of a revival of religion within the West. For Roy, secularization stands triumphant. My work supports his argument, thus I too advocate the secularization model, albeit with certain modifications.

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A Critical Interpretation of Olivier Roy: On Globalization, the Cosmopolitan, and
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A Dissertation

Presented to

the Faculty of the University of Denver and the Iliff School of Theology Joint PhD

Program

University of Denver

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

by

Joshua Rey Ramos

June 2018

Advisor: Dr. Carl Raschke

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Introduction

My thesis is that secularization transforms religion into religiosity. In other words, the secular breaks apart religion, or rather, ‘deculturates’ religion from a cohesive, collective body embedded within a particular society and within a traditional culture towards an individuated, and existential experience of faith within the autonomous religious subject. There are various reasons for this shift, as there are various consequences. Globalization, which is modernization writ large, is the dominant paradigm through which I conceptualize these changes. The theorist whose work I use as a lens to interpret secularization, religion and societal transformation is Olivier Roy. Roy’s theories are of significance within the contemporary debates of globalization, the post-secular, and what is known as the “return of religion”, in that his theories provide a strong explanatory effect of the conditions of contemporary religion and societal change. Roy stands in the tradition of secularization theory that supports transition towards religious decline. He does not advocate the model of a revival of religion within the West. For Roy, secularization stands triumphant. My work supports his argument, thus I too advocate the secularization model, albeit with certain modifications.

In particular, I use Roy’s work of *Holy Ignorance*, which is a comparative sociology of religion in conjunction with political science. The seminal and core theory of Olivier Roy’s *Holy Ignorance* is that religion and culture have parted ways because of

globalization and secularization. There is now no longer an organic, embedded, and traditional link between a specific religion located within its specific culture. This split between culture and religion is what Roy calls “deculturation”. Religion is disembedded, and is thereby made abstract and virtual. The abstraction and virtualization of religion is subject to variation through the dissemination of information within the technology of the Internet and social media, and is thereby universalized.

Why the term *Holy Ignorance*? What does Roy mean by *Holy Ignorance*? *Holy Ignorance* indicates religious fundamentalism’s ignorance of its own cultural and theological traditions, and it also indicates the secular west ignorance of its own cultural religious heritage. Roy’s use of the term ‘ignorance’ does not intend polemical insult, but rather Roy means ignorance in its most literal sense, that of the lack of knowledge. Knowledge of theological tradition is no longer required for the salvation for the religious believer, and knowledge of the religious heritage of Europe by the secular societies has largely been forgotten, in what French sociologist Danielle Hervieu-Leger calls “amnesiac societies”, which is the loss of the cultural memory of Europe through the process of secularization. *Holy Ignorance* is therefore the ignorance on both sides of the divide, that is, the ignorance that proceeds from the religious, and the ignorance that proceeds from the secular.

In Chapter One, I lay out the connections between religion and globalization, and between secularization and Roy’s theory of deculturation. My observation is that globalization created the condition of the so-called return of religion, but at the same time it secularized religion into religiosity, thereby transforming and re-configuring the nature and role of religion within the public square into an embattled minority that takes on a

modernized, fundamentalist interpretation of the sacred. In this sense, globalization is both secularization and sacralization. However, secular culture impacts religion more so than the other way around. The unintended consequence of secularization is that by creating an autonomous sphere for religion, a road was paved for the 21st century resurgence and revitalization of religion. But this revitalization is only apparent, for it is the shifting tectonic plates of secularization that is driving the apparent phenomena of the religious resurgence. In Chapter Two, I support the theory that globalization secularizes and thereby deculturates religion into religiosity with the discussion of religious demography. Demographically, it is projected that the religious are set to out-birth the non-religious at such a prodigious rate that there may occur a reversal of secularization within the United States and Europe around 2050. This is because religiosity and fertility are directly correlated. Higher religiosity equals higher fertility, while lower religiosity equals lower fertility. And it is values that stand above socioeconomics when it comes to determining the rate of fertility. This is what Second Demographic Transition Theory maintains, that there was an ideational shift from a concern for the collective well being of the family towards a concern for the atomistic well being of the individual. The locus of the individual in conjunction with modernized reproductive technologies created a unique turning point within the history of human populations. Demographers Wolfgang Lutz, Vegard Skirbekk and Maria R. Testa lays out the problem clearly:

...through the introduction of modern contraception, the evolutionary link between the drive for sex and procreation has been broken and now reproduction is merely a function of individual preferences and culturally determined norms.¹

¹ Wolfgang Lutz, Vegard Skirbekk and Maria Rita Testa, *The Low Fertility Trap Hypothesis: Forces that may lead to further postponement and fewer births in Europe*, 3. http://www.oeaw.ac.at/vid/download/edrp_4_05.pdf

Individualization is the mechanism at work within the fertility rates of both the secular cohorts and the religious cohorts, and it is individualization that is itself a proxy for secularization, as it corresponds directly with human development and education, which are standard predictors for secularization. Secularization re-configures the fertility rates of the religious and non-religious, but the fecundity of the religious is also a sign of deculturation. The religious feel embattled within a hostile, secular majority, and thereby they reproduce to win the culture war, or what is also known as what political scientist Monica Duffy Toft calls “wombfare”. Furthermore, the likelihood of the children of the religious to retain the faith is, I suggest, unlikely. This is because deculturated religion consists of the religiosity of born-again faith, and such a fervent faith cannot be passed down to the children. Each individual must make a decision of faith on his or her own, a decision that consists of the classic conversion experience as espoused by Harvard psychologist William James, and as exemplified by the classic stories of conversion such as St. Paul the Apostle or the French philosopher Blaise Pascal. Therefore, Olivier Roy finds contemporary religious conversions and de-conversions to be of high significance in the decades to come, since they epitomize deculturated religion. In Chapter 3, because of the importance of conversions in discussing religion, secularization and deculturation, I examine religious conversions through demographic measures. Religious dis-affiliation, those who convert out of religion, is a measure of secularization. At the International Institute of Applied Systems Analysis in Austria, I ran demographic historical snapshots and demographic projections of the unaffiliated. I correlated human development and secondary education with secularization, and the demographic projections show further

secularization unto 2050 within North America and Europe. I argue that the globalized condition of the secular west creates an atmospheric ecology of religious dis-affiliation. Pluralism and pluralization only serves to secularize. Increasing economic affluence, legal protections for religious freedom and conversions, the myriad choices of religious optionality, increasing levels of human development and education, and the globalized mediascape that propagates secular values all work together in tandem to create a strong tendency towards secularization and religious dis-affiliation. The religious will likely further deculturate and radicalize in response. This will create further tension within the public square of the West. This tension thus leads to the post-secular debate. In Chapter 4, I argue that the post-secular is a state of permanent tension, rather than mutual accommodation or translation. This is because deculturation is the breaking apart of nominal religion. The religious aim to be more pure, exclusive, and strive towards stricter ethical norms, with no compromise. The nominal, the liberal, and the secular are forced out from religious communities because of their aim for pure religion. On the other hand, the secular cohorts return the favor of exclusion towards the religious communities. Secularization aims to extirpate religious reference from the public square, and interprets religious practice and reference to transcendent norms as irrational and exotic. We are witnessing incommensurability between the secular and the religious more so than accommodation, and this is occurring at the locus of anthropology. For example, Olivier Roy points out that “the deep conflict that is dividing Europe between a secular majority and hardcore religious faith communities on abortion, same-sex marriage, bio-ethics, or gender issues shows that there is no longer a common moral ground for values.”² This

² Olivier Roy, *Rethinking the Place of Religion in European Secularized Societies: the*

explains why Pope John Paul II's *Theology of the Body* is a major work of significance within both conservative and reactionary Roman Catholic circles, for they believe that an emerging rivalry of a sacred, metaphysical anthropology versus a secular, scientific anthropology is the final watershed moment within Western culture. With the split between religion and culture, there is no longer a continuity of common values between Christianity and modern Western secularized societies. In this sense, secularism has won, at least within the West. In the final Chapter 5, I bring the discussion to the discourse of political theology, which I believe is a natural concomitant to post-secularity, globalization and secularization. Roy's *Holy Ignorance* and *Globalized Islam* have various implications that touch upon the subject. Carl Schmitt famously remarked that, "all significant concepts of the modern theory of the state are secularized theological concepts."³ Schmitt's statement has since served as the definitive interpretation of what is political theology. Olivier Roy wrote in his *Secularism Confronts Islam* "that secularization does not mean the end of transcendence but the establishment of a nontheological transcendence, in a sense of a secularized religion."⁴ It is at the interface of these two statements that I find there to be possible implications of political theology within Roy's work. Secularism operates as a religion. The modern-nation state has taken on infinite value. The incommensurable anthropologies of a metaphysical sacred or a

need for more open societies, European University Institute, Robert Schuman Centre, *ReligioWest* 2016. <http://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/40305>

³ Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, trans. George Schwab (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985), 36.

⁴ Olivier Roy, *Secularism Confronts Islam*, trans. George Holoch (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 40.

scientific secular has touched upon the highest values of the religious and secular cohorts. Politics and religion, and the secular and the sacred, are in the final analysis unable to be completely separated, however, they are also at the same time unable to be completely conflated. There is a state of permanent tension between the two. Because of deterritorialisation and deculturation, the religious are linking along the lines of shared values and shared faith rather than society, territory and culture. This suggests that there is within cosmopolitan theory in conjunction with globalization that a possible avenue is able to emerge within political theology as a future narrative of our shared, global future. In Chapter 6, I offer concluding remarks.

Chapter One: Globalization and the Return of Religion

The question of globalized religion in the 21st century begins with what is called “the return” or “the resurgence” of religion that began during the mid 20th century. Use of the term “return” or “resurgence”, as can be found in various theorists beginning with Jacques Derrida in the early 1990s, derives from the observation that a political and cultural presence of the religious has made a visible, significant impression upon the social realities of the secularized public spheres of Western democratic nation-states.-In the last four decades we have witnessed global resurgence in every major world religion, bringing about a dramatic increase in the relative power and influence of religion within the dominant political structures and global civil society. The discursive reality of religion has obtained a wide scale of influence that extends beyond domestic concerns and into the greater international political dimensions of the global public square. At the center of this burgeoning of religion within our contemporary secular age is the theory of globalization as it relates to religion.

There are three general observations that I want to make in this chapter.

1) The first is that globalization theory best describes the dominant trends for our emerging religious future, the new forms of contemporary religions and religiosities, their future trajectories, their global trends, and their varieties of transformation within the Western public sphere. 2) The second observation is that globalization has created the conditions necessary for the so-called return of religion, and thereby the necessary

concomitant nature of the post-secular debate. The unintended consequence of secularization is that by creating an autonomous sphere for religion, a road was paved for the 21st century resurgence and revitalization of religion. 3) The third observation is the seemingly contradictory proposition that, as Olivier Roy makes clear, there is actually no return of religion, for globalization has separated religion from culture. The separation between religion and culture is what Olivier Roy calls “deculturated” religion, and it is deculturated religion that is “deterritorialized” that is at the root of both fundamentalist and liberalized religion. Olivier Roy rejects Samuel Huntington’s model of the “clash of civilizations” as an incorrect approach towards the relation between religion and society for the 21st century, because it assumes that religion and culture are necessarily linked, and that religion and culture are mutually embedded within each other. Religion and culture have since parted ways with emergence of globalization.

Defining Religion

“Religion” is a contested concept. It is by now methodological dogma within the field of religious studies to state that scholars of religion cannot come to a broad consensus as to who or what defines the concept of “religion”. In 1962, religious studies scholar Wilfred Cantwell Smith was the first to reject an essentialized, reified conceptual definition of religion within his seminal work *The Meaning and End of Religion*.⁵ During the 1980’s Jonathan Z Smith famously said in his *Imagining Religion* that “...there is no data for religion. Religion is solely the creation of the scholars study...Religion has no

⁵ Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion*, (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1978).

independent existence apart from the academy”.⁶ By the 1990’s, anthropologist Talal Asad wrote in his *Genealogies of Religion* that “there can be no universal definition of religion, not only because its constitutional elements and relationships are historically specific, but because the definition itself is the historical product of discursive processes.”⁷ Within this past decade, Catholic theologian William Cavanaugh observed in his *The Myth of Religious Violence* that,

there is no transhistorical or transcultural concept of religion essentially separate from politics. Religion has a history, and what counts as religion and what does not in any given context depends upon different configurations and authority.⁸

And as of late, the critiques of the Western conceptualization of what constitutes “religion” have led to the current field of “Critical Religion” led by scholars such as Timothy Fitzgerald and Russell McCutcheon. This new field maintains, according to Fitzgerald, that the category of religion is “not a stand alone concept”⁹, and should be demystified in favor of being empirically translated into terms that fundamentally denote cultural and social practices, and contextualized within the larger structures of ideology. The scholars of the ‘Critical Religion’ field adopt a materialist perspective that negates and criticizes any theologizing towards or phenomenology regarding the practice and concept of “religion”. Their position is fundamentally the rejection of Mircea Eliade,

⁶ Jonathan Z Smith, *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), xi.

⁷ Steve Bruce. “Defining Religion: A Practical Response.” *International Review of Sociology* 21, no. 1 (2011): 107-20.

⁸ William Cavanaugh. *The Myth of Religious Violence*. (New York, Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 58.

⁹ Timothy Fitzgerald. *The Ideology of Religious Studies*. (New York, Oxford University Press, 2000).

whose religious theory of phenomenology and the sacred has been regarded as an essentially covert theology. The field of “Critical Religion” offers constructivist accounts of religion whereby religion is not some natural thing or entity out there waiting to be analyzed, nor is it an irreducible existential experience of the hierophanies of the sacred. Rather, “religion” is imagined and constructed as a veneer for the purposes of the organization and the structuralization of secular political-social phenomenon.

Yet another way to frame the issue of defining religion is to recognize upfront that the concepts of the “religion” and the “secular” are both concomitants of each other, and both mutually constitute each other. The concepts of the religious and the secular are not so easily pulled apart for the purpose of compartmentalization. There is hidden behind the characteristics of the secular a religious dimension, just as there is distributed throughout the domain of the religious a thoroughgoing secularization. Religion structures the secular, just as the secular structures religion. As Talal Asad observes,

Religion has been part of the restructuration of practical times and spaces, a re-articulation of practical knowledge and powers, of subjective behaviors, sensibilities, needs and expectations in modernity. But that applies equally to secularism, whose function has been to try to guide that re-articulation and to define ‘religions’ in the plural as a species of (non-rational) belief.¹⁰

Religion is absorbed into the practical order of politics and rationality, while the practical order of politics is drawn into the sacral order of religion and faith. Religion becomes politicized, and as Olivier Roy points out, this is what constituted the failed project of political Islam in the Middle East, as he argued in his book *The Failure of Political*

¹⁰ Talal Asad. “Reading a Modern Classic: Wilfred Cantwell Smith’s The ‘Meaning and End of Religion’.” *History of Religions* 40, no. 3 (2001): 205-22.

Islam.¹¹ For Olivier Roy, the political is inherently secular, and thereby any attempt of a religion to merge with the political order will inevitably secularize it.

On the other hand, when the political encompasses the total, politics thereby become sacralized. Politics are the new religion, replete with their own kinds of faith, myths and utopian projects.¹² Further, the political domain often operates as a theological magisterium, defining what counts as religion within the secular Western courts of legislature with regards toward the legal concept of “religious freedom”, which is due to the fact of the multiplicity of definitions of religion inherent within the various religious communities.¹³

Therefore, since the “secular” and the “religious” are an interrelated dyadic concept mutually negotiating each other in their meaning and significance, it can therefore be said that the definition of “religion” as we know it within the West will always be a modern concept, as it is always tied to the “secular” as an Enlightenment project that undergirds the modern Western nation-state. As such, there is always and already a mutual inter-construction and inter-play between the concepts of religion, religious, and religiosity on one hand, and on secularism, the secular, and secularity on the other.

¹¹ Olivier Roy. *The Failure of Political Islam*. (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1994).

¹² See Emilio Gentile, *Politics as Religion*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006); and John Gray, *Black Mass: Apocalyptic Religion and the Death of Utopia* (Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2008).

¹³ Winnifred Fallers Sullivan, *The Impossibility of Religious Freedom*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).

To define religion, I concur with William Cavanaugh's broader observation about the debate of what defines the concept of religion:

Some scholars have cited James Leuba's *Psychological Study of Religion* (1912), which lists more than fifty different definitions of religion, to conclude that there is no way to define religion. But as Jonathan Z Smith points out, the lesson is not that religion cannot be defined, but that it can be defined in more than fifty different ways.¹⁴

Because religions and the religious can be variously conceptualized in myriad ways, the real issue for the question of religion and globalization is in what sense do these conceptualizations and theories of religion offer as the better or best explanatory effect of religion and the religious in contemporary Western society? Following philosopher Thomas Kuhn, my assumption in theorizing contemporary religion is that "to be accepted as a paradigm a theory must seem better than its competitors, but it need not, and in fact never does, explain all the facts with which it can be confronted."¹⁵ The map is never the territory. Though the map may accurately signify, the map is never the actual territory that is to be experienced, and there will always be facts in tension with the map.

I therefore offer two broad designations of the definition of religion upfront, one of pragmatic use, and the other of demographic use. For the first pragmatic sense, I offer sociologist of religion Steve Bruce's definition that religion

consists of actions, beliefs and institutions predicated upon the assumption of the existence of either supernatural entities with powers of agency, or impersonal

¹⁴ William Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence*, (Oxford University Press, 2010), 119.

¹⁵ Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolution*, (Chicago University Press, 1970), 12.

powers or processes possessed of moral purpose, which have the capacity to set the conditions of, or to intervene in, human affairs.¹⁶

Charles Taylor also uses this definition of religion by Steve Bruce for his analysis of secularization in his famous work *A Secular Age*. Since this dissertation limits itself only to Christianity, Islam and the Secular within the West, this definition of religion is effective enough for its purpose to denote a firsthand observation of the characteristic of the Western religion in which I am dealing with. It is a coherent interpretation of the three religious cohorts.

The second is the demographic sense, which I offer in tandem with demographers Brian Grim and Todd Johnson their definition of religion, which is

an organized group of committed individuals that adhere to and propagate a specific interpretation of explanations of existence based on supernatural assumptions through statements about the nature and workings of the supernatural and about ultimate meaning.¹⁷

The demographic model is used to denote any sort of statistical reference when it come to the measurement of religious bodies as it pertains to immigration within the USA and Western Europe, and as a measurement of secularization and religiosity. It is within this demographic sense that we can locate what is called the Secular cohort, the unaffiliated or the ‘Nones’, which stands a measure for secularization.

For the third definition of religion I reject an essentialization or a taxonomic classification of religion, preferring rather ‘the religious’ or ‘religiosity’, which makes the

¹⁶ Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age*, (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 429.

¹⁷ Brian Grim and Todd Johnson, *The World's Religions in Figures: An Introduction to International Religious Demography*, (Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 136.

experience and beliefs of the subject the locus of analysis. Religiosity, as defined Roy, consists of “faith as it is lived: the manner in which believers experience their relationship with religion, it is the lived, inner experience, religious feeling, but also the way believers define themselves in the outside world...”¹⁸ We can provide a conceptualized backdrop to ground the switch from religion towards religiosity with continental philosopher of religion Carl Raschke’s definition of religion in his work *Postmodernism and the Revolution in Religious Theory*. Raschke writes that

We, therefore, deliberately seek to avoid any routine resort to the generic term ‘religion’, which suggests a generic assemblage, an ‘essentiality’. We prefer the adjectival substantive ‘the religious’ to remind us of the ‘horizon-tal’ character of what we are theorizing.¹⁹

To speak of the ‘the religious’ is to speak of those practices and people who are always encroaching upon the religious singularity of what Raschke designates as *the event horizon*.

Globalization and its relation to Deculturation and Deterritorialisation

Raschke speaks in his *GloboChrist* of “globalization as religionization”²⁰ and within his *Postmodernism and the Revolution in Religious Theory* that “the globalization of the world proceeds in tandem with its religionization.”²¹ Globalization, which is modernity writ large, is the paradigm through which the future trajectories of the religious are best

¹⁸ Olivier Roy, *Holy Ignorance*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 15.

¹⁹ Carl Raschke, *Postmodernism and the Revolution in Religious Theory: Towards a Semiotics of the Event*, (Virginia: University of Virginia Press, 2012).

²⁰ Carl Raschke, *GloboChrist: The Great Commission Takes a Postmodern Turn*, (Baker Academic, 2008).

²¹ Carl Raschke, *Postmodernism and the Revolution in Religious Theory*, (Virginia, University of Virginia Press, 2012), 7.

interpreted. Globalization is the universal paradox of the sacred and secular, for inasmuch as globalization secularizes religion, at the same time it sacralizes the secular.

When entering, furthermore, into the subject of globalization and religion, we are also observing and analyzing the function of signs that are de-territorialized through the process of globalized technology and human communication between the religious and among the religious and the non-religious. The signifiers of religious symbolic that flow through exchanges within the virtual global sphere within the Internet are embraced and adapted by individuals, subject to their own sense of interpretation. Internet memes win converts and create born-again religiosities, and serve to undermine all institutional forms of authoritative restrictions. Memes create political-religious events, and political-religious events create memes. Globalized religion expands through the global marketplace of signifiers, enabled with globalized communication technologies and conditioned through the secularized space of Western democratic societies.

This “internetization” of communication runs in conjunction with the anthropological dimension of the religious. As Raschke observes:

Religion is not a ‘form’ or ‘cultural formation’; it is neither an ‘essence’ nor a generic characteristic of phenomena. It is a singularity in around which the signs of language and culture, which include the semiotic markets of theological discourse, as well as the events that constitute our historicity, swarm and circulate.²²

It is at this location of the ‘semiotic market’ in which signifiers ‘swarm and circulate’ where I find a direct connection to Olivier Roy’s theories of globalization and religion within *Holy Ignorance*, as Roy writes that, “what we are witnessing today is the militant

²² Ibid., 7.

reformulation of religion in a secularized space that has given religion its autonomy and therefore the conditions for its expansion.”²³

Globalization leads us to the question of “deculturation”. What is “deculturation”? Deculturation is the central idea of *Holy Ignorance*, in that religion and culture have parted ways, and that there is no longer an automatic link between religion and culture. Olivier Roy conceptually defines the split and severance between religion and culture as deculturation. Deculturation as a concept was not invented by Roy, but was a neologism created by anthropologist Daniel P. Kunene in 1968, who defined deculturation as

the process, whereby, at the meeting of two cultures, one consciously and deliberately dominates the other, and denies it the right to exist, by both indirectly and indirectly, a) questioning its validity as a culture b) denigrating it c) making its carriers objects of ridicule and scorn, and thus d) finally leading to the questioning thereof by the very people whom it has nurtured and given an identity and a positive being.²⁴

Roy, however, takes his conception of deculturation into a different direction, one that is not so much post-colonial, but is rather descriptive in its usage. Deculturation, for Roy, is a matter for of globalization theory, and not necessarily post-colonial.

Roy defines deculturation in *Holy Ignorance* as “the loss or abandonment of culture or cultural characteristics”, that namely it is a loss of the cultural characteristics of religion primarily within the West, though it has global implications. Roy’s theory of deculturation in a nutshell is that “secularization and globalization have forced religions to break away from culture, to think of themselves as autonomous and to reconstruct themselves in a space that is no longer territorial and is therefore no longer subject to

²³ Olivier Roy, *Holy Ignorance*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 2.

²⁴ Daniel P. Kunene. “Realism and Romanticism in African Literature.” *Africa Today*. Vol. 15, No.4 (Aug- Sep, 1968), pp. 19-24.

politics.”²⁵ To deculturate is for a religion to be stripped of its culture and territory in which it has been traditionally embedded. Once religion is untethered from culture, and made autonomous, the religion becomes exportable and universalizable, and able to be adapted through generalized interpretation.

There are various consequences of this shattered link between religion and culture. The first is that, according to Roy, “deculturation is the loss of the social expression of religion”, which thereby obliterates the nominal community identity that once held ethnicity, culture and society together. As Roy points out, for the traditional model of religion and culture, “religious allegiance is not considered to be a question of personal choice; it is a community identity and individual belief does not come into it.”²⁶ There is a co-incident between the religious marker and the cultural marker, whereby belonging takes precedence over believing. For example, the common sense and everyday observation that Italians are Catholic, Serbians are Orthodox, the Tibetans are Buddhist, the Turkish are Muslim is increasingly becoming no longer the case due to deculturating process inherent within globalization. Protestantism, secularization and other forms of new spiritualities are growing within each of the societies of these nation-states, challenging perceptions of ethno-nationalism and the religious traditions that were once inherent to them.

Through deculturation, religion is shifting away from its civilizational aspect towards more fundamentalist or liberalized varieties. As Roy writes, contemporary religion consists of the fact that

²⁵ Roy, *Holy Ignorance*, 2.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 67.

we are witnessing a shift of the traditional forms of religious practice—Catholicism, Hanafi Islam, classic Protestant denominations such as Anglicanism and Methodism—towards more fundamentalist and charismatic forms of religiosity (evangelicalism, Pentecostalism, Salafism, Tablighi Jamaat, neo-Sufism, Lubavich).²⁷

What is thriving are new recent inventions of religion that began roughly in the 18th century, such as Wahhabism, Salafism, Hasidim, the evangelical awakenings of the Wesleys, and of Pentecostalism. These new kinds of religious practice are more readily and easily exportable than either their traditional or mainline counterparts. Deculturated religion separates itself from culture and universalizes itself through the expansion of evangelism, proselytization and individual conversion. Conversion is no longer a mass phenomenon but an individual phenomenon.

This universalizing form of deculturated religion, which is no longer nominal, now consists of the choice of voluntary individuals who link together in communities that are situated outside of national politics and political territories because of the separation between religion and state, and at the same time they push back against what they perceive as a surrounding hostile secular culture. Both the state and the culture are rejected as hostile towards its practice and beliefs. We therefore do not have clash of civilizations, which is a model based on the embedding of religion within culture, but rather a clash of competing emerging religiosities. Religion is no longer civilizational and cultural, but rather is globalized and individualized.

For Roy, deculturation operates in conjunction with “deterritorialisation” . Deterritorialisation finds its conceptual trace not with Olivier Roy, but rather with

²⁷ Roy, *Holy Ignorance*, 4.

Deleuze and Guattari's critique of capitalism in their *A Thousand Plateaus*.²⁸ Roy adapts deterritorialisation within *Holy Ignorance* for his own specific use. Roy states that,

Religion and culture no longer have a relationship with a territory or given society, which is what we call deterritorialisation. It means that religion has to define itself solely in terms of religion: there is no longer any social authority or social pressure to conform.²⁹

Religion is no longer inherently embedded or linked to a political society or territorial space; and because of such, one of the outcomes is that the social authority of who or what defines religion has been jettisoned. Without a centralizing social authority, this opens Pandora's box of the indeterminacy of religious identities that can evolve towards fundamentalists or liberalized forms of interpretation.

Roy also uses "deterritorialisation" in another sense to refer to a "general phenomenon"³⁰ that blurs distinctions and borders between what is considered "Christianity" or "Islam" and what is considered the "West" on the ideological and territorial level. The blurring of lines between borders and identities, that of hybridization, is the outcome of deterritorialisation. Roy connects deterritorialisation to social demographic factors as well, because of the migration of a significant proportion of Muslim populations into Western European societies that picked up steam since the 1970's, with France and Germany taking the largest bulk.³¹ Roy also connects

²⁸ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, (University of Minnesota Press, 1987).

²⁹ Roy, *Holy Ignorance*, 38.

³⁰ Olivier Roy, *Globalized Islam* (New York: Paris: Colombia University Press, 2004), 18.

³¹ Roy, *Globalized Islam*, 2.

detritorialisation with ideology, since the spread of Muslim religious minorities runs in conjunction with the spread of religious ideas across the entire theo-political spectrum.

As Roy writes,

There is definitely a link between the growing detritorialisation of Islam (namely the growing number of Muslims living in Western non-Muslim countries) and the spread of specific forms of religiosity, from radical neofundamentalism to a renewal of spirituality or an insistence on Islam as a system of values and ethics.³²

Deterritorialisation is thereby hinged to the wheel of modernization that turns both ways in either theo-political direction, either towards liberalization or towards fundamentalism.

Deterritorialisation also constructs within the media the central categories and themes that contain the public debates regarding Islam and the West, such as “multiculturalism, minority groups, clash or dialogue of civilizations, communitarianism.”³³ Roy points out that “ethnicity and religion are being marshaled to draw new borders between groups whose identity relies on a performative definition: we are what we say we are, or what others say we are.”³⁴ It is precisely at this function of self-identity, of saying that ‘we are what we say we are’, that makes deculturated religion a complicated issue within the public debate between religion and the secular. When one obtains the right to self-identify as the religious identity that one desires, this creates a profusion of religious identities that cannot necessarily be refuted through a collective social authority. One sees this in the debate on ISIS, with Muslims debating over who has

³² Ibid, 2.

³³ Ibid, 20.

³⁴ Ibid, 20.

the right to be called a Muslim or not, or whether a new religious movement is Islamic or not. Is ISIS ‘Islamic’?³⁵ Are those who join ISIS ‘Muslim’? In the final analysis, those who participate in ISIS can justifiably call themselves Muslim and their movement Islamic based on the criteria of self-identification, which is itself a criteria that is legitimized and globalized through the Westernization of values, secular norms and legal rights. Roy points out that, for Muslims in the West, “the aim is to reconstruct a true Muslim community by starting from the individual. It is based on an individual re-appropriation of Islamic symbols, arguments, rhetoric and norms.”³⁶ Because individuation is at the core of the transformation of the religious, the secular domain takes precedence when explaining the transformation of the religious, rather than their sacred texts or theological beliefs. To understand contemporary movements within Islam, it is more appropriate to start with the deculturation process inherit within secularization, rather than what the Koran says or what Muslims have traditionally believed. Traditional theological interpretations of the sacred text are fundamentally challenged with the globalization of secularized, liquid modernity.

Deterritorialisation thereby works against definitions of religious identity that are established through collective means of institutional social authority. Olivier Roy writes that the “deterritorialisation of Islam leads to the quest for definition, because Islam is no

³⁵ Graeme Wood, “What ISIS Really Wants”, *The Atlantic*, March 2015.
<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/03/what-isis-really-wants/384980/>

³⁶ Ibid, 99.

longer embedded in territorial cultures...³⁷ The matter of defining of what consists of Islam is not only an issue of institutions, since institutions desire to consolidate a defined liberalized and democratic Islam in the face of the terrorism of radical Islam, but also from the every day Muslims themselves who face secularization and hostility from both the far left and the far right. Muslims have to reconstruct the definition of what it means to be Muslim and what Islam as a religion means because of the cultural challenges of secularization and secularism. As Roy writes,

Deterritorialisation also has an impact on the production of the Muslim discourse. First, resettled or uprooted Muslims are more prone to reassess what Islam means for them, either to reconstruct a Muslim identity or to answer questions (and pressures) from the non-Muslim environment.³⁸

This adaptation, reappropriation and reconstruction of religious identity can take shape through fundamentalist interpretations, but also liberalized interpretations as well. For instance, Roy points out that in the reconstruction of the identity of Islam, there is also developing “an uprooted, deterritorialised and cosmopolitan intelligentsia, sharing a common language (English or, less often, modern literary Arabic), [that] plays a role in producing values, teachings and world views adapted to globalization.”³⁹ In this sense, both cosmopolitan values and counter-cosmopolitan interpretations of Islam are deterritorialised through the globalization.

Deterritorialisation can also be linked with post-Christendom Christianity, where global Pentecostal faith is spreading, the free churches of non-denominational

³⁷ Roy, *Globalized Islam*, 20.

³⁸ *Ibid*, 105.

³⁹ *Ibid*, 104.

Christianity, and with the breaking apart of mainline institutions of Christianity due to the conservative and liberal divide on theological anthropological norms. In the backdrop of a secularized and post-Christian Europe, and in conjunction with deterritorialized Muslim minorities, the debate of the post-secular has emerged to account for the sociological conditions.

Finally, Roy defines deterritorialisation as not only demographic, but also as symbolic, as that which spreads information.

Deterritorialisation is not only associated with the movement of people (which only affects a small percentage of the global population), but also with the circulation of ideas, cultural objects, information and modes of consumption generally in a non-territorial space. But in order to circulate, the religious object must appear universal, disconnected from a specific culture that has to be understood in order for the message to be grasped. Religion therefore circulates outside of knowledge. Salvation does not require people to know, but to believe.⁴⁰

The idea of Roy's use of the term *Holy Ignorance* is that when a specific religion is separated from specific culture, the message of that religion is overly simplified. The adherents are unaware or are ignorant of the traditional body of theological beliefs and historical culture that is necessary to have a mature, knowledgeable understanding of that particular religion. One simply takes up the Bible and believes, or one joins ISIS without having read the Koran, or one becomes a kind of Buddhist that reflects Western pop psychology self-help practices more so than authentic Buddhist practices in Tibet. When religion and culture part ways, we have now designer spirituality, a create-your-own-kind-of-religion that is swayed either by consumerism or secularization. The universal, absolute message of autonomy is communicated through the technology of the internet and social media within a globalized spiritual marketplace that creates an optionality of

⁴⁰ Roy, *Holy Ignorance*, 6.

religious choices, with individuals operating as consumers. The globalized spread of a deculturated, disembedded and decontextualized religion within the virtual sphere of cyberspace in conjunction with global mass migration is what creates the image of the return of religion.

Why Globalization Secularizes

It is by now evident that since 9/11 and the aftermath of the Iraq war and other various martial engagements within the Middle East, and since the rise of internet social media and the technology of the smart phone, and alongside the financial collapse of Wall Street in 2008 with its global implications, that we have established enough pervasive evidence to say that globalization stands and continues to develop as an integrating societal process that increasingly shapes global mutual interdependence within all spheres of human activity.

The concept of globalization began and runs in tandem with the emerging global culture of free market capitalism. The coinage and use of ‘globalization’ was at first a concept developed by Harvard economist Theodore Levitt during the 1970’s—Levitt developed the idea of the “globalization of markets”, arguing that there was a “standardization” of products or forced commonality of markets that was developing through what Daniel Boorstin called “The Republic of Technology”, in which the “supreme law...is convergence, the tendency for everything to become more like everything else.”⁴¹ And it is technology that makes globalization the summit of modernization, for modernization according to the late sociologist Peter Berger “consists

⁴¹ Theodore Levitt, “The Globalization of Markets.” *Harvard Business Review* 61, no.3 (1983): 92.

of the growth and diffusion of a set of institutions rooted in the transformation of the economy by means of technology”.⁴² With technological advance, the world as a whole homogenizes and standardizes in all of its ensuing features contained within the societal, political and cultural sectors. And as of such, this includes the realm of religion and the religious. Globalization stands over and above secularization as the key indicator of religious transformation within contemporary society, as it encompasses the whole of which secularization consists of the part. Globalization is that which secularizes. Globalization is secularization.

Secularization can be briefly defined within three senses that interlock. The first is that of Peter Berger, in which he defines it as “the process by which sectors of society and culture are removed from the domination of religious institutions and symbols”⁴³; the second is that of sociologist Bryan Wilson, who defines it as the “decline of the social significance of religion”⁴⁴; and the third is that of sociologist Mark Chaves, who defines it as “the declining scope of religious authority”⁴⁵. Taken as a whole, I use secularization within these three parameters: the extirpation of governing institutional religious symbols from all sectors within society, the decline of significance of religion within these sectors, and the loss of centralized religious authority.

⁴² Peter L. Berger and Brigitte Kellner, *The Homeless Mind: Modernization and Consciousness*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974), 15.

⁴³ Peter L. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy*, (New York: Anchor Books, 1967).

⁴⁴ Bryan Wilson, *Religion in Secular Society*, (1966).

⁴⁵ Mark Chaves, “Secularization as Declining Religious Authority”, *Social Forces*, Vol. 2, Issue 3, 1994, pp. 749-774, 749.

Globalization secularizes because globalization is itself the outcome of the logic of modernity and late capitalism. And “modernization” as a concept has always been the core component to the classic secularization thesis. The secularization thesis is that the more a society modernizes, then the more the society will secularize, or simply put: more modernization equals less religion. The classic thesis of secularization has been disputed through what is known as the resurgence of religion, which raises various factors that suggest that the secularization thesis ought to be consigned to the dustbin of history.⁴⁶ Suffice to say now, Olivier Roy stands within the tradition of secularization theory, and argues that religion is in interminable decline within the West. For Roy, secularization stands triumphant.

Globalization can be considered as a ‘package’ concept that contains within several variables that all converge and contribute to the production of secularization: democratization, neoliberalism, the “ecumenism of human rights”, advanced technology, mass immigration, and the spread of western values. All of these variables contained within the ‘package’ concept of globalization converge within an output known as the global spiritual marketplace, which refers “to the plurality and variety of religious offers in culture” in which “new ‘competitors’ enter the marketplace where the individual can choose from whatever offer caters best to his/her religious needs.”⁴⁷ Levitt’s notion of the convergence of globalized markets has served as the basis for conceptualizing religious expression through economic forms within the supply-demand consumer model of a

⁴⁶ Rodney Stark. “Secularization R.I.P” *Sociology of Religion* 60, no. 3. (1999): 249-273.

⁴⁷ Alexander Darius Ornella. *Encyclopedia of Sciences and Religions*, (2013) pp. 2041-2041.

globalized spiritual market place. This analysis of global spiritual marketplace concurs with Raschke, who writes that

The global marketplace has made ‘culture’ a vast supermarket aisle of customized consumer items, a set of symbolic codes and accepted practices that eventuate from both competitive and often commercial efforts to ‘locate’ and domesticate a person or a group within the global emporium of ideologies and life options.⁴⁸

Religion has become one option among many, and the individual stands over and above the collective and tradition, enabled to choose among the options. This relation between the individual and the religious option at hand takes it paradigmatic symbol within the religious convert. The paradigm of the religious convert is one of Roy’s key notions in his *Holy Ignorance*. As Roy writes regarding his work, “Converts and the born-again are central to our study, since they epitomize the phenomenon of the deculturation of religion.”⁴⁹

Globalization also refers to the “compression of the world and intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole”, according to Roland Robertson.⁵⁰ This compression of global consciousness is marked by the intensifying speed of rapid social transformations through ever increasing interdependence and interconnectivity by way of exponentially increasing communication technologies. Economist Ellen Frost defines globalization as a “long term process of connection and transformation” that “sets in motion a living, expanding and highly uneven network of cross-border flows” that pertain

⁴⁸ Raschke, *Postmodernism and the Revolution in Religious Theory*, 3.

⁴⁹ Roy, *Holy Ignorance*, 14.

⁵⁰ Roland Robertson, *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture*, (Sage Publications, 1992), 8.

to products, people and ideologies.⁵¹ The world has become a vast social network. Manuel Castells concluded in his trilogy *The Information Age* that, “the rise of the network society and the growing power of identity are the intertwined social processes that jointly define globalization, geopolitics, and social transformation in the early twentieth first century.”⁵² Manuel Castells observes that we are now in the “Age of Networks”, and as of such the religious are aligning, connecting and developing their sacred communities along this technological and electronic web of nodes and lines of communication—what can be called the internetization of the religious and religiosity. Olivier Roy shows in his *Globalized Islam* how Islamic religious communities through the virtual space of the Internet are creating a globalized *ummah*. In this sense, globalization both fragments and coheres, fragmenting social cohesion into identities of religiosity, and at the same time cohering identities of religiosity into communities that align alongside their own reconstructed values, norms and theological beliefs. We are therefore post-Durkheimian, insofar as religion no longer coheres collectively and is no longer organically embedded within society.

Furthermore, shifting forms of human population run in conjunction with shifting forms of knowledge mediated through the globalized technology of social media, which adds up to a hyper-acceleration of societal transformation. Continental philosopher Paul Virilio explains this rapid, hyper-acceleration of societal change through his concept of *dromology*, which means the logic of speed. Speed “exerts a number of transformative

⁵¹ Raschke, *GloboChrist*, 27.

⁵² Manuella Castells, *The Power of Identity: The Information- Economy, Society and Culture Age*, (Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), xvii.

effects upon human culture” and is “the decisive factor in human technological evolution.”⁵³ The logic and rate of speed in these technologies increases the rate and possibilities of the dissemination of information and the dissemination of people within immigration, shaping social realities and therefore religiosity faster than they are able to be inculturated within political territories. Dromology makes religious inculturation impossible, and at the same time enhances deculturation. Both the ‘public space’ and the ‘public sphere’ are reconstructed within the social imaginary as a globalized virtual space where traditional boundaries of space, time and borders are melted into amorphous and nebulous configurations. What this creates is a vast and uncontrollable rapid spread of ideas and information in which social networks emerge and respond in real time, thereby creating various global civil societies and transnational communities that are adapted by both the religious and secular alike.

With the exponential increase of information circulated and immigration imported into Western societies, pluralization is now the political question of our global democratic age; globalization is pluralization. This ‘globalization’ of people and ideas circulates varieties of religious beliefs, practices and communities, and therefore increases religious diversity and plurality –such as seen in expressive religious individualism in the West – as well as a sense of transnational solidarity with religious communities, such as seen with the Islamic *ummah* and global civil society. Greater religiously diverse societies contain a cacophonous variety of religious bodies committed towards a position within a political spectrum consisting of liberal, moderate or

⁵³ John David Ebert, “Dromology”, in *The Virilio Dictionary*, (Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 69.

fundamentalist values. Forced to intersect side by side, these religious bodies and faith communities form competition and conflict within a global religious market. Because of such, Peter Berger has argued to replace the thesis that ‘modernization equals secularization’ with thesis that ‘modernization equals pluralization’. In other words, that the theory of secularization should be replaced with the theory of pluralization.⁵⁴

Although Berger is right in assessing the pluralizing condition of Western societies, as we shall soon see, pluralization itself is a condition and agent of secularization. Pluralization increases the opportunity for disaffiliation.⁵⁵ Pluralization relativizes through the spread of religious options, which thereby casts reflexive doubt within the subject as towards his/her religious convictions. Religious diversity does not stimulate greater religious participation, but rather secularization and disaffiliation. Globalization pluralizes, and pluralization secularizes.

To compact matters further, pluralization has two meanings. The first is that within the collective level, through the measurement of the proliferation of religious bodies within societies. The second is that which operates within the individual level, through the multiplicities of identities. The cultural effect of hybridization allows for the porous and liminal identity of both/and, while pluralization also brings about the possibility for ‘multiple religious belonging’, ‘double belonging’, or ‘hyphenated

⁵⁴ Peter L. Berger, “Further Thoughts on Religion and Modernity”, *Society*, (New York), Vol. 49, Iss.4, (July 2012): 313-316, pp.315.

⁵⁵ Pablo Branas-Garza, Garcia Munoz, and Shoshana Neuman, “Determinants of Disaffiliation: An International Study.” *Religions*, 2013, Vol.4 (1), pp.166-185.

religious identity'.⁵⁶ Therefore, hybridization of religious identity, due to the disjunctured and fractured process of globalization, challenges the traditional form of binary, taxonomic classification, and creates a radical, thoroughgoing pluralization on both the individual and the collective level.⁵⁷ Pluralization of identity is unbounded.

Furthermore, globalization as a societal process driven by technology runs together with globalism as the dominating symbolic imaginary and ideology of the West. Globalism in conjunction with globalization enhances secularization. Globalism resides in at least two spheres, the political and the economic. The political sphere consists of the modern project of pluralism that is maintained and advanced through democratization. These political conditions of liberal democracy and freedom of religion substantiates a religious atmosphere of pluralism. What sociologist of religion Daniel Hervieu Leger calls the “ecumenism of human rights” is cast within the political structures of the legal options for the freedom of religion.⁵⁸ This universal standard is crystallized in the Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes the freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Brian Grim and Todd Johnson, *The World Religions in Figures: An Introduction to International Religious Demography*. (Wiley-Blackwell, 2013).

⁵⁷ See Homi Babha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994).

⁵⁸ Peter L. Berger and Samuel P. Huntington, *Many Globalizations: Cultural Diversity in the Contemporary World* (New York; Oxford University Press, 2002), 7.

⁵⁹ http://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Documents/UDHR_Translations/eng.pdf

Article 19 and Article 20 also support religious freedom by proposing and supporting “freedom of opinion and expression” as well as “freedom of association”. This “ecumenism of human rights” formats or standardizes religion into the concept of the so-called “world religions”, thereby putting these world religions inadvertently into an ontological, homogenized plane of sameness without difference. Religions are essentialized. Every religion is just as valid, is as the same, and is as equal as the other. The message conveyed is that all religions are one. The presumption of this this notion that all religions are one traces its origins to construction of the concept of religion with the advance of European colonialism, and was given a further modernized epistemological grounding with the philosopher John Hicks, whose model of religion consisted of the metaphor the singular mountain that has various paths.

And within the economic realm, globalism also takes on the economic form of what Peter Berger terms “Davos culture”, which consists of Westernized human development wedded together with neoliberal capitalism that serves as the infrastructure of the global monetary basis.⁶⁰ The output of the economic realm is the spread of post-material values within post-industrial societies that engender a lifestyle of self-realization and expressive individualism. Globalism, running in conjunction with globalization, perpetually secularizes societies and creates the disjunction of deculturated religion. Therefore in our global, liberal democratic, pluralized, secular age, we are left with the over-arching societal condition whereby we have thriving religious bodies with competing theo-political norms set alongside and up against thriving non-religious bodies

⁶⁰ Peter Berger, “Four Faces of Global Culture.” *The National Interest*, no. 49 (1997): 23-29.

with their own particular set of secular norms. The unintended consequence of secularization is that by creating an autonomous sphere for religion, a road was paved for the 21st century resurgence and revitalization of religion.

Globalization is the condition of the Return of Religion

The rise of the transnational influence of religion is due to the modernization within technologies of communication and media, as well as the various processes inherent within globalization, namely demography and democratization.⁶¹ Though these factors of hyper-rate global communication and universal expansion of democratic values were first thought to pose critical challenges to the growth and social cohesion of the religious communities, the response of the religious to globalization was largely accommodating toward these processes and thus the religious effectively became assimilated, whether through their participation in global civil society as a force for peace within the ‘ecumenism’ of human rights, or in the reaction of anti-globalism religious networks who paradoxically use modern communicative technologies as a countervailing platform and vehicle for terrorism and violence.

Usual indications of the rise of the religion start with the observation of the rise of political Islam throughout the Middle East and North Africa, beginning with the significance of the rise of the Khomeini regime. In addition to the rise of political Islam, there is the world wide spread of evangelicalism through Protestant missionary movements, the mass migration of immigrants that have brought strong religious communities straight into the heart of secularized cosmopolitan cities of Western Europe,

⁶¹ See Monica Duffy Toft, Daniel Philpott, and Timothy Shah, *God’s Century* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company New York 2011).

the rise of the Moral Majority and the Christian Republican conservatism within the United States, the spread of cults (Jim Jones, David Koresh, Heavens Gate), the birth of New Age spiritualities, and New Religious Movements (Scientology, Jehovah's Witness, Mormons) within Western Europe. What ties these movements all together is the secularizing force of globalization.

We must also first recognize that the 'the return of religion' was a nomenclature coined by Jacques Derrida in his work *Acts of Faith*, a return that he linked with the rise of globalization, or as Derrida puts it, 'globalatinization'. As Derrida explains,

religion today allies itself with tele-technoscience, to which it reacts with all its forces. It is on the one hand, globalization; it produces, weds, exploits, the capital and knowledge of tele-mediatization; neither the trips and global spectacularizing of the Pope, nor the interstate dimensions of the "Rushdie affair," nor planetary terrorism would otherwise be possible, at this rhythm—and we could multiply such indications ad infinitum.⁶²

Derrida observes that 'tele-technoscience', by which he means the technology of communications and the mediascape, has created and globalized the visibility of religion to the public square. Derrida's reference to Pope John Paul II—who was the world's first rock-star celebrity Pope, and who had played a decisive political role in the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe—runs in agreement with Olivier Roy's observation that "John Paul II's papacy embodied religion's media-friendly modernity."⁶³

At the same time, Derrida also posits the opposite of media-friendly religion, that of the 'Rushdie affair', whereby Iranian novelist Salman Rushdie had a *fatwa* issued

⁶² Carl Raschke, "Derrida and the Return of Religion: Religious Theory After Postmodernism", *Journal for Culture and Religious Theory* vol.6 no. 2 (Spring 2005): 1-16.

⁶³ Roy, *Holy Ignorance*, 3.

against him, calling for his assassination for his controversial novel *The Satanic Verses*. The *fatwa* was issued from the Iranian Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, leader of the 1979 Iranian Revolution, which is often traced as the first transition towards globalized religious fundamentalism. What Derrida was picking up on was that the same dynamics at play within this “planetary terrorism” were similar to those at play within the “global spectacularizing” of conservative Catholic revivalism. Religion is either cast in a hostile or a friendly light, and emerges in processes that can favor democratization as we see with John Paul II, or religion can oppose democratization, as we see with Khomeini. And at the core of this is what Derrida calls “digital culture”, “digital systems and virtually immediate panoptical visualization, ‘air space’, telecommunications satellites, information highways, concentration of capitalistic-mediatic power” in which “the cyberspatialized or cyberspaced wars of religion have no stakes other than the determination of the ‘world’, of ‘history’, of the ‘day’, and of the ‘present’.”⁶⁴ The globalizing technological advance of the secularizing digital culture is at the heart of the return of religion.

Yet, as Raschke writes, “The ‘return’ of religion is actually a resurgence, a violent reaction to the relativizing, historicizing, and ‘liberating’ effects of modernity.”⁶⁵ Secularization, intent on pacifying religion, in turn created the reaction that it had intended to mitigate. Religion returned, or rather reacted, against the secularization which was itself the cause for the autonomous expansion of the religious. However, the kind of

⁶⁴ Jacques Derrida, *Acts of Religion*, trans. Gil Anidjar (New York: Routledge, 2000), 24.

⁶⁵ Raschke, *GloboChrist*, 35.

religion that expressed itself was that of fundamentalism. The term “fundamentalism” emerged in the twentieth century United States referring to debates that took place within protestant denominations, in particular the Baptists and Presbyterians, over the modernist theology that was taking sway over them, with ‘the fundamentalists’ identifying themselves as the guardians of traditional orthodoxy. Overall, according to Martin Marty, “fundamentalism was a specific response to modern challenges; the word reaction best serves to describe the impulse and strategy of fundamentalists.”⁶⁶ Fundamentalism is not confined to any one particular religion or faith, any nation-state or particular western society, and cuts across all markers of gender, race and class. Fundamentalism as a modernist movement that uses a highly selective approach when it comes to translating the scriptures, without using interpretative apparatus of the complexities of tradition and culture. As Martin Marty and Scott Appleby point out,

The fact that fundamentalist movements’ middle management and rank and file frequently have educational and professional backgrounds in applied sciences, technical and bureaucratic fields helps explain why fundamentalists tend to read scriptures like engineering blueprints—as a prosaic set of instructions and specifications.⁶⁷

The interpretation of the scripture of the fundamentalist is “reduced to a storehouse of raw materials to be ransacked as needed for building a political program. Few poets or cosmologists find their way into fundamentalists cadres.”⁶⁸ The text is abstracted, and is

⁶⁶ Martin Marty, “Fundamentalism”, *International Encyclopedia of Political Science*, (2011), 934-39.

⁶⁷ Martin Marty and Scott Appleby, “Think Again: Fundamentalism,” *Foreign Policy*, November 12th, 2009, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2009/11/12/think-again-fundamentalism/>

⁶⁸ Ibid.

able to be interpreted any way possible, falling into the hands of whomever wills through the passageway of technology and social media. Olivier Roy points out that

“Fundamentalism is the religious form that is most suited to globalization, because it accepts its own deculturation and makes it the instrument of its claim to universality.”⁶⁹

The return of religion is better understood as the reaction of religion towards the globalizing force of secularization, and because of its reactionary nature, fundamentalism and globalization are joined at the hips. Peter Beyer and Lori Beaman argue that,

it is entirely arguable that the rise of globalization discussions—which in their early social scientific and business forms began roughly, and with various antecedents, in the very early 1980’s—coincided with the rise to prominence of religious movements tagged ‘fundamentalisms’.⁷⁰

Fundamentalism is therefore a symptom and key indicator of the technological advance and secularizing force of globalization. Globalization creates fundamentalism. The return of religion is therefore simply the reaction of religion.

Conclusion: There is no Return of Religion

In sum, globalization produces secularization, which deculturates religion. Globalization also pluralizes, and pluralization creates secularization. Globalization also creates fundamentalism, which is a reaction to its counterpart of liberalization. Therefore, within the West, there is no return of religion. The “return of religion” model is constructed along the civilizational model of religion, which takes a Samuel Huntington’s approach of the Clash of Civilizations, whereby religion and culture and territory are inextricably

⁶⁹ Roy, *Holy Ignorance*, 5.

⁷⁰ Peter Beyer and Lori Beaman, *Religion, Globalization and Culture*, (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2007), 2.

linked. But this is increasingly no longer the case, for globalization has disrupted all links. The effect of globalization is that there is no longer an intrinsic link between religion and culture. Religion is disembedded, and therefore made abstract and virtual. This separation and parting of ways is the basis of the apparent religious revival and of the public visibility of religion. As Olivier Roy writes, the

religious ‘comeback’ is merely an optical illusion; it would be more appropriate to speak of transformation. Religion is both more visible and frequently in decline. We are witnessing a reformulation of religion rather than a return to ancestral practices abandoned during the secularist hiatus.⁷¹

This notion of the reformulation of religion through secularization gets at the center of what Roy argues throughout his *Holy Ignorance*. Religion is transformed, and no longer consists of ‘a return to ancestral practices’, that is, the inculturated and civilizational institutional forms of traditional religion. Religion has not returned in the same shape and form as it once was before the long eclipse of the Enlightenment – a territorialized and culturally embedded historical unit of cohesive social expression -- but it has rather reformulated into a deterritorialized universal of individual religiosities that gather together in ‘faith communities’. The return of religion, or rather the reaction of religion, is due to the process of globalization, and its apparent return is instead a symptom of thoroughgoing Westernization and secularization. The religious revival is itself a production and play of secularization at work, or as Roy puts it, “Secularism engenders religion.”⁷²

⁷¹ Roy, *Holy Ignorance*, 5.

⁷² Roy, *Holy Ignorance*, 26.

Furthermore, regarding the increase of secularization, from a purely demographic perspective, secularization found its largest growth in the twentieth century. As religious demographers Todd Johnson and Brian Grim observe in their analysis of the religiously unaffiliated and secular cohorts that, “In 1910 the world was home to very few atheists and agnostics. By 2010, they numbered in the hundreds of millions and represented 11.8% of the human population.”⁷³ The 20th century was in fact the premier hallmark and expansive growth of unbelief, notwithstanding the rise of political religion since the 1970’s. Despite the necessary correction of the once prevalent and triumphalist classical secularization theory, this macro-narrative of the contemporary “resurgence of religion” is problematized by its tendency of proclaiming the obverse of a global sacralization or re-enchantment. To correct the pendulum that swung too far into the universal inevitability of secularization, we cannot overestimate in the other direction of a grand religious revival of a sacralization.

There is additional evidence of the sociological data on the “return of religion” that suggests, according to Jose Casanova, that secularization has gained a stronghold within the West as opposed to religious revitalization. As Casanova writes,

...there is little evidence of any significant religious revival among the population of Western European societies, except among immigrant groups....Actually, the rate of secularization in many European societies may have reached a point of no return.⁷⁴

⁷³ Brian Grim and Todd Johnson, *The World Religions in Figures: An Introduction to International Religious Demography*. (Wiley-Blackwell, 2013).

⁷⁴ Jose Casanova, “Exploring the Post-Secular: Three meanings of “the Secular” and their Possible Transcendence”, in *Habermas and Religion*, edited by Craig Calhoun, Eduardo Mendieta, and Jonathan VanAntwerpen, (UK Polity Press 2013), 84

For Jose Casanova, who borrows Daniele Hervieu-Leger's term of religion as "a chain of memory," argues that this chain of memory

appears broken almost without repair and large generations of young Europeans are growing up without any personal relationship with or even knowledge of the Christian religious tradition. Not only the Christian churches, but most importantly families have lost their role in the process of religious socialization.⁷⁵

Europe is not at yet at a point to speak of the post-secular, and because of such, it is premature to speak of the return of religion. It is here at this point where Olivier Roy and Jose Casanova concur, insofar as the upcoming European generations, those born into deculturated religion, are born into the generation of *Holy Ignorance*, that of secularized societies that have severed the "chain of memory", the religious traditions that created inculturated, civilizational religion which provided a fortification of religious identity that was able to be transmitted to the next generations within an organic, fluid manner. *Holy Ignorance* means ignorance of religious tradition, which is the disruption of religion as a "chain of memory".

After deculturation there are a series of intended and unintended consequences, such as the obliteration of the middle ground within debates regarding religion and the public square, or the loss of the social cohesion and expression of religion, such as exemplified within the pure religion of fundamentalism or the pure religion of liberalized spiritualities. Secularization defines and separates what is "religion" from what is "culture", creating a widening divide between believer and non-believer, and thereby arresting and preventing "inculturation" of religion. The result of separating religion from its traditional link to a particular cultural embedding is the creation of a "pure religion",

⁷⁵ Ibid., 84.

where “religion is forced to be religion and nothing else”.⁷⁶ Purity, the idea of a pure religion, of a pure faith, of a pure past corroded by the profane present, of a pure future that lies ahead, is the new form of religion and religiosity. One must purify oneself from the sins of the world as with the fundamentalist, just as one must purify oneself from the shackles of religious dogma as with ‘the spiritual but not religious’. Roy writes that “contemporary conversions look for the ‘purely religious’ and entail the constitution of ‘faith communities’ that, even when they do not sever their ties with the surrounding society, insist on being purely religious.”⁷⁷ Purity of religion is one of the characteristics markers of the contemporary experience of the individual searching for his preferential option of faith within globalized spiritual marketplace of religiosities.

What deculturated religion shows is that the secularizing forces that are at work within the liberalized religious communities are the same forces that are creating the kinds of religiosity experienced and expressed with the conservative religious communities. The public visibility of religion consists of the fact that the alternative expressions of religion is a symptom of secularization, insofar as it manifests the de-institutionalization of religion and the decline of religious authority through the individualization of religious beliefs. There is a confluence, in that reflexive modernity is characterized by an individualization that privatizes the absolute sovereignty of the individual's choice, preferences and value judgments, while globalization publicizes

⁷⁶ Ulrich Beck, *A God of One's Own: Religion's Capacity for Peace and Potential Violence* (Cambridge, UK: Polity 2010).

⁷⁷ Olivier Roy and Nadia Marzouki eds, *Religious Conversions in the Mediterranean World*, (UK: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2013), 176.

religion by removing it from any necessary connection from the spatial limitations of territorial region, making it freely available to all. The nexus between individualization and deterritorialization creates a global religious market, which leads to either secularization or fundamentalism.

Sociologist Ulrich Beck indicates that, “the door that opens here swings in two opposite directions: a fundamentalist anti-modernity on the one hand, post-modern religious diversity.”⁷⁸ Modernity is therefore a wheel that spins both ways and in two different directions. The atheist and the fundamentalist both alike reject religious authority, and secularization can be expressly understood as the decline of religious authority. “Contemporary believers put far more stress on faith, on spiritual experience, on individual and personal rediscovery of religion, than on legacy, culture, transmission, authority, and theology”, according to Roy.⁷⁹ And such rejections of religious authority can be seen within the two global trends of modern religion that are crucially shaping Western society and politics in the 21st century, that of the “Nones” (or “Spiritual but not Religious”) and that of radical jihadist terrorists groups such as ISIS. The ‘Nones’ reject all forms of institutional religion, and as they are usually agnostic rather than atheist, and spiritual rather than religious, they singularly express the definition of secularization as the rejection of religious authority. But the same can be said about ISIS, which on one account they can be defined as thoroughly modern since they are fundamentalist reactionaries, and on another account they are liberalized since they resist all appropriate

⁷⁸ Beck, *A God of Ones Own*, 133.

⁷⁹ Olivier Roy, “Islam in Europe”, *Eurozine*, May 3, 2007, <https://www.eurozine.com/islam-in-europe/>

Islamic institutions of definition and appropriation. Religious identity is no longer founded and confined to the official channels of appropriate theological institutionalized centers of authority, but rather religious identity rather self-determined by the subject and agent themselves. ISIS is Islamic because they say they are, and their motives are theological because they admit and confess that they are theological based on their hermeneutic of the text, which rejects traditional Islamic interpretations of the Koran in favor of interpretations that finds their genealogy with Sayid Qutb, and in the end their hermeneutic finds its ultimate locus within the individual himself. As put by Olivier Roy, “the self is the truth; faith, not religion is the truth”⁸⁰

Globalization is not a singular process but rather is best described as a set of tensions, paradoxes, contradictions, conflicts and unintended consequence that carry across the multiple secularities and modernities of various nations and geographical regions. For instance, the global economy of merging transnational corporations is often in tension with the politics of nation-states defined along territorial lines, and the culture of commodification inherent within this free flow of market capitalism is often in conflict with the values, habits and lifestyles of local indigenous identities. The outcome of fractured globalization and secularization is that religion first “deculturates” and then begins to de-territorialize, whereby the religious markers or symbols separates itself from its original cultural, political and historical context and free flows through the dissemination of ideas via technology and the global migrations of people. German sociologist Ulrich Beck has pointed out that globalizations renders

⁸⁰ Roy, *Globalized Islam*, 380.

the simultaneous presence and availability of all (world) religions and cultural and spiritual symbolic worlds, from the ‘most primitive’ to the ‘most modern’, separated for the most part from their temporal and spatial context, and open to every conceivable appropriation and misappropriation throughout the world, including terrorist ones.⁸¹

Deculturation is decontextualization. Carl Raschke writes that

“religion ‘returns’ only because it is ‘rhizomic’, it is a constant pressure beneath the surface of the deep; its double sourcing becomes the double sentencing of what Deleuze understands as ‘territorialized’ self identity and ‘de-territorialized’—mobile or ‘nomadic’—signifiers that are in ‘flight’ toward unchartered destinations in the history of thought. De-territorialization is what Derrida characterizes as ‘de-racination’. The modern era of ‘Enlightenment’ constitutes a progressive deterritorialization of the existential ‘situation’ of faith...⁸²

What is emerging is the rhizomic spread of the simulacra and icon of images, messages, through communicative technologies that spread deculturated religion. Religion therefore “deculturates” and is “formatted” into an autonomous site that engenders the semiotic production of religious markers that are capable of global expansion within either a liner, disjointed or paradoxical exportation. With this interpretation being accessible and wide open, this creates a further chasm, as religion can be interpreted either in a benign sense as we see with the Nones, or in a fundamentalist sense, as we see with ISIS. What begins to emerge are extremes, polarities, and bifurcated opposites. Globalization creates dualities just as much as it homogenizes. What happens is that we have the obliteration of the moderation within public debate. Political scientist Eric Kaufmann observes, in the West “moderate religion is in decline, caught between a Scylla of secularism and a

⁸¹ Beck, *A God of One's Own*, 28.

⁸² Raschke, “Derrida and the Return of Religion: Religious Theory After Postmodernism”, *Journal of Culture and Religious Theory*, Vol. 6.2 (Spring 2005) 4. <http://www.jcrt.org/archives/06.2/raschke.pdf>

Charybdis of fundamentalism. What we see is a final reckoning between religion and the Enlightenment, with individuals forced to choose between the two.”⁸³ Deculturation is the obliteration of nominal, inculturated, and moderate religion. Religion and culture have parted ways.

⁸³ Eric Kaufmann, *Shall the Religious Inherit the Earth?: Demography and Politics in the Twenty First Century* (London: Profile Books, 2010), 29.

Chapter 2. The Return of Religion through Religious Demographics

Demography, the return of religion and secularization are linked together within the paradigm of globalization. Is there a return of religion within Western societies through the high fertility rates of religious cohorts versus the low fertility of secular cohorts? Certain demographers and political scientists have argued in favor for the scenario of the reversal of secularization through the abundant fecundity of the religious. The religious shall inherit the earth, as argued by Eric Kaufmann, through the sheer force of reproduction, because high religiosity correlates strongly with high fertility. The religious tend on average to have more children than the non-religious.

However, Olivier Roy's thesis of deculturation contradicts this possibility of the religious inheriting the earth through the overabundance of child bearing, because deculturated religion lacks the inherit ability to transmit religion and religious identity to the next generation. Deculturated religion is one that consists of personal conversion and is fundamentally a 'born-again' experience that requires an individual faith commitment towards the norms and codes of that religion. Such an individuated faith cannot be passed down within a smooth transition within secularized societies, as this kind of born-again faith requires each individual to decide for himself. Deculturated religion is the loss of nominal religion, which means the loss of religion as a cultural identity. The demographic thesis of the reversal of religion through fertility rates is thereby contested, as the children of religious parents will be thrown into pluralized western societies where

the tendency is to disaffiliate or liberalize within the secular milieu. Secularization, which correlates with low fertility rates, creates the reaction of the religious who attempt a re-sacralization through high fertility rates. Such a reaction is a characteristic of deculturated fundamentalist religion.

Furthermore, both attitudes of the secular and the religious towards child bearing are centered around *choice*, which is a byproduct of individualized autonomy. As globalization is the driving force that transforms religion into a reaction against the secularized immanent frame, this plays out in the will to reproduce and in the choice of retaining the faith. Deculturated religion ensures that each generational cohort must make that *choice* of whether or not to retain the faith of his or her parents. For Olivier Roy, this is not likely.

Globalization and Religious Demography

The resurgence of religion can be understood within the dynamics of human population, which if we follow Manfred Steger's definition of globalization as principally "shifting forms of human contact"⁸⁴, central to any theory of religion and globalization would necessitate a demographic dimension. "Demography is destiny"—a phrase coined in the 1970's by Ben Wattenberg and Richard Scammons in *The Real Majority*, suggests the capable dynamic of changes in human population to powerfully and persuasively shape the political and cultural landscape of any given nation or state.⁸⁵ One can criticize this by saying that to understand demography in terms of destiny is yet another reductionism.

⁸⁴ Manfred Steger, *Globalization: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press: 2009), 8.

⁸⁵ Ben Wattenberg and Richard Scammons, *The Real Majority: An Extraordinary Examination of the American Electorate*, (Coward, McCann, and Geogohan, 1971).

But this is to largely miss the point, for as American political scientist Jack Goldstone points out, “to admit that demography is not destiny is not to deny its power.”⁸⁶

Goldstone likens the force of demography to the weight of gravity: inasmuch as gravity is capable of being defied through human ingenuity, this feat has not been accomplished through ignoring or dismissing its force, but has occurred rather through our own measures of gravity’s interactions and understanding of its nature; this similarly applies to demography. The transformative force of social and cultural processes that reside at the core of globalization—collaboration within global civil society, conflict between religious and political identities, and the current vast increase in migration that is challenging the identity and boundaries of the nation-state—can be relatively elucidated through an investigation of the magnitude, composition and distribution of human population. As British sociologist David Voas has written, “People enter, exit, and move within religion, just as they are born, will die, and migrate, in life.”⁸⁷ Whether for war or peace, the demographic factor “must be considered as a major factor of politics alongside classic materialist, idealist and institutional perspectives”, and should be placed within the core of any investigation of globalization and the resurgence of religion.

Within this context of globalization, demographics and the resurgence of religion, there are possible challenges to secularism within one of the basic parameters of demography, that of birthrates. In short, in every major world religion there is a strong

⁸⁶ Jack Goldstone, “Politics and Demography” in Goldstone, Jack, Eric P. Kaufmann and Monica Duffy Toft, eds, *Political Demography* (Boulder, Colorado: Paradigm Publishers, 2012), 276.

⁸⁷ Skirbekk, Vegard, Eric Kaufmann and Anne Goujon, “Secularism, Fundamentalism or Catholicism? The religious composition of the United States to 2043”, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 49(2): 293-310 (June 2010), 293.

pronatalist trend, and it is demographically projected that the religious are set to outbirth the non-religious at such a prodigious rate, that it is argued that there will occur a stalling and possible modest reversal of secularization within the United States and Europe around 2050.⁸⁸ For there is a strong connection between religiosity and fertility, and this is largely due to the force that religion plays within the social cohesion and moral tradition of these communities that are oriented towards transcendent goals. The fact is that on average “conservative religious values tend to be associated with higher fertility, while liberal secular values predict lower birthrates”.⁸⁹ Values stand above socioeconomics when it comes to determining the rate and amount of fertility. While most modern, secularized developed countries and many developing countries are well under the total fertility rate (TFR) of 2.1—the ‘magic’ or ‘golden’ number for a society to reproductively replace itself—those of conservative, religious communities resist this general direction in fertility rates, choosing to remain at or above the golden number. In 2011, political scientist Eric Kaufmann along with Austrian demographers Anne Goujon and Vegard Skirbekk released the article “The End of Secularization in Europe? A Socio-Demographic Perspective” in which they argue that “*a combination of higher religious fertility, immigration, and slowing rates of religious apostasy will eventually produce a*

⁸⁸ Eric Kaufmann and Vegard Skirbekk “Go Forth and Multiply”, *Political Demography*, 209.

⁸⁹ Eric Kaufmann and Vegard Skirbekk “Go Forth and Mulitpy”, *Political Demography*, 200.

reversal in the decline of the religious population in Western Europe".⁹⁰ Religiosity, migration and fertility play a strong role in the United States as well, where secular Americans have an average total fertility rate of 1.66, as opposed to Catholics who average at 2.3, Protestants at 2.21, and Muslims at 2.84, and where the birthrate of those with religious conservative views in regard to abortion is two-thirds higher on average than those who hold to "pro-choice" views.⁹¹ In 2010, Kaufmann, Goujon and Vegard released the first cohort-component based projection of the main religions of the United States in *Secularism, Fundamentalism or Catholicism? The Religious Composition of the United States to 2043*, whose results showed that "the low fertility of secular Americans and the religiosity of immigrants provide a countervailing force to secularization...".⁹² The largest immigrant cohort, Hispanic Catholics, will experience the strongest growth of any ethno-religious group, expanding to 18 percent of the American population by 2043.⁹³

With this sort of differential fertility gap between the religious and the nonreligious, and between those with conservative and liberal values and beliefs, Kaufmann and Skirbekk project the possibility that "American religious conservatism

⁹⁰ Kaufmann, Eric, Anne Goujon and Vegard Skirbekk, "The End of Secularization in Europe? A Socio-Demographic Perspective" *Sociology of Religion*, 73 (1): 69-91 (Spring 2012). emphasis theirs.

⁹¹ Eric Kaufmann and Vegard Skirbekk "Go Forth and Multiply", *Political Demography*, 204.

⁹² Skirbekk, Vegard, Eric Kaufmann and Anne Goujon, "Secularism, Fundamentalism or Catholicism? The religious composition of the United States to 2043" *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 49(2): 293-310 (June 2010), 293.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 304.

will most likely strengthen in years to come unless liberals close the fertility gap.”⁹⁴ And if religious conservatism rises through an increase of its stock and an expansion of its culture, what challenges will this bring to the values and identities within the quarters of liberalism?⁹⁵ This shift stands to offset the effect of liberalism within the United States and Europe, however modest or however grand. Yet, a further question to be raised is: does modern, secular, political/cultural liberalism contain the necessary resources of tradition, social cohesion and *civitas*—“the spontaneous willingness to make sacrifices for some public good”⁹⁶—necessary to close this fertility gap between those conservative religious communities who value high fertility in their doctrine (to be fruitful and multiply) and ethos (eschatological sacrifice for the world to come). Political scientist Eric Kaufman is skeptical of liberalism’s pronatalist capability, for as social theorist Daniel Bell has pointed out in his *Contradiction of Capitalism*, there is located within modern, liberal society a fundamental contradiction, which is “the relation between self-interest and the public interest, between personal impulses and community requirements.”⁹⁷ The present cultural condition is characterized by a sense of individual *entitlements*, an argot that often masks under the pretensions of human flourishing, which at its core resembles more ‘unrestrained appetite’ and unfettered individualistic impulse

⁹⁴ Eric Kaufmann and Vegard Skirbekk, “Go Forth and Multiply”, *Political Demography*, 202.

⁹⁵ By liberalism I mean the continuous development of individual rights and civil liberties that favor and procure behaviors and progressive social conditions that figure away from traditional norms.

⁹⁶ Daniel Bell, *Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1976), 25.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 250.

than the realization of the public good. In the modern realm of human reproduction and childbearing—where self-interest and individualistic aesthetic impulse, to say the least, is not necessarily a virtue towards achieving high fertility—we may perhaps find here the vulnerability of liberalism and secularization. As Kaufmann put it, “liberalism’s demographic contradiction—individualism leading to the choice not to reproduce—may well be the agent that destroys it.”⁹⁸ In short, religious growth via high fertility rates, in direct opposition to the low fertility rates of the nonreligious, will become a major impetus of social, cultural and political change within the context of globalization and the resurgence of religion in the ensuing decades.

The triumph of religious fertility has its precedence in Western history. Just take American sociologist Rodney Stark’s *The Rise of Christianity* for example, who argues that, “superior fertility played a significant role in the rise of Christianity.”⁹⁹ Christian fertility had far surpassed that of the Greco-Roman empire—which was already well below 2.1 replacement levels at the inception of Christianity—through its refusal of “the attitudes and practices that caused pagans to have low fertility”¹⁰⁰ Christianity rejected the common Greco-Roman pagan cultural patterns of fertility: abortion, infanticide of females and deformed males, birth control devices, divorce, cohabitation, and any other social factors which lead to a natural decrease in fertility rates. The ethos and habits of fertility within Christianity, which was a result from Judaism’s scriptural injunction to

⁹⁸ Eric Kaufman, *Shall the Religious Inherit the Earth?* (London: Profile Books, 2010), xx.

⁹⁹ Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity* (New York, NY: Harper Collins, 1997), 112.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 122.

‘be fruitful and multiply’, encouraged pronatalism through the cultural pattern of marital fidelity and the moral reinforcement of the marital conjugal act as bearing a natural connection to reproduction. These values and practices of pronatalism that characterized the spirit of Christianity crucially aided its growth within the Greco-Roman empire, and among other important social factors, Christianity saw its rise from a population of about 1,000 Christians from the year 40 C.E. to a robust estimate of around 33 million by 350 C.E. This pattern of growth, which Rodney Stark averages to about 40 percent per decade, mimics the growth of 20th century Mormonism, which averaged at 43 percent per decade.¹⁰¹ Monica Duffy Toft traces this growth to Mormonism’s “strongly pronatalist theology, history and subculture...”¹⁰² that presently continues to have a strong influence on Mormon fertility. And Mormonism has grown into a more visible contender in the public square. In 2004, the GOP received 97 percent of the Mormon vote, which is “the most partisan voting record of any ethnic or religious group in the United States.”¹⁰³ They have recently pervaded the television, Internet and billboards with the cultural campaign “I am a Mormon”, and were also instrumental in placing one of their own as the 2012 Republican Party presidential nominee. This influential growth of a religious group that solidly identifies with a particular set of values is the visible effect of a pronatalist theology and an ethos of high fertility. Much like the rise of Christianity in the Greco-Roman era, what happens in the private sphere of reproductive choice does not remain silent in the public square.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 7.

¹⁰² Monica Duffy Toft, “Wombfare”, *Political Demography*, 221-223.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 223.

Globalization of Fertility Decline

Political theologies of pronatalism must be set within the greater global context of our present demographic situation. The world is on the cusp of a demographic transition that can reasonably be described in the terms of an upheaval or revolution. The 21st century will be the age of ‘greying’ or hyperaging cohorts within the world’s developed countries, which will shrink their labor forces and direct economic strength to the world’s developing countries.¹⁰⁴ In conjunction with the age of the ‘greying’ cohorts there will also come the global plummet of fertility rates. The world’s population as a whole has initialized a reversal in its momentum towards growth and is set on a trajectory towards decline. There is a common perception, due in part to the effects of human overcrowding taking place in urbanization and the all too apparent wastefulness in our age of hyper consumption, that we are overpopulating and possibly headed towards an ecological disaster of cataclysmic proportions. This is a hangover from the force of mortality decline that took place with the onset of industrialization and modern advancements in technologies and medicine. This first demographic transition, which took place roughly around the onset of the 19th century, initiated a mixed condition of high fertility in conjunction with low mortality, and thus created a watershed population boom. This vast increase in population drew attention and speculation from people such as the English cleric Thomas Malthus, whose famous *An Essay on the Principle of Population* set the demographic trend for the next two centuries by essentially arguing that prodigious population growth makes possible the condition for national poverty. Malthus reasoned

¹⁰⁴ See Jack A. Goldstone “The New Population Bomb”, *Foreign Affairs* January/February 2010.

that human population should be understood in terms of total population vs. total resources, and that the overwhelming demands of population through proliferation of human fertility without any set limitations would inevitably outweigh the supply of resources. Over a century later the Malthusian thesis developed into its most sensational expression, when during the mid 1960's Paul Ehrlich's released *The Population Bomb*, a best seller that predicted mass starvations and other forms of cataclysm due to overpopulation. This landmark work fueled the common public perception of an imminent population disaster to come. Ehrlich's cautionary tales along with others of its ilk influenced opinions to limit the growth of human population, advocating that considerable change and policy measures in the area of reproductive rights should begin to take place in order to allay the consequences and fears of wide spread famine, global ecological catastrophe and wide scale energy resource depletion,

The alarmist overpopulation thesis is now largely if not entirely discredited. First, consider that the United Nations Population Division projects that the terminus to our global population growth is around 2050, which all thing being equal, will balance at around 9.15 billion people.¹⁰⁵ This terminus to global population growth must also take into account coextensive global fertility recession. The world's total fertility rate was at 6.0 when Ehrlich released his sensational book, yet since then, within the course of three to four decades the global TFR sunk to an average of 2.52.¹⁰⁶ Ben Wattenberg was in the

¹⁰⁵ Jack Goldstone, "The New Population Bomb", *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2010, 31.

¹⁰⁶ Jonathan V. Last, *What to Expect When No One's Expecting: America's Coming Demographic Disaster* (New York, NY: Encounter Books, 2013), 27. See also United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, *World*

1980's pointing out in his *The Birth Dearth* that fertility rates all over the nations of the developed world had already dipped well below the TFR magic number of 2.1 children. Then around 2004, Wattenberg was still able to maintain his earlier depopulation thesis, writing bluntly in his book *Fewer* that “*never have birth and fertility rates fallen so far, so fast, so low, for so long, in so many places, so surprisingly*”.¹⁰⁷ This precipitous drop in fertility rates that he saw in the late 80's had not yet abated—as predicted or hoped for by some pundits—and simply continued in its unprecedented global free fall. Wolfgang Lutz and his associates in the World Population Program at IIASA in Austria maintain that:

Over the last three decades birth rates have been on the decline in virtually all countries of the world, and it is estimated that already more than half of the world's population has below replacement level fertility...An increasing number of countries have birth rates that are not just somewhat below replacement fertility, but far below that level.¹⁰⁸

Additionally, this fertility decline, insofar as is known, has no prominent reason for a probable reversal without the implementation of pronatalist policy measures. The presumption of a naturally occurring permanent equilibrium within human fertility rates is at best hopeful, and at worst naïve. In other words, there is a threshold of human fertility decline that is able to be traversed, a supposed bottom line ‘safety net’ that is

Population Prospects: The 2010 Revision, 2011. <http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/Excel-Data/fertility.htm>

¹⁰⁷ Ben Wattenberg, *Fewer* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2004), 5. Emphasis his.

¹⁰⁸ Wolfgang Lutz, Vegard Skirbekk and Maria Rita Testa, *The Low Fertility Trap Hypothesis: Forces that may lead to further postponement and fewer births in Europe*, 3. http://www.oeaw.ac.at/vid/download/edrp_4_05.pdf

possible to collapse under the burden of the will to not reproduce. What now characterizes modernity is the force of fertility's uninterrupted descent.

There is at current offered a vast constellation of reasons and interdependent connections for the global decline in fertility: those that are institutional, issues of gender equality, our present economic crisis, our present economic growth, increasing access towards education, the population density of urbanization, and matters as mundane as infant car seats or the ongoing battle between the so-called Bohemian bourgeois dog owners and Bohemian bourgeois parents over claims to common territory in city parks. The most prominent reason offered, however, is a feature of Second Demographic Transition Theory, which argues that there was an ideational shift from a concern for the well being of the family to the concern for the well being of the individual. Developed by the Belgian demographer Ron Lesthaeghe and Dutch demographer Dirk van de Kaa, Second Demographic Transition theorizes that *individual preference* determines fertility rate, disputing the common and classical notion that socioeconomic development is the all-encompassing framework for fertility decline. In observing the population trends of fertility decline that took place in the mid 1960's, which according to demographer John Caldwell was the historical moment when the world experienced "almost certainly the first major global decline in history,"¹⁰⁹ Lesthaeghe and van de Kaa perceived that when it comes to conceiving children, the individual's concern exceeds a simple bottom line of economic well being, income and available resources. What is preoccupying the popular

¹⁰⁹ John C. Caldwell, "The Globalization of Fertility Behavior" in Bulatao, Rudolfo and John B. Casterline ed. *Global Fertility Transition* (New York, NY: The Population Council, 2001), 93.

imagination is a sense of self-fulfillment, which can be described as personal ambitions of a post-materialist nature that regards individual freedom towards self-expression and self-realization as the penultimate consummation of livelihood. These European demographers borrowed their definition of 'post-materialism' from the American political scientist Ronald Inglehart, who defines post-materialists as those who "place more emphasis on self-fulfillment through careers, rather than through ensuring the survival of the species", and whose telos of life is aimed "out of the family toward broader social and leisure activities" which foster cultural individualism.¹¹⁰

The shift towards the invested wellbeing and happiness of the individual has its origins with the invested wellbeing and happiness of the family. This was first theorized by the French historian Philippe Aries, who when noticing the onset of childlessness that was becoming increasingly endemic to his native France and surrounding Europe in the mid 1960's, theorized that a transition was taking place within the organization of family life.

Philippe Aries writes:

The ways people look at life usually are determined by more mysterious, more indirect causes, I feel that a profound, hidden, but intense relationship exists between the long term pattern of the birth rate and attitudes toward the child. The decline in the birth rate that began at the end of the eighteenth century and continued until the 1930's was unleashed by an enormous sentimental and financial investment in the child. I see the current decrease in the birth rate as being, on the contrary, provoked by exactly the same attitude. The days of the child-king are over. The under-forty generation is leading us into a new epoch, *one in which the child, to say the least, occupies a smaller place.*¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ Eric Kaufmann, *Shall the Religious Inherit the Earth*, 55.

¹¹¹ Dirk van der Kaa, *The Idea of Second-Demographic Transition in Industrialized Countries*, 4-5. Paper presented by van de Kaa at the Sixth Welfare Policy Seminar of the

Aries argues that during the days of the ‘child-king’ there was a ‘bourgeois model’ of the family characterized by ‘altruistic ends’ in the reproduction and rearing of children. This ‘altruism’ entailed investing in the quality of the children’s education and future, which thereby required limiting the quantity of children that the parents would conceive in order to procure the social and economic resources necessary for their progeny’s success and security. However, this same ‘sentimental and financial investment’ shifted to what Aries calls the ‘individualistic model’, in which the emphasis was no longer placed on the flourishing of the children but rather on the flourishing and self-interests of the parents. The parents were to then interpret children in terms of how they would possibly benefit the happiness and self-fulfillment of the parents themselves. This model of cultural individualism and self-realization of the parents became the new reasoning behind their desire in conceiving children, and affected the parent’s decision when choosing how many children to bear, which became fewer and fewer.

An additional social factor to consider that was crucial in achieving low fertility was the widespread use of efficient, modern contraception since the mid twentieth century. Dirk van de Kaa notes that, “the availability of new, highly effective means of contraception had created a sort of ‘second contraceptive revolution’ as it was later called”.¹¹² This revolution that made contraception convenient and morally acceptable to the general public weakened the male’s total control of fertility by the traditional

National Institute of Population and Social Security, Tokyo, Japan, 29 January 2002
http://www.ipss.go.jp/webj-ad/webjournal.files/population/2003_4/kaa.pdf

¹¹² Ibid, 6.

contraceptive methods of *coitus interruptus* and condoms, and empowered the female in her control over sexual activity and fertility with the efficiency encapsulated in the pill and other modern methods. Wolfgang Lutz lays out the problem clearly:

...through the introduction of modern contraception, the evolutionary link between the drive for sex and procreation has been broken and now reproduction is merely a function of individual preferences and culturally determined norms.¹¹³

Post-materialist cultural individualism coupled with modern contraception proved a wrecking ball to maintaining replacement level fertility.

Further, this ideational shift towards low fertility was a “marginal behavior” that developed unto the “potentially universal,” as put by French demographer Jean-Claude Chesnais, fellow of the Institute for Demographic Studies in Paris.¹¹⁴ What was once the practice of the bourgeois middle and upper class within developed countries became the endemic practice of the mass culture. This globalized expansion of cultural liberalism took place through the mediascape, initiating imitation of these particular cultural representations of human fertility and reproductive behavior. Daniel Bell theorized in *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society* that,

The life style once practiced by a small cénacle, is now copied by many.... [and] this change of scale gave the culture of the 1960's its special surge, coupled with the fact that a bohemian life-style once limited to a tiny elite is now acted out on the giant screen of the mass media.¹¹⁵

¹¹³ Eric Kaufman, *Shall the Religious Inherit the Earth*, 51.

¹¹⁴ Jean-Claude Chesnais, “Comment: A March Towards Population Recession”, in Bulatao, Rudolfo and John B. Casterline, *Global Fertility Transition*, 255.

¹¹⁵ Erick Kaufman, *Shall the Religious Inherit the Earth*, 53.

Needless to say, mass media since the 60's has come a long way, and what is 'acted out on the giant screen' is directed through the global system of the Internet and the marketing of Hollywood culture to widen its scale and scope of reach. This engineering of human desire through the globalized mediascape produces what Vegard Skirbekk calls a 'low-fertility trap', where "low fertility begets lower desired fertility, which in turn drives fertility even lower, and so on....".¹¹⁶ As the 'golden' or 'magic' replacement number of 2.1 children begins to seem as one too many, family size increasingly diminishes to smaller amounts, and each successive generation becomes acclimated and accustomed to further small families. This sub-par amount becomes a cultural pattern, normalizing just how many children one may desire to conceive. This downward spiral in which modern, secularized culture hastens, a cultural lifestyle of unfettered enjoyment and self-interest that removes the impediments to its own realization—which is in this case turns out to be children—is resisted, however, by the fecund communities of the religious.

The Resulting Global Wombfare

Political regimes subsequently follow demographic regimes. Eastern Orthodox theologian David Bentley Hart, writing of the cultural wars that are antagonizing the United States, considered how might those with conservative tendencies may truly resist and rebel against the widespread libertine culture that has become in his estimation dissolute. After considering a range of options, Hart playfully yet provocatively concludes that:

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 50.

Probably the most subversive and effective strategy we might undertake would be one of militant fecundity: abundant, relentless, exuberant and defiant childbearing. Given the reluctance of modern men and women to be fruitful and multiply, it would not be difficult, surely, for the devout to accomplish—in no more than a generation or two—a demographic revolution.¹¹⁷

Though Hart, as he later made clear in another article to his outraged detractors, was writing more to amuse than actually obliging the faithful towards ‘militant fecundity’, his kind of rhetoric is authentically mobilized in other religious communities, such as in the protestant ‘Quiverfull’ movement in the United States, or in Yaser Arafat’s notion of a ‘biological time bomb’ of Palestinian high fertility set to explode and disrupt Israel within several generations. This language and assertive ideology of active and militant and childbearing is what Harvard Professor of Public Policy Monica Duffy Toft labels ‘wombfare’, a tactic that is employed in the long term battle between the cultures of the left and right.

The political theology of wombfare is particularly acute in Israel, providing the starkest contrast of a fertility gap between the religious and nonreligious. In a society founded by secular Zionists, the demographic rise of the Haredim through pronatalism will have a significant influence on the future of the political and economic security of Israel. Just between 1980-1996, the Ultra-Orthodox Jews or Haredim fertility rates grew from 6.49 to 7.61, while other Israeli Jews, seculars among them, saw a drop from 2.61 to 2.27.¹¹⁸ Israeli economist Dan ben David, who poses this fertility gap as an ‘existential problem’, writes in the *Haaretz*,

¹¹⁷ David Bentley Hart, “Freedom and Decency,” *First Things*, June/July 2004.

¹¹⁸ Eric Kaufmann, *Shall the Religious Inherit the Earth*, 226.

It is difficult to overstate the pace at which Israeli society is changing... If we don't find a way to integrate these populations into a shared Israeli narrative, and immediately, then in another generation or two—at most—the demographic balance within Israel will change the country beyond recognition.¹¹⁹

The high fertility within the communities of the Haredim is supported by a religious ethos that also reinforces the allegiance of the Haredim towards their religious community, and at the same time fortifies their resistance towards any possible conversion to secular beliefs. In his *Mediterranean Identity*, Professor David Ohana of the Ben-Gurion University of the Negev states that “The outstanding contemporary characteristic of Israeli society is the fragmentation of the Israeli identity into secondary elements that overshadow the specific quality of Israeliness.”¹²⁰ For Ohana, ‘Israeliness’ represents a region of religious cross-fertilization that bridges the various cultures of the Mediterranean basin of Greece, Italy, Egypt and Turkey into a cultural theory of Levantism, which is a humanism with a distinctive Israeli cosmopolitanism. However, the continuous growth of what Ohana calls fragmentary ‘secondary elements’ will within decades demographically eclipse the primary political and cultural whole, and through a political theology of revelation and pronatalism the values of the Haredim stand to challenge that definitive quality of ‘Israeliness’ or secular humanism to which Ohana is allied to.

And as for Europe, dread was the popular symptom of the alarmist reactions towards the viral *YouTube* video “Muslim Demographics”, which gained more than 10 million hits within a space of two months since its inception in 2009. This sensational

¹¹⁹ Dan ben David, “The Moment of Truth”, *Haaretz*, Feb. 6, 2007.

¹²⁰ David Ohana, *Israel and its Mediterranean Identity* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 150.

phenomenon set the high fertility rates of Muslim immigrants in opposition to the low fertility rates of native Western Europeans, claiming the French Muslim TFR at 8.1 in contrast to the native French TFR at 1.8.¹²¹ Though the below replacement level of the French native TFR was correct, the French Muslim TFR of the video was excessively exaggerated. Despite the inflated projections of the “Muslim Demographics” TFR, the anxiety and unease in which the video was received by the general public lays out the problem clearly: Europe’s conscience suffers disquiet from its own sense of demographic decline, its own sense of loss of identity through a challenge to the core of its culture through religious immigrants and high fertility. This problem is exacerbated in that Europe has trouble in defining just what constitutes and unifies the cultural identity of ‘Europe’. In its pursuit of multiculturalism through the framework of secularism it seems to forget that all dialogue requires a presupposed identity, and an assertive secularism largely fails when it comes to cultural unity and social cohesion. Europe cannot be simply identified by geographical boundaries, as it requires a social bond that is necessarily civilizational and developed from within a particular moral and cultural tradition. Yet Europe has in effect become constituted by what French sociologist Danielle Hervieu-Leger calls “amnesic societies”, which are incapable of “maintaining the memory which lies at the heart of their religious existence.”¹²² This amnesia of Europe’s Christian religious memory and erosion of its Christian moral tradition is in part due to Europe’s own will to forget its universalizing past of violence. Europe’s recollection of its

¹²¹ “Muslim Demographics”, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6-3X5hIFXYU>

¹²² Grace Davie, *Religion in Modern Europe: A Memory Mutates* (Oxford University Press: 2000), 30.

expansionist history has brought a sense of shame towards its civilizational heritage, and this shame has brought along with it a loss of self-confidence in Europe's own Christian spiritual and religious traditions. French philosopher Remi Brague writes that Europe "no longer believes that what it has to offer is likely to interest those who chanced to be born outside its frontiers."¹²³ Because of this loss of memory through the violent trauma of its past, Europe has adopted an attitude of what former president of the European Commission Jacques Delors called the 'motor' of 'Never Again', which was "translated into a movement of reconciliation...[that]...was now a matter of uniting peoples and bringing nations together, without however making the nation state disappear."¹²⁴ Delors believed that the 'will towards reconciliation' steadily marching under the banner of 'Never Again' needed a necessary cultural or spiritual bond that was absent in the discourse of constructing a European Union. Delors had attempted to bring Christian churches into the discussion of constructing a European identity, arguing that in order for Europe to achieve its goal towards unity, it must first recognize that "*the EC lacks a heart and soul*".¹²⁵ Delors understood that identifying a center or 'heart and soul' of Europe that unites its cultural and spiritual identity is a necessary condition towards justice, reconciliation, and unity. Yet if Europe continues to deny this and refuse to recognize its own particular Christian heritage and moral tradition out of an unfounded

¹²³ Remi Brague, *Eccentric Culture: A Theory of Western Civilization* (South Bend, Indiana: St Augustine's Press, 2002), 185.

¹²⁴ Lucian N. Leustan. "Does God matter in the European Union" in Leustan, Leustan, ed., *Representing Religion in the European Union*, (New York, NY, Routledge, 2013), 1.

¹²⁵ *Ibid*, 2.

fear of a return to a theocratic Medieval past or out of its debilitating remorse over its history of violent, universal expansion, will it continue to suffer from a loss of cultural, social cohesion that will leave the identity of Europe naked and “open to the expansion of newer peoples who still care for bonds of family and religion,”¹²⁶ as Phillip Jenkins points out in *God’s Continent?* The problem lies with deculturation that breaks the bond of religion as chain of memory. Europe has entered the age of *Holy Ignorance*.

The Criticism of Religious Transmission

An analysis of the discussion from the perspective of Olivier Roy would raise certain issues and several critiques. The first is to point out that the thesis of post-material individualization that is driving the decline of the secular birth rate is a case in point of what Roy calls “formatting” or the standardization of religiosity, in that the secularizing conditions that are determining the decline of the birth rates of secular cohorts is at the same time engendering the strict religiosity that creates an uptick in the religious cohorts birth rates. Modernity is the wheel that spins culture both ways, either towards liberalization or towards fundamentalism, thus the post-material values of post-industrial societies determine the behavior of not just secular cohorts but also religious cohorts. As Roy writes, “the achievements of the Sixties have become mainstream”, and we see the *Sex and the City* ethos that contributes to the bourgeois bohemian lifestyle of low fertility rates diffused through the globalized technology of the media.¹²⁷ It is a case in point of Rene Girard’s notion of *mimesis*. On the other hand, we also see the religious use the

¹²⁶ Phillip Jenkins, *God’s Continent: Christianity, Islam, and Europe’s Religious Crisis* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2007), 10.

¹²⁷ Roy, *Holy Ignorance*, 217.

media as well to encourage higher fertility rate and mobilize the faithful towards the choice to reproduce, such as seen with James Dobson *Focus on the Family*, or the Quiverfull Movement. Roy writes that, “The family is no longer sacrosanct; opting for a family life is presented as an individual choice, a desire for self-realization and not as a compliance with some natural law.”¹²⁸ Globalization is the secularizing force that drives both the decline of the TFR of the secular cohorts as well as the increase of the TFR for religious cohorts.

The fact that the religious see themselves as embattled against the surrounding, hostile secular culture, and are using birth rates or “wombfare” as a form of combat, supports Roy’s thesis of religion and culture parting ways. The encroaching secular culture forces the religious to reconstruct child bearing as a sacred duty to re-sacralize the godless societies through the force of re-population. The liberalized sexual mores of post 1960’s secular culture puts the religious on the defensive, and therefore they stand as *reactionary*, which according to Martin Marty is the defining sole characteristic of religious fundamentalism.

The next issue is that of transmission, or the passing of religious identity towards the children. Roy writes that,

But they all face the question: how does one transmit the faith? Particularly when the parents are converts or born-again, since transmission is no longer guaranteed by the social or cultural visibility of religion....How is the experience of a breakaway to be transmitted? How can one be born from a born-again?”¹²⁹

¹²⁸ Roy, *Holy Ignorance*, 217.

¹²⁹ Roy, *Holy Ignorance*, 215-216.

Deculturation ensures that transmission of religious identity is disrupted, and deculturation creates the potential for religious identity to be hybridized. There is therefore no longer a seamless transition from parent to child when it comes to religious affiliation. A ‘breakaway’, that is a ‘born-again’ Christian or Muslim, one who is affected with an interior religious renewal towards a strict form of religiosity, cannot construct a stable transmission of identity towards his or her children, since the faith that is experienced is one of individual commitment and decision. To be born-again from a born again is an impossibility for Olivier Roy, or as is often heard in Christian revivalist circles: “God has children, but no grand-children.” The children must come to his or her personal conviction and experience of the faith, and can no longer solely rely on ties of family, or ethnic/cultural identity. Born-again faith disrupts all nominalist religion, which is the religion of culture, and of therefore civilization, and of therefore empire.

To ensure the transmission of religious identity requires the strict commitment of an exclusive and closed faith community. These kinds of faith communities that are of the fundamentalist bent are, according to Roy, too difficult to maintain by the individual in the long run, especially in light of the enticements of the surrounding materialistic and indulgent character of the secular ethos. Roy points out that, “Dogmatism finds it hard to hold out in the long term if it is not upheld within a closed community. Many pass through Tablighism, Salafism, or Pentecostalism, but eventually leave.”¹³⁰ The problem is, as Roy points out, is that “one of the characteristics of modern fundamentalisms is to replace spirituality with a system of norms and codes. Sin is no longer a part of the

¹³⁰ Roy, *Holy Ignorance*, 216.

system: when it occurs, it breaks it.”¹³¹ The problem of modern fundamentalism is that it is intolerant towards any ambiguity or grey area within the realm of morality and ethics, which exacerbates its tendency towards exclusivism against its opponents or within its own adherents. The issue of exclusivity within fundamentalist religious bodies is further highlighted within the secular culture of western societies, in which the dominant sentiment is that towards the ethos of inclusivity, and thereby creates a visibility of religion that does not line up with the dominant secularization that is in fact taking place. Religion is made strange, as it is situated on the rational stage of Weber’s ‘iron cage’.

The attempt of the parents to stop the secularization of their children is a generational problem that each set of parents must attempt to overcome. When religion and culture were embedded within a civilizational whole, the transmission of religious identity was not a real problem. Because of deculturation, each successive generation must reconstitute itself as a ‘born-again’ generation. Roy discusses evangelical leader Thomas Rainer’s book *The Bridger Generation*, which is an attempt to analyze the cultural issues of the generation into which the author’s son was born into, in order to effectively evangelize them and offer an appropriate Christian response.¹³² The children of the religious are born into a secularized, pluralized climate that contributes towards a prone tendency towards disaffiliation. Yet for Roy, this attempt to re-evangelize the next generation only “highlights the exteriority of religion in relation to cultural markers”, whereby there is no integral or organic link between religion and culture because of

¹³¹ Roy, *Holy Ignorance*, 216.

¹³² Thomas Rainer, *The Bridger Generation*, (Broadman and Holman, 1997).

secularization.¹³³ This process of deculturation then puts a burden on the older generation to “pick from the floating cultural markers and pin them to religious markers: Christian rock, *eco-kosher*, *halal* fast –food”, and they “put on Christian rock parties, use ‘youth’ language, adopting the codes of the ‘tribe’ to preach to its members”.¹³⁴ The further problem lies in that as each generation attempts to adopt the cultural markers of the successive generation in order to retain their affiliation, the cultural markers are in a state of rapid flux, suspect to the rapid changes of the free-market inherent within the process of globalization. Roy points out that, “the cultures they are targeting are in fact sub-cultures, made up of codes and modes of consumption, they are transient... sub-cultures have always existed, but they can flourish today because it is possible to exist in a virtual space.”¹³⁵

The memes and the technology of the virtual spaces of the internet maintains and fashions sub-cultures of the religious and the secular—such as seen with ISIS, the Alt-Right, and or the atheistic community of the Ex-Muslims—and thereby reproduces the semiotics of deterritorialisation and the secularization of deculturation. What we end up with is the dromology and flux of endless reproduction and repetition of virtual sub-cultures that construct religious and non-religious identities within the over-arching immanent frame. Deculturation ensures that *the sacred canopy* becomes and remains pluralized and individuated *sacred canopies* within the various markets of the globalized secular and religious economies. The transmission of religious identity within Western

¹³³ Roy, *Holy Ignorance*, 217.

¹³⁴ *Ibid*, 217.

¹³⁵ *Ibid*, 217.

society is therefore rendered interminably problematic because of the deculturation process of globalization.

Chapter 3: Analysis of Religious Conversion and Secularization

In *Holy Ignorance*, Olivier Roy writes that, “Converts and the born-again are central to our study since they epitomize the phenomenon of the deculturation of religion.”¹³⁶

Conversions are significant for Roy in connection with ‘the return of religion’ in that

they concern millions of people who shift from Catholicism to Protestantism (in Latin America and Africa, in the USA among the Latinos), tens of thousands from Christianity or atheism to Islam in Europe (youth from the French ‘underclass’) or from Islam to Christianity (among Iranian refugees in Turkey, Muslims in Central Asia or even in Algeria).¹³⁷

Olivier Roy also writes that

the key factor in conversions is the lack of a connection between religion and culture; in other words, religions are recruiting with which they are traditionally associated, or are having a deculturation effect which is not followed by acculturation.¹³⁸

Contemporary religious conversions are characterized by individuation, accessible information, choice, optionality, and the political condition of liberal democracy that guarantees and protects freedom of religion and the right to convert. Contemporary religious conversions are specifically deculturated, deterritorialized, distinguished by the born-again experience, and they remain locked within the dialectic of the secularization process. Further, conversions do not only consist of a religious transition, but can be

¹³⁶ Roy, *Holy Ignorance*, 14.

¹³⁷ Olivier Roy and Nadia Marzouki, *Religious Conversions on the Mediterranean World*, (UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 177.

¹³⁸ Roy, *Holy Ignorance*, 13.

secular in their nature, such as those who disaffiliate and secularize out from a religious cohort. Conversions therefore are suitable as a measure of secularization.

What follows is an analysis of the main drivers of conversions towards secularization (the Unaffiliated, the Nones), and the main drivers of conversions towards high levels of religiosity. The demographic scenario portrayed in the previous chapter, that of the correlation between fertility rates and religiosity, led to the notion of whether children will disaffiliate and secularize from religious faith and their inherited religious tradition. This chapter provides data to suggest that in fact there will be a tendency towards religious disaffiliation and secularization.

Roy argues that secularization stands triumphant within the West because of deculturation, and the data I provide suggests that this is likely. I examine what are the main drivers of religious affiliation and secular dis-affiliation. With data provided from the International Institute of Applied Systems Analysis (Laxenburg, Austria), I use Human Development and Secondary Education as a proxy for modernization, and then correlate both with secularization. I argue that Human development creates the ecological conditions necessary for trends of religious disaffiliation and secularization to occur. Furthermore, because globalization pluralizes, this exacerbates the move towards secularization, because of the condition of the optionality of faith made possible through pluralization.

The Unaffiliated as a measure of Secularization

Secularization in the West corresponds with the rise of the “Unaffiliated”, those who self-identify as atheist or agnostic or who have no religious affiliation, and who comprise 1.1 billion of the world’s population—that is roughly one-in-six of the world’s population are

unaffiliated—and who are the world’s third largest ‘religious’ body, just behind Christianity and Islam, as well as numbering greater than Hindus. One of the dominant religious conversion patterns of the twentieth century is that of the unaffiliated, who largely exited from Christianity within Western liberal democracies.¹³⁹ Though the share of the unaffiliated largely consisted in the West within the past century, the share of the unaffiliated is now predominant in the Asia Pacific region, accounting for 76.2% of the global total.¹⁴⁰ The rise of the ‘nones’ or the unaffiliated is a dominant current trend whose cultural and social impacts in the near global future have yet to be discerned. Typically identified with political and cultural values that are considered liberal, and at times characterized with assertive, anti-religious attitudes, the growth or decline of the unaffiliated matters for the ongoing development and negotiation between the public and private sphere.

The unaffiliated is a measure for secularization. Atheists have no religious belief, nor religious practice, and no religious self-identification, while agnostics typically assert that knowledge of a deity’s existence or of a fundamental, transcendent order of ultimate reality is impossible or always remains uncertain for human ascertainment. Agnostics in particular are often noted to in fact to have some kind of religious belief, such as in the afterlife, or they may partake in some kind of religious practice that is spiritualistic in its nature (Zen, Yoga, Tarot, etc.). Yet, notwithstanding these possible religious beliefs and

¹³⁹ See Brian J. Grim and Todd Johnson, *The World’s Religions in Figures: An Introduction to Religious Demography*, (Wiley-Blackwell, 2013).

¹⁴⁰ See *The Global Religious Landscape: A Report on the Size and Distribution of the World’s Major Religious Groups as of 2010*, The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, December <https://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/centers/jesinst/pdf/Grim-globalReligion-full.pdf>

practices that the agnostics may or may not have, their own purported self-identification of not belonging to any religion indicates secularization for two reasons: the loss of religious authority and the de-institutionalization of religion through their own particularized, individualization variation of religion. Indeed, Mark Chaves maintains that, “Secularization is most productively understood not as declining religion, but as the declining scope of religious authority.”¹⁴¹

What are the main drivers of religious disaffiliation? To leave one’s own religion—and religion is largely an affair of familial inheritance—is a conversion in the sense of transitioning to a new self-identity and worldview. Conversion by way of disaffiliation is a measure of secularization, and this trend of conversion particularly captivates the modern West. In his work *Religious Conversion and Disaffiliation*, anthropologist Henri Gooren takes throughout his work the orienting question: “*What is it that makes people religiously active?*”¹⁴² In analyzing the main drivers of religious disaffiliation, this question can perhaps be reframed as: *What is it that makes people actively non-religious?* It is my assumption that both questions are in mutual relation at the basic dimensions of existential or religious human experience.

Religion and Secularization

Secularization and the unaffiliated is a characteristic question of religion and modernity. The central question in defining religion is important, for as Mark Chaves notes, “how

¹⁴¹ Mark Chaves, “Secularization as Declining Religious Authority”, *Social Forces*, Vol. 2, Issue 3, 1994, pp. 749-774, 749.

¹⁴² Henri Gooren, *Religious Conversion and Disaffiliation*, (UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

religion is understood determines secularization theory's direction"¹⁴³ Indeed, the 'secular' and the 'religious' are in a dyadic relation that mutually constitutes each other in meaning.

Current scholarship in religious studies recognizes that there are inherent difficulties and limitations in defining the concept of 'religion' because of its direct relation to the concept of 'secular'. Ancient Roman use of the Latin word *religio* was used to describe moral and social obligations in society, and in this sense *religio* primarily signified the bond or cohesion of social order, and not necessarily theological beliefs in gods or supernatural deities. It is also noted by Wilfred Cantwell Smith that the ancient civilizations of Greece, Egypt, Aztecs, India, Japan and China did not contain a word that was equivalent or approximated in the modern use of the word 'religion'. In medieval Western Christendom, *religio* developed to signify and distinguish the clergy who took part within orders, as opposed to diocesan or 'secular' clergy, thus the split between what is considered 'religion' and what is considered 'secular' was first initialized as a Roman Catholic theological differentiation.

Scholars recognize that the current, modern usage of the term 'religion', much like the modern usage of its counterpart 'secular', is only around two hundred years old and developed within the distinctive political and social configurations of the birth of the modern West.¹⁴⁴ The definition of 'religion' in modernity, as William Cavanaugh points out, signified

¹⁴³ Chaves, "Secularization as Declining Religious Authority", 750.

¹⁴⁴ See Jose Casanova, "The Secular and Secularisms", *Social Research*, Vol. 76, No. 4, (Winter 2009), pp. 1049-1066.

a universal genus of which the various religions are species; each religion comes to be demarcated by a system of propositions; religion is identified with an essentially interior, private impulse; and religion comes to be seen as essentially distinct from secular pursuits such as politics, economics, and the like.¹⁴⁵

This separation between what is conceptualized as ‘religion’ and what is conceptualized as ‘secular’ has remained the central foundation for contemporary theories of religion, which can categorically be divided into two approaches of essentialism or functionalism. The essentialist approach tends to define religion through the primary characteristic of beliefs and doctrines on God(s), spirits or what is called ‘transcendence’, while the functionalist approach defines religion through the role that religion plays within society in fulfilling individual and communal needs, such as expressed in communal practices, rituals and observances.

However, the modern definition of religion is under sustained criticism, particularly with the attempt to identify religion as an immutable, transhistorical and transcultural essence that is “waiting to be separated from the secular like a precious metal from its ore”.¹⁴⁶ Establishing a universal definition for ‘religion’ is problematic in that, as Johnson and Grim observe, “there cannot be a universal definition of society and culture –they are constantly changing, and religion changes with them.”¹⁴⁷ Further, the complexity of religion changing in tandem with society also expands the definition of religion to seemingly account for almost any kind of belief or practice within society. As historian of religion scholar Jonathan Z Smith points out, by as early as 1912 James

¹⁴⁵ Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence*, 69.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, 69.

¹⁴⁷ Brian Grim and Todd Johnson, *The World’s Religions in Figures*, 136.

Leuba's *Psychological Study of Religion* cites over fifty definitions of religion in the appendix, which gives the impression that the term "religion" is either indefinable or expansive enough to be able include over fifty definitions. This complexity of defining religion has led Smith to famously remark that "...there is no data for religion. Religion is solely the creation of the scholars study...Religion has no existence apart from the academy."¹⁴⁸

Despite these limitations to defining religion, it can be said that religion involves a combination of beliefs, practices, and self-identification to a community or institution that is

based on the existence of supernatural deities with powers of agency (that is, Gods) or impersonal processes possessed of moral purpose (the Hindu and Buddhist notion of karma, for example) that set the conditions of, or intervene in, human affairs.¹⁴⁹

Religious self-identification serves as way to measure secularization.

On The Secular

Each of the words "secular", "secularism", and "secularization" contain certain connotations that should be distinguished when the question of religion and modernity is raised, so as to not confuse the descriptive account of secularization from a normative account of secularism. The core term "secular" serves as an imaginative, theoretical construct de-limiting what is sacred (religious) from what is mundane (natural), and is conceived as a "natural" order of space and time that remains when one peels away the

¹⁴⁸ Jonathan Z. Smith, "Religion, Religions, Religious" in *Critical Terms for Religious Studies*, ed. Mark C. Taylor, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 281.

¹⁴⁹ Steve Bruce, *Secularization: In Defence of an Unfashionable Theory*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 1.

super-structure of what is conceived as “religion”. “Secularism” is a comprehensive doctrine or political ideology that is manifest in the worldview of secular humanism or atheism, as well as in policies such as separation between state and religion for the purpose for either passively tolerating religion or actively controlling religion (Kuru 2007), as well as in aggressive state atheism as seen in the Communist era. The process of secularization need not assume the comprehensive doctrine or ideology of secularism.

Secularization and its Discontents

“Secularization” can be analytically conceptualized in two ways: a) “the theory of the institutional differentiation of the so-called secular spheres, such as state, economy, and science, from the religious institutions and norms” b) “the theory of the progressive decline of religious beliefs and practices as a concomitant of levels of modernization”.¹⁵⁰ Thus, secularization occurs in the realm of public space and in the realms private belief and practice.

Modernization is the process through which agrarian pre-industrial societies transition to industrial technological societies and eventually to post-industrial, information societies.¹⁵¹ The differentiation and specialization of institutions through the transformations of the economy is made possible through the central agency of technology. Modernization can further be characterized as growth within the sectors of health, income and education, which are central indicators of the concept of human

¹⁵⁰ Jose Casanova, “The Secular, Secularizations, Secularisms” in *Rethinking Secularism*, ed. Craig Calhoun, Mark Jurgensmeyer, and Jonathan Van Antwerpen, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

¹⁵¹ See Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular, Religion and Politics Worldwide*, (UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

development. The theory of modernization is that socioeconomic development produces and to some extent predicts shifts and changes in political and cultural values.

The thesis of secularization is that religion loses its influence and social significance through these transitions of modern, human development.¹⁵² Jürgen Habermas observes that advocates of the secularization thesis maintain that progressive, human development within societies leads to higher levels

of welfare and greater social security; and with a reduction of risks in life, and the ensuing increase in existential security, there is a drop in the personal need for a practice that promises to cope with uncontrolled contingencies through faith in a 'higher' or cosmic power.¹⁵³

Technology is central to this interpretation, which gives humans a sense of the mastery over their own fate and control over both the forces of nature and the onset of death. With technology, sociologist David Martin writes that “the general sense of human power is increased, the play of contingency is restricted, and the overwhelming sense of divine limits which afflicted previous generations is much diminished.”¹⁵⁴ Divine providence is displaced with human ingenuity and technological power, and in this sense secularization occurs through the existential security provided through the advances of technology brought with modernization.

¹⁵² See Bryan Wilson, *Religion in Secular Society: Fifty Years On*, ed. Steve Bruce, (UK: Oxford University Press, 2016).

¹⁵³ Jürgen Habermas, “Notes on a Post-Secular Society”, *Secularism’s Crisis of Faith*, Kenan Institute for Ethics, Duke University, Fall 2008.
<http://kenan.ethics.duke.edu/religion/files/2017/04/Habermas-Notes-on-Post-Secular-Society.pdf>

¹⁵⁴ David Martin, *The Religious and the Secular*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), 116.

Yet, for over more than a decade, the secularization thesis has undergone thoroughgoing critique from various fields of academic discourse. What many perceive to be the failure of secularization theory is that it is too general, universal, reductionist, Western centric, and more often than not triumphalist.

Through what is called the “resurgence of religion”, the “post-secular”, and “multiple modernities”, many argue that religion endures and even grows through the process of modernization. The United States is often cited as a paradigmatic illustration of the conjunction between religious growth and modernization. Robert D. Putnam and David E. Cambell show through their data that it is the well educated of the United States who fill the church pews, and that religion is “increasingly the ‘opiate the affluent’, while secularization seems to be proceeding more rapidly among less educated Americans.”¹⁵⁵ In one historical and sociological analysis based on estimates of church membership, Rodney Stark and Roger Finke found that about 17% of Americans belonged to a church in 1776, and grew to about 62% in 1980, in what they call the “churching” of America.¹⁵⁶ As a thoroughly modern nation born on the secularized premise of the separation between church and state, America is considered a strong bastion of high religious affiliation and vitality.

From a global perspective, Monica Duffy Toft, Daniel Philpott and Timothy Shah maintain that “the demographic center of gravity of many religious communities

¹⁵⁵ Robert D. Putnam and David E. Campbell, *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2010). Cited in Norris and Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular*, 271.

¹⁵⁶ Rodney Stark and Roger Finke, *The Churching of America*, (Rutgers University Press, 1992)

continues to shift from an impoverished, illiterate, and rural mass to an emerging and increasingly sophisticated middle class...”,¹⁵⁷ and from this educated class many religious actors are able to mobilize growth within religious communities. Indeed, the current discussion and revisions of the secularization thesis has moved forward into what are called “post-secular” societies, which are characterized with a burgeoning mutual adjustment between both the religious and secular communities, and where religion continues to maintain a public influence and social significance in light of the advances of secularization. What Jose Casanova calls the “de-privatization” of religion and its current vibrancy within the public sphere in terms of global civil society, its salient visibility through religious immigrants within condensed urban cityscapes, the sweeping evangelistic efforts of missionary organizations, and transnational networks of radical religious terrorism has brought reconsideration as to how shared citizenship between the religious and the non-religious is possible in modern secular societies.¹⁵⁸ Many examples abound of the resurgence of religion, such as the Iranian Revolution, the Moral Majority of the United States, 9/11, the emergence of global religious terrorists networks, the BNJP Party in India, the fall of communism in Poland under the religious actor of Pope John Paul II, the Orthodox revival in Russia, the vast growth of Pentecostalism in Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa as well as the underground Christian churches in China, and the notable growth of Buddhism in Western societies. Peter Berger, once the

¹⁵⁷ Monica Duffy Toft, Daniel Philpott, and Timothy Shah, *God’s Century: Resurgent Religion and Global Politics*, (W.W. Norton and Company, 2011).

¹⁵⁸ See Jose Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*, (University of Chicago, 1994).

foremost advocates of secularization theory in the 1960's, famously recanted his earlier prediction of the demise of religion,

The world today, with some exceptions, is as furiously religious as it ever was, and in some places more so than ever. This means that a whole body of literature by historians and social scientists loosely labeled secularization theory is essentially mistaken.¹⁵⁹

The exception for Berger is Europe, where religious decline continues unabated.

Another objection to the thesis of secularization is that that religion does not decline through modernization but rather changes or transforms. Certain agnostics who in fact have some type of religious belief are offered as evidence of the constant demand for religion and demonstrates that the vitality of religion still remains with us, albeit in a new modernized, contemporary expression (i.e. Yoga, spiritualist practices, meditation, votive candle lighting, astrology, etc.) The exiting of religion from its organized, institutional formation is an outcome of what Charles Taylor calls the “nova effect”, in which the dynamic of religion continues through transformation and change. Particularly within Western liberal democracies since the 1960's, contemporary religion takes on an egalitarian form of expressive individualism. This transformation or change in religious expression can be defined as New Religions or contemporary, alternative spirituality. The identity of these ‘movements’ is porous and indeterminate, and its adherents are often characterized within descriptive phrasing such as ‘spiritual but not religious’, ‘fuzzy fidelity’, ‘unchurched believers’, ‘believing without belonging’, or are located within the conceptual space of ‘liminality’. Charles Taylor, in his monumental work *A Secular Age*,

¹⁵⁹ Peter L. Berger, *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics*, (Eerdmans, 1999).

considers these modern expressions of religion as a derivative of the ‘ethics of authenticity’ “in which people are encouraged to find their own way, discover their own fulfillment, ‘do their own thing’.”¹⁶⁰ At its most extreme form, Robert Bellah has termed this transformation of religion as “Sheilaism”, where religion consists entirely of individualized, interiorized expression.¹⁶¹

However, demographers Todd Johnson and Brian Grim do not find there to be a global resurgence in religion: “In 1910 the world was home to very few atheists and agnostics. By 2010, they numbered in the hundreds of millions and represented 11.8% of the human population.”¹⁶² The United States, which stands as the example of modernization in conjunction with religious vitality, is experiencing the highest percentages of the unaffiliated within the history of the Pew Centers polling, which saw an increase from roughly 15% to slightly below 20% within the past five years. And despite the objection which describes modern religion as change but not decline, or as the ‘nova effect’ of the new individualized religious experience, it can be argued that alternative expressions of religion is a syndrome of secularization insofar as it manifests the de-institutionalization of religion and the loss of religious authority through individualization of religious beliefs. These contemporary expressions of religions can be

¹⁶⁰ Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age*, (Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007).

¹⁶¹ Robert Bellah and Richard Masden. *Habits of the Heart*. (1985) Sheila writes that “I believe in God. I’m not a religious fanatic. I can’t remember the last time I went to church. My faith has carried me a long way. It’s Sheilaism. Just my own little voice... It’s just try to love yourself and be gentle with yourself. You know, I guess, take care of each other. I think that He would want us to take care of each other.”

¹⁶² Brian Grim and Todd Johnson, *The World Religion’s in Figures*, 109.

characterized as “earthly desires for health, meaning, and wellbeing rather than a connection to the supernatural.”¹⁶³ Further, the growth of these movements is minimal, and not strong enough to replace the exit of adherents to Christendom in Western societies, where much of the ‘nova effect’ is occurring. Lastly, these movements by the very fact of being individuated perhaps lack the social cohesion and mechanisms necessary to produce sustained growth in religion in generations to come. The loss of social cohesion is one of the major components of Olivier Roy’s notion of deculturation.

The Relation of Modernization to Religion

What the recent critique of the secularization thesis makes clear is that though the concept of modernization is central to secularization and religious conversion, the effect of modernization on religion is varied, and must take into account regional, cultural, and historical variation of the particular societies concerned. Rodney Stark and Roger Finke maintain that, “What is needed is not a simple minded theory of inevitable religious decline, but a theory to explain variation.”¹⁶⁴ Also, Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart clarify that “secularization is a tendency and not an iron law.”¹⁶⁵ The process of secularization can stall and be reversed through high fertility rates of the religious over against the low fertility rates of secular cohorts, and as well through religious conversions. Adapting the thesis of secularization to include variation and to consist as a tendency, there are several key, large-scale processes and effects of modernization on

¹⁶³ Eric Kaufmann, *Shall The Religious Inherit the Earth*, 17.

¹⁶⁴ Rodney Stark and Roger Finke, *Acts of Faith*, (Berkeley, CA, 2000), 33.

¹⁶⁵ Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide*, (Cambridge University Press, 2011), 5.

religion that are to be considered with the question of religious disaffiliation.

Modernization understood as pluralization and as human development creates the ecological conditions necessary in which the trends of religious disaffiliation occurs.

I argue that the Main Drivers for Religious Disaffiliation are

- Pluralization (Choice)
- Human Development (Existential Security and Individualized Autonomy)

Religious Diversity, Pluralism and the Democratic Condition

Peter Berger writes that,

There is no great mystery about the causes of modern pluralism – these are the classical process of modernization – urbanization, migration, mass education, the mass media of communication, all of these gaining additional potency under democratic conditions...¹⁶⁶

Religious diversity, a necessary pre-requisite of pluralization, is distinct from religious pluralism in its definition. Religious diversity is a characteristic of demography measured by inter- or intra-religious population grouping under a specific religion (Christianity, Baptists, Islam, Suffi, Hindu, etc.), whereas pluralization or pluralism is a philosophical or political project that necessitates a civic engagement with religious diversity for the purpose of achieving a shared civil society through mutual understanding of one's values and religious commitments based on shared dialogue.¹⁶⁷

The effects of modernization on religion that enables the diversification and pluralization of religious bodies and institutions is through the modern processes of

¹⁶⁶ Peter L. Berger, "Secularization and Descularization", in *Religions in the Modern World*, Linda Woodhead, Hiroko Kawanami, David Smith eds. (Routledge, 2002), 342.

¹⁶⁷ See Diana Eck, "Religious Pluralism, On the Ground and in the Pulpit", *Union Seminary Quarterly Review*, 56, (3-4) 2003.

globalization (communications, transnational migrations, information) and democratization (political conditions). Globalization and democratization makes possible the conditions for religious diversification and pluralization.

1) *Globalization*: Modern technological advances within transportation and communication creates a global network of transnational migration and initializes a vast dissemination of information to the public. This ‘globalization’ of people and ideas circulates religious beliefs, practices and communities, and therefore increases religious diversity and a sense of transnational solidarity with imaginary religious communities, such as seen with the Islamic *ummah*. Within this global circulation of the varieties of religion an ecological climate for religious conversions and disaffiliation is created.

2) *Democratization*: The modern project of pluralism is maintained and advanced through the presence and growth of liberal democracies. The political condition and cultural climate that is engendered is one of religious tolerance and/or a common, global civil society that incorporates religion into the public square. Democratization is concomitant with the expansion of the philosophical doctrine and legal formulation of human rights, which is codified in relation to religion in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that:

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

The political conditions of liberal democracy and freedom of religion substantiates a religious atmosphere of pluralism and creates religious markets in which competition between religious bodies and institutions ensues.

Human Development and Risk

Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart hypothesize in *The Sacred and Secular* (2011) that “feelings of vulnerability to physical, societal and personal risks are a key factor directly driving religiosity.”¹⁶⁸ They argue that socio-economic development increases levels of existential human security, and that “the core idea of security denotes freedom from various risks and dangers”¹⁶⁹ which can bring the onset of premature death. Risks include not only military threats but also “environmental degradation to natural and manmade disasters and floods, earthquakes, tornadoes, and droughts, as well as the threat of disease epidemics, violations of human rights, humanitarian crisis, and poverty.”¹⁷⁰ Overall, what is not so important is the specific nature of the risks, but rather what is being risked, namely human life, which makes human security equivalent to existential security. Once people are lifted out of these vulnerable positions towards risks, and adequate levels of socioeconomic development are in place, there is a tendency to secularization. Again, Norris and Inglehart clarify secularization in terms of tendency and probability, and not as some iron law of determinism.

The analysis of Norris and Inglehart bears direct relation to the consensus within sociological literature, where high levels of human insecurity are associated with high levels of religiosity; conversely, high levels of human security are associated with

¹⁶⁸ Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide*, (Cambridge University Press, 2011), 245-246.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 14.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 14.

reductions in religiosity. Anthony Gill and Erik Lundsgaarde found that with increase in government welfare spending there corresponds a reduction in religious participation.¹⁷¹ Rachel M. Mcleary and Robert J. Barro support through a cross-country analysis the hypothesis that economic development tends to decrease religiosity.¹⁷² In a multi-level analysis of religious attendance within 60 countries, Stijn Ruiter and Frank van Tubergen found that religious attendance is increased by personal (existential) and societal (economic) insecurities.¹⁷³ Scandinavia is a particularly acute case of low religiosity and high government welfare spending.¹⁷⁴ Ekrem Karakoc and Birol Baskan found that “economic inequality increases the positive evaluation of the role of religion in politics through its effect on religiosity and participation in religious organizations.”¹⁷⁵ And based on data from four rounds of the European Social Survey (ESS, 2007-2008) on 26

¹⁷¹ Anthony Gill and Erik Lundsgaarde, “State Welfare Spending and Religiosity: A Cross National Analysis”, *Rationality and Society*, 2004, Vol. 16 (4): 399-346.

¹⁷² Rachel M. Mcleary and Robert J. Barro, “Religion and Economy”, *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Vol. 20, No. 2, Spring, 2006, pp.49-72.

¹⁷³ Stijn Ruiter and Frank Van Tubergen, “Religious Attendance in Cross National Perspective: A Multi-Level Analysis of 60 Countries”, *American Journal of Sociology*, (November, 2009) pp. 863-95.

¹⁷⁴ Phil Zuckerman, *Society Without God: What the Least Religious Nations Can Tell us about Contentment*, (NYU Press, 2010).

¹⁷⁵ Ekrem Karakoc and Birol Baskan, “Religion in Politics: How Does Inequality Affect Public Secularization”, *Comparative Political Studies* 45(12) 1510-1541, 2012.

European countries, Tim Immerzeel and Frank van Tubergen were also able to maintain and further develop the human insecurity hypothesis.¹⁷⁶

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARTS

The following demographic charts are ones that I developed at the International Institute of Applied Systems Analysis in Laxenburg, Austria, in which I correlate secularization with human development. I use the concept of human development as my proxy for modernization. In these charts I took demographic data from the World Religion Database, and measured the secular cohort from across all world regions alongside the Human Development Index from the United Nations.

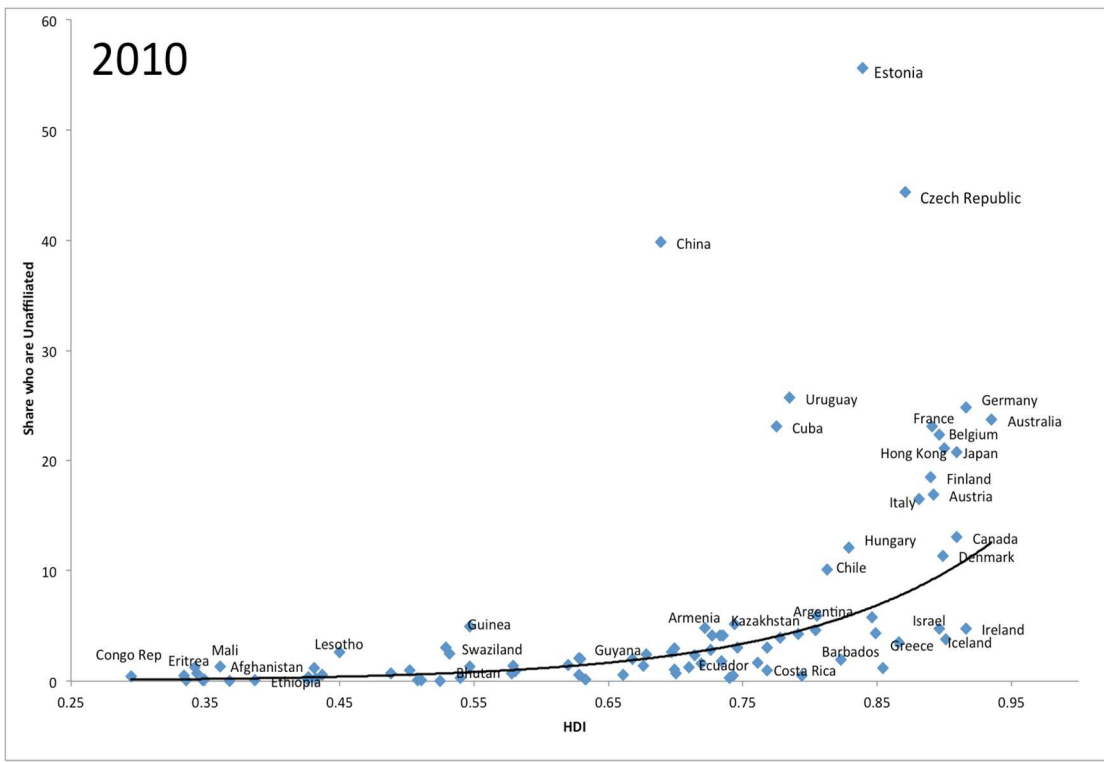


Figure 1. A Global Snapshot: Historical Cross Section of the Share of Unaffiliated with the UN Human Development Index in 2010

¹⁷⁶ Tim Immerzeel and Frank van Tubergen, “Religion as Reassurance? Testing the Insecurity Theory in 26 European Countries”, *European Sociological Review*, Vol. 29, Issue 2, April 2013, pp. 359-372.

Source: World Religion Database and UN Human Development Index

Overall in 2010, as in shown in the chart above, the global regions that rank lowest on the Human Development Index have the lowest percentage of the Unaffiliated, while the regions that rank highest on the Human Development Index have the higher share of the Unaffiliated. Western liberal democracies and post-Communist countries are characterized with high percentages of the unaffiliated, and therefore secularization. In particular the outliers of the post-communist countries of Estonia and Czech Republic have the highest percentages of the unaffiliated.

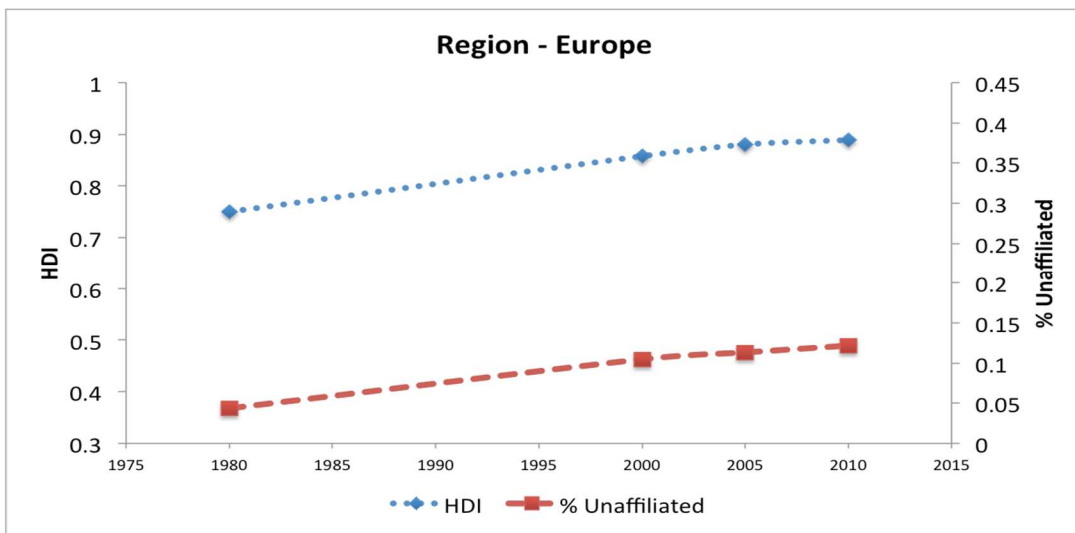


Figure 2. Demographic Measure of Europe with the HDI

In the chart above, I took demographic data from World Religion Database, and measured the secular cohort of the European region (consisting of all E.U. countries) alongside the Human Development Index from the United Nations. The Human Development Index served as a proxy for the means of modernization. The percentage of the Unaffiliated increased over time with the rise of the level within the Human Development Index.

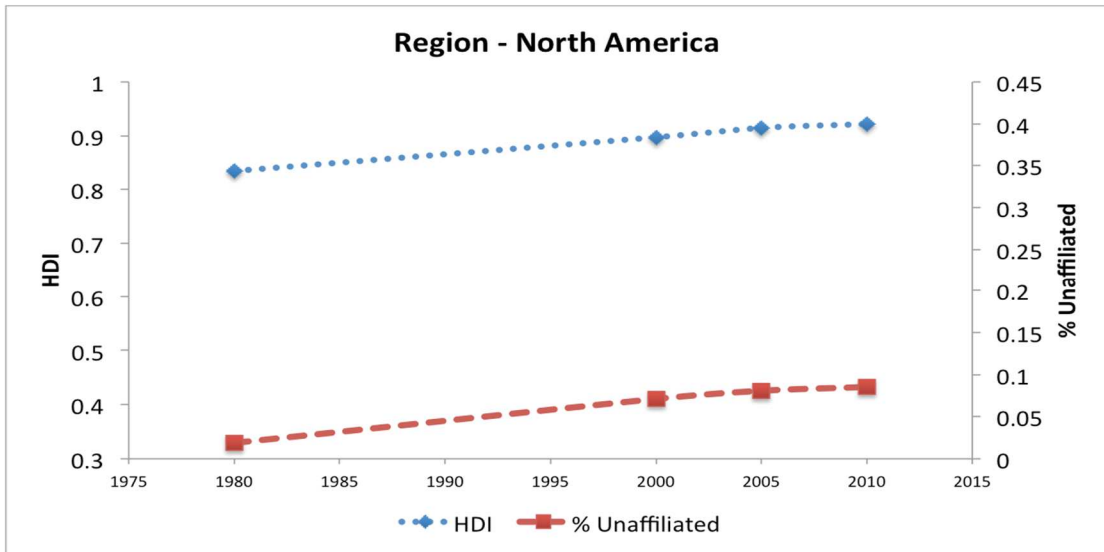


Figure 3. Demographic Measure of the United States of America with the HDI
 In the chart that is shown above, I took demographic data from World Religion Database, and measured the secular cohort of the region of North America alongside the Human Development Index from the United Nations. The Human Development Index served as a proxy for the means of modernization. The percentage of the Unaffiliated increased over time with the rise of the level the Human Development Index.

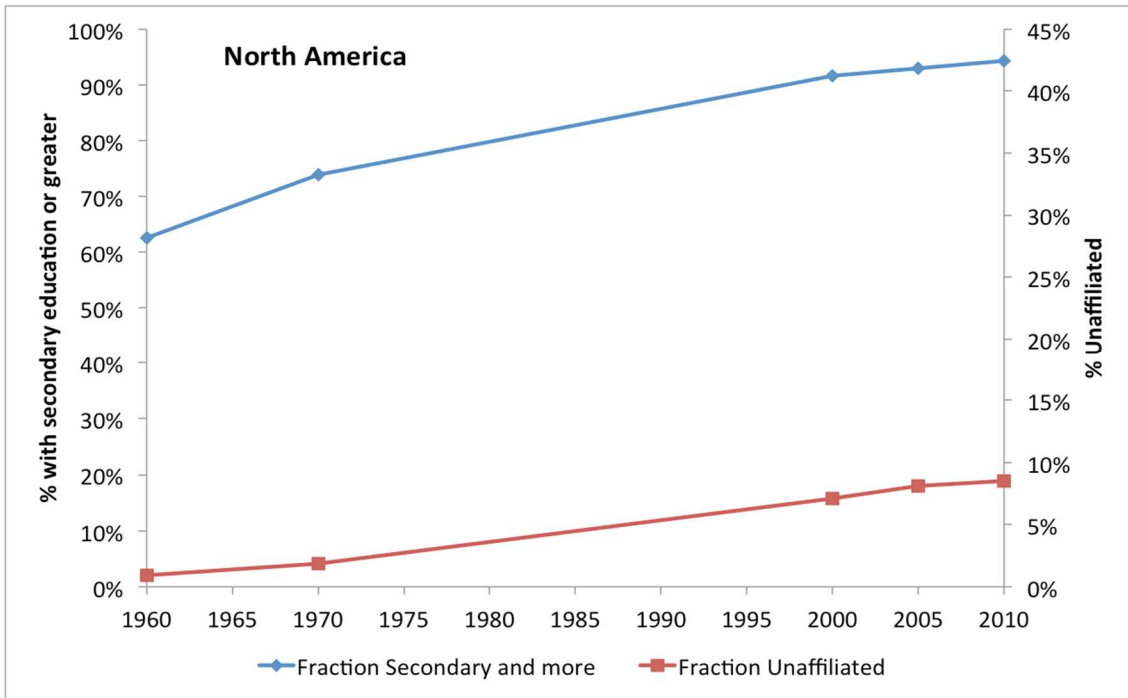


Figure 4. Demographic Measure of North America with Secondary Education

Here in the chart above I measured secondary education levels with the secular cohort of the Unaffiliated. Education serves as a proxy for modernization. As the level of secondary education increased throughout the United States, so did secularization as measured through the percentage of the Unaffiliated.

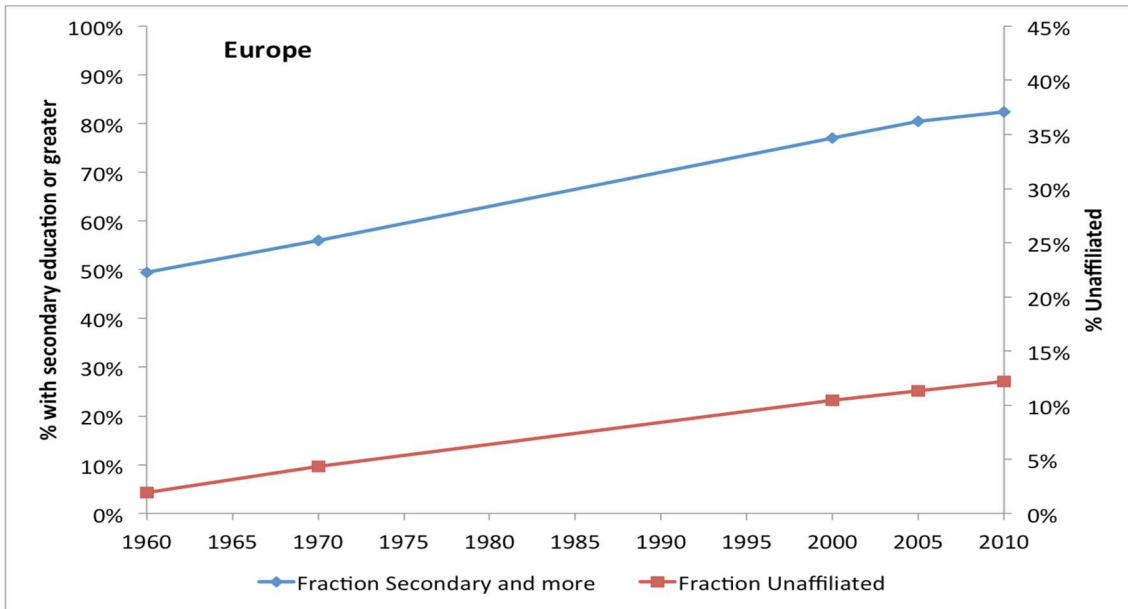


Figure 5. Demographic Measure of Europe with Secondary Education

In the demographic chart above, I measured secondary education levels alongside the secular cohort of the Unaffiliated. Education serves as a proxy for modernization. As the level of secondary education increased throughout the region Europe (all E.U. countries), so did secularization as measured through the percentage of the Unaffiliated.

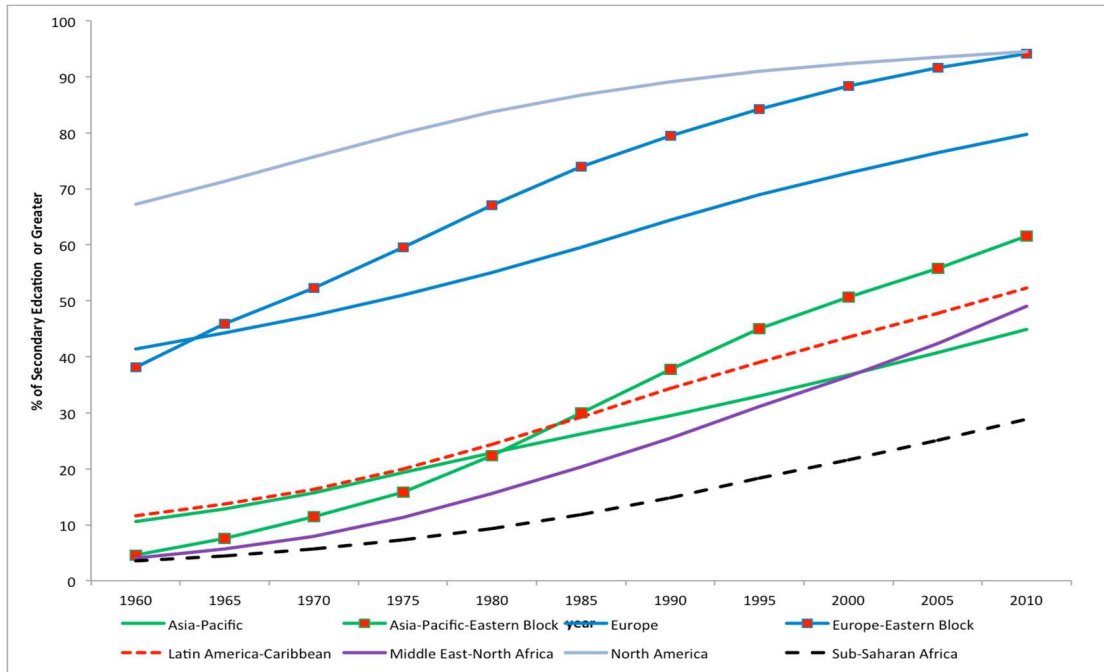


Figure 6. Secondary Education by Global Region

In the demographic chart above, I took data from IIASA that indicates Secondary Education or Greater measured alongside the population of each global region. Secondary Education, like Human Development, is a proxy for modernization. The percentage of Secondary Education or Greater has overall increased globally by region since the 1960's. Daniel Bell's argument of the globalization of Western secular norms via mass media since the 1960's, alongside the global increase of Secondary Education since the 1960's, underpins supports the case for further secularization in the decades to come.

1) Education, Individualization and Secularization

The spread of mass education is a concomitant of modernization, and is essential to economic growth and human development. Education in relation to religion is limited in its secularizing effects if education is understood simply within the scope of the thesis of rationalization, in which religion will inevitably erode through the progressive growth of scientific knowledge. This view of the triumph of science over religion has been adequately critiqued elsewhere.¹⁷⁷ Yet, despite the limitations of the rationalization

¹⁷⁷ Rodney Stark, "Secularization R.I.P.", *Sociology of Religion*, Vol. 60, No. 3, Autumn 1999, pp. 249-273.

thesis, education is positively correlated with secularity and the unaffiliated.¹⁷⁸ The context of education should be understood within obtaining adequate levels of human development and existential security, thus giving education a more comprehensive role in secularization. Education gives the individual an “emancipative orientation”, as Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel maintain, and high levels of education stands as “an indicator that an individual grew up with a sufficiently high level of existential security to take survival for granted—and therefore gives top priority to autonomy, individual choice, and self-expression...”¹⁷⁹ High levels of education assume high levels of existential security, thus education serves as a proxy for modernization and human development. Further, inasmuch as education develops intellectual independence, human choice and self-expression, education must be seen as a socialization process, for education serves as transmission for culture and values and thus is a carrier for either secularization or religion. Lack of education and literacy restrains and limits the choices that one has.

Figure 7 & 8: Demographic Projections unto 2050 of North America and Europe

The two charts below are Demographic Projections from the data I obtained from the IIASA, projecting the share of the Unaffiliated alongside Secondary Education or Greater. According to the projected scenarios, secularization is highly likely for the regions of both Europe and North America unto 2050, around the time that fertility rates in the West are projected to drop precipitously. The data I use overall supports Olivier Roy’s theory of deculturation and secularization.

¹⁷⁸ (Capovlitz and Sherrow 1977, Albrecht and Heaton 1984, Barro, Hwang and Mcleary 2006, Philipov and Berghammer 2007, Beit-Hallahmi 2007, Baker 2008, Sherkhat 2008, Glaeser and Sacerdote 2008)

¹⁷⁹ Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel, *Modernization, Cultural Change and Democracy*, (Cambridge University Press, 2005), 43.

NORTH AMERICA

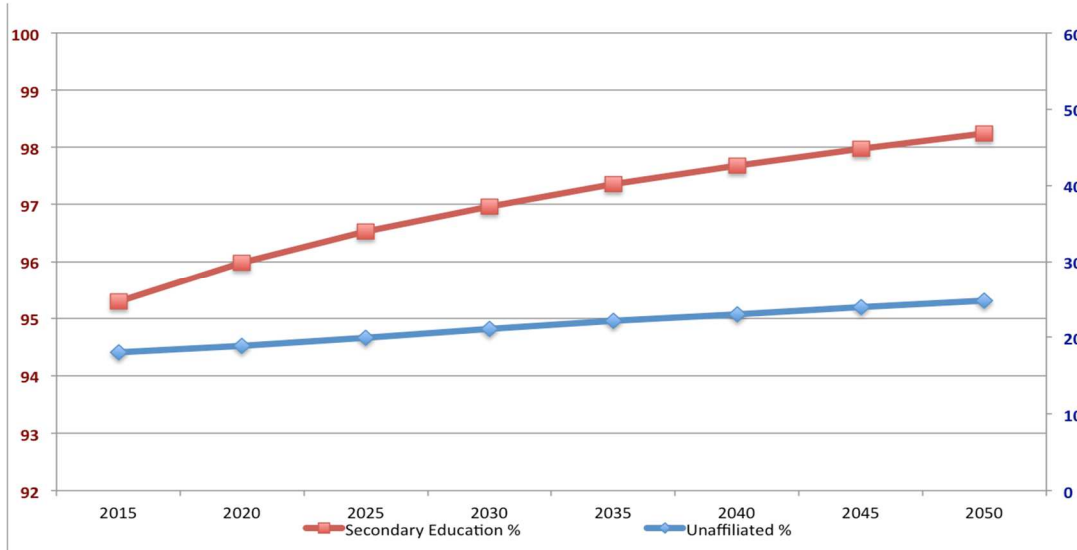


Figure 7.

EUROPE

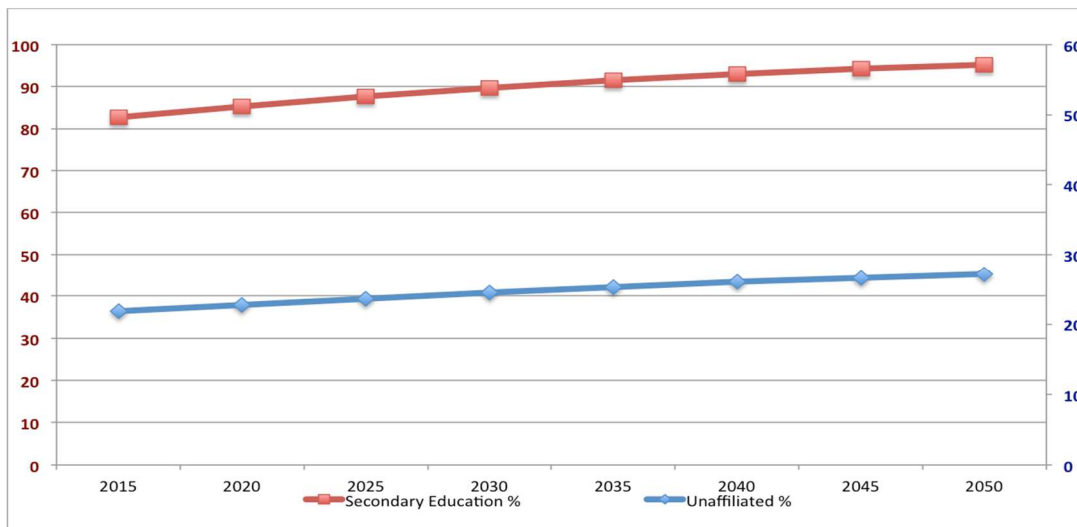


Figure 8.

The Culminative effect of Human Development as Modernization upon Religion

Modernization both secularizes and pluralizes, while pluralization increases the opportunity for religious disaffiliation.¹⁸⁰ And the central component of religious disaffiliation is *choice*. Johnson and Grim point out,

One salient feature of pluralistic societies is the greater possibility of religious choice: an individual is no longer tied to the religion of his parents or country or birth if adherents of the world's religions surround him in his own backyard.¹⁸¹

The choices within the globalized spiritual market place offer a break from the natural bond that ties the children with the religion of their parents and country. Such a break due to choice is what is meant by deculturation. Furthermore, as human development continues within western societies, alternative choices that offer varieties of secularization continue to expand. Amartya Sen, in his article "Development as Capability Expansion" argued that the standards and quality of life given to us through human development should be seen as "human capabilities".¹⁸² Human capabilities refers to the opportunities that a person has to exercise his or her "freedom to attain different kinds of alternative lives between which a person can choose".¹⁸³ The increase of human development increases the opportunity of choice, which therefore increases the opportunity for religious disaffiliation.

¹⁸⁰ Pablo Branas-Garza, Garcia Munoz, and Shoshana Neuman, "Determinants of Disaffiliation: An International Study." *Religions*, 2013, Vol.4 (1), pp.166-185.

¹⁸¹ Todd M. Johnson and Brian J. Grim, *The World Religions in Figures*, (Wiley Blackwell, 2013).

¹⁸² Jeni Klugman, Francisco Rodriguez, and Hyung-Jin Choi, "The HDI 2010: New Controversies Old Techniques", *The Journal of Economic Inequality*, Vol. 9, Issue 2, 2011, pp. 249-288, 254.

¹⁸³ *Ibid*, 255.

With growth in human development and increase in existential security, there is a loss in the social significance and demand for religion. With increase in religious diversification (globalization) and pluralization (liberal democracy), religion is no longer taken for granted in the domain of moral authority and certainty, which makes religion more a matter of individual choice when the conditions of religious inheritance and belief are relativized. Modernization, described as human development, in conjunction with the pluralization brought the globalization, has strong secularizing effect on religious faith, and a deculturating effect on religious tradition. As Branas-Garza, Munoz, and Neuman conclude in their “Determinants of Disaffiliation: An International Study” that,

Our data advocate that indeed there is a clear strong correlation between religious pluralism of a country and the tendency of its population to convert out and abandon any religious affiliation...we find clear evidence in favor of the demand side, sociological approaches: *a greater diversity does not stimulate greater religious participation, but rather secularization and disaffiliation.*(Branas-Garza, Munoz, and Neuman, 2013)

Definition of Religious Conversion

Conversion can be defined as a “comprehensive change of religious worldview and identity, based on self-report and on the report of others”.¹⁸⁴ Conversion always implies a movement from an identity or perspective towards another identity or perspective. Lewis Rambo describes conversion as “a process of religious change that takes place in a dynamic force field of people, events, ideologies, institutions, expectations, and

¹⁸⁴ Henri Gooren, *Religious Conversion and Disaffiliation: Tracing Patterns of Change in Faith Practices* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 3.

orientations.”¹⁸⁵ This developmental process set within the stages of the life cycle and particularly within adolescence and adulthood is best understood within conversion motifs or what Henri Gooren calls a “conversion career”.¹⁸⁶ Self-identification is largely an ongoing discovery, and individuals may often revert back to a former identity or further change into another identity. In a sense, identity stays in a perpetual state of transition. In order to capture the full complexity of the meaning and comprehensiveness of conversion one must necessarily involve interdisciplinary research from the fields of developmental psychology, anthropology, sociology, religion and theology. Each discipline covers necessary aspects of the conversion process of the individual, from the interior process of critical thinking or religious problem solving, the cultural aspect of belonging and of habits of ritual and belonging, institutional factors of evangelization and charismatic, religious actors, and not least the often neglected aspect of the religious/theological.

Religious Conversion and Self-Identity

For the purpose of demography, the scope of conversion is limited to “switching”, which is the transition of “self-identification” between religious traditions. This says nothing of religious vitality and intensity, and it remains opaque on the specific beliefs and values embraced by the individuals. For instance, one may identify as a Muslim, but we know not whether in fact that individual is in fact an agnostic, but chooses to identify for the purpose of cultural belonging or because of government restrictions that would judicially

¹⁸⁵ Lewis Rambo, *Understanding Religious Conversion*, (Yale University Press, 1933), 5.

¹⁸⁶ John Lofland and Norman Skovonod, “Conversion Motifs”, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, Vol. 20, No. 4, (Dec., 1981), pp. 373-385.

penalize a religious conversion. Current academic discourse speaks of the hybridization of religious identity, due to the compressing forces and transnational process of globalization that challenges the traditional form of binary, taxonomic classification.¹⁸⁷ The cultural effect of hybridization allows for the porous and liminal identity of *both/and*, while pluralization also brings about the possibility for ‘multiple religious belonging’, ‘double belonging’, or ‘hyphenated religious identity’. For instance, one can be a Buddhist Jew or an Agnostic Muslim, an Atheist Hindu and even a Muslim -Christian.¹⁸⁸ Creolisation, hybridity and syncretism marks the new age of deculturated religion. What characterizes religion within modernity is that one individualizes their own religious beliefs by choosing from whichever religious tradition that suites one’s own particular lifestyle and worldview. This type of individualized piecemeal of religion is an instance of Roy’s theory of deculturation.

Conversion Theory and Disaffiliation

Conversion theory is a century old endeavor, however the question of religious disaffiliation or what some call apostasy/defection to non-religion is of recent importance due to the growth of the unaffiliated and the continued decline of religious attendance and membership in Western, liberal democracies.¹⁸⁹ If taking Gooren’s orienting question of *What is it that makes people religiously active?*, then *What is that makes people actively non-religious?* is the orienting question that I employ for religious disaffiliation and

¹⁸⁷ Homi Babha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994).

¹⁸⁸ Lofland and Skovonod, “Conversion Motifs”, (1981)

¹⁸⁹ See Lewis Rambo, *Understanding Religious Conversion*, (Yale University Press, 1933).

modernity. While taking into consideration all the factors of the large-scale processes and effects of modernity—mass communications, transnational migration, mass education, human development, pluralization, religious diversification—the thread of existential security and education within theories of religious (de) conversion is of central importance.

Theories of Conversion: Religion as Coping Mechanism

The birth of conversion theory is wedded with the birth of the psychology of religion, for the first question of the convert is satisfied through the dialectic of an interior, psychological resolution. Beginning with the North American psychologist Edwin Diller Starbuck, who inquired into American rural religious revival through empirical and statistical methods with his *The Psychology of Religion: An Empirical Study of the Growth of Religious Consciousness* (1899). Starbuck was the first to situate the phenomena of religious conversion primarily within the age cycle of adolescence, a thesis that still stands largely unchallenged in current literature within sociology and psychology. His work carried over and was heavily referenced with William James classic *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1901), which maintains the same thesis of adolescence as the initiating period of conversion. James develops the theme of the crisis period of conversion, in which acutely felt compunctions and existential tensions lead to a divided self, thus in the act of conversion “the process, gradual or sudden, by which a self hitherto divided...becomes unified.” It is here at the tension of the individual, the modern experience of the crisis of secularism, and the inability of the immanent frame to offer a fullness of comprehensive doctrine for many individuals within the West to convert to stricter forms of religious communities and stronger forms of religiosity.

Individuals radicalize when the tensions of poverty and the metanarrative of liberal democracies fail to give a reason to continue a full existence within the immanent frame.

Globalization, Deculturation and Religious Conversion

Secularization and human development correlate. Because of such, the West will continue to secularize and remain secular, and there will be a strong tendency towards religious disaffiliation. The increase in secularization and pluralization within the West will exacerbate the political and cultural differences between secular and religious cohorts through the deculturation of religion. Further, extreme poverty levels and existential insecurity that the globalized, neoliberal capitalistic practices are creating within the global south and non-western societies has the opposite effect of generating high levels of religiosity. High levels of global mass immigration from these non-Western societies into Europe and other Westernized societies creates the uptick of the apparent return of religion, which in the secular public sphere appears vibrant due to their commitment towards religious practices and high levels of religiosity. In this sense, globalization is both a main driver of secularization in the West, and the main driver of religiosity within the global south, MENA and other non-western societies. Globalization operates as a dual edged sword.

There are several observations to be made with Olivier Roy's theory of deculturation and religious conversion. What is to note that those who secularize by becoming religiously unaffiliated, and those who sacralize by embracing religious faith no longer do so from a top down political apparatus of enforced imperialism. Both secularization and sacralization have become within our cultural climate a matter of individual choice and optionality. What Olivier Roy points out is that conversions of

sacralization and secularization are “massive, individual and multidirectional.” As Roy writes,

As far as the history of Christianity is concerned, mass conversions were largely linked to political domination, from the barbarians of the late Roman Empire to the Amerindians and Africans of the colonial period. Conversions to Islam used to occur inside the Muslim kingdoms and empires mostly as a way to align with the dominant power...In a word, conversions worked vertically from the dominant to dominants, as if the top were some type of magnet attracting subjects.¹⁹⁰

Religious conversion has always been a matter of politics, and the concern was to maintain a political order between state and religion through either suppression of the burgeoning religious faiths or through their acculturation, territorialisation and assimilation by the political powers that be. But to understand conversions merely within the framework of political domination and imperialism is to understand conversions as a matter of mere culture. Culture is reduced to religion, and religion is reduced to culture within this operative framework. Yet, religious or secular conversions today do not consist of the appropriation of culture, but rather the quest for identity and the pure system and practice of an absolute and universal faith. Because of the deculturated nature contemporary conversions, Roy argues that “conversions contribute to the destructuration/modernization process of traditional societies.”¹⁹¹

Roy observes that the shift of conversion from religion as culture towards the separation and sundering of religion from culture begins with the so-called return of religion that took place since the 1960's, which was the rise of fundamentalism as well as the rise of the age of authenticity. Roy points out that, “Contemporary conversions look

¹⁹⁰ Olivier Roy and Nadia Marzouki ed, *Religious Conversions in the Mediterranean World* (2013), 175.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 178.

for the ‘purely religious’ and entail the constitution of ‘faith communities’ that, even when they do not sever their ties with the surrounding society, insist on being purely religious.”¹⁹² The religious switching that occurs between Islam towards Christianity, or from Christianity towards Islam, or from either of these towards a more radical versions of the either, such as towards Salafism or towards Pentecostalism, is not a matter of a trend towards a return towards civilizational religion, but rather to religion in its purest form, that of deculturated religion. In the fundamentalist version of deculturation, religious tradition is rejected for not being orthodox enough. In the liberalized form of deculturation, religious tradition is jettisoned for being too orthodox.

What we are witnessing in contemporary religion and transformation are massive individual conversions premised on religious choice and optionality, rather than massive group conversions that made the bulk of conversions within historical terms. Individualized and deculturated conversions therefore serve to undermine cohesive political identity and collective social identity. Modern converts are also antithetical to inculturated, nominal religion. Modern converts are characterized with religious zeal that appears as an odd, exotic, phenomena within the backdrop of secularized public square. The embrace of a pure and zealous faith, which stands against nominalist version of cultural religious affiliation, characterizes deculturated religion. The true believers separate themselves from the lukewarm affiliates and the non-believers, inasmuch as the true believers separate themselves from culture. The convert rejects the concept of ‘religion’ as consisting of dead orthodoxy. The fundamentalist rejects ‘religion’ because it veered away from the ‘true faith’ of strict absolute orthodoxy, in which the

¹⁹² Ibid., 176.

fundamentalist has recovered through his abstracted appropriation of the sacred text. The liberal rejects 'religion' because it veered away from the 'true faith' of inclusivity that has been layered with patriarchal and violent traditions.

Religious conversions were once a project of empire and colonization. But with globalization, we are now post-civilizing mission, though we are not post-empire. For globalization is empire. As Roy writes,

it is clear that globalization today is an extension of colonialism and that the debate about values (human rights, democracy, women's rights) is also a debate about power (illustrated by the 'right to intervene' and the development of a forceful humanitarian sector, the worthy successor of the nineteenth-century foreign missions). The impact of globalization, like that of colonialism, goes way beyond issues of power and alienation, and that is what interests us.¹⁹³

But this empire is an unwitting force for religious conversion and secularization through the force of deculturation. Globalization secularizes, and globalization creates religious fundamentalism, but it does so as an inadvertent process. Globalization is an empire that creates religious revival and religious conversion as an unintended consequence of its secularization. It is a secularization that aims, in paradoxical manner, to retain religious freedom and the right to convert religious faith, but by doing so through the legal concept of human rights, we are given the condition of pluralization, which is itself a secularizing factor.

The conversions we see today are 'born-again' conversions, ones that consist of "a sudden individual break with the past and a re-assertion of religion as an absolute faith

¹⁹³ Roy, *Holy Ignorance*, 150.

with little or no concession to the profane culture”.¹⁹⁴ Roy points out, that “Evangelicals in the USA, Salafis in Egypt, Haredim in Israel”, are examples of religious communities that breakaway from the apparent liberalism and corruption of their affiliated religious cohorts. Conversions are a product of deculturation, and conversions are an agent of deculturation. Like globalization, conversions are a duel edged sword.

In the final analysis, Olivier Roy makes the case of *Holy Ignorance* for the religious convert:

The convert puts forward something that could not be understood in sociological terms: faith as a primary, not as an element among others constituting a religious identity.... A sociological approach cannot exhaust the experiences and agency of the converts. There is autonomy of the religious sphere that social sciences have a problem grasping.¹⁹⁵

The religious convert, the true believer, the deculturated religion consists in faith in the absolute, in the transcendent, and the universal. This kind of faith cannot be reduced to reason, to culture, and to any other symbolic system. This is the kind of universal and absolute faith that the sociologist and anthropologist fails to grasp.

¹⁹⁴ Roy, *Holy Ignorance*, 176.

¹⁹⁵ Roy and Marzouki eds. *Religious Conversions in the Mediterrean World* (2013), 184.

Chapter 4. What is the Post-Secular?

The post-secular consists of an uncertain state of enduring tension. The post-secular is a direct output of the resurgence or return of religion. As I argued in the previous chapters, the so-called “resurgence” of world religion is the purported critical religious trend of the beginning of the 21st century, one that is made possible through the conditions of globalization, democratization, and modernization. The thesis of secularization – that religion inexorably loses social significance through the transitions of modernization – no longer stands as the uncontested, dominant paradigm of religion within political and social theory. Peter Berger famously wrote just shortly before 9/11 that

The world today, with some exceptions...is as furiously religious as it ever was, and in some places more so than ever. This means that a whole body of literature by historians and social scientists loosely labeled secularization theory is essentially mistaken.¹⁹⁶

But this is not necessarily the case, at least within the West, according to Olivier Roy. For Roy, secularization has won out in the West, while globalization continues to deculturate religion in non-Western societies. Religion, separated from culture through the process of secularization, transforms into the experience of subjective and individuated experience of religiosity. Decultured religion is individuated religion. For Roy, the secularization thesis still stands a recognizable force of societal change, albeit with certain modifications to be made regarding the process.

¹⁹⁶ Peter L. Berger, *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics*, (Eerdmans, 1999), 2.

Roy argues that through deculturation, the post-secular is a state of permanent tension because there is no longer a middle ground in which a common consensus can emerge within the public square. The religious and the non-religious no longer share common values. Deculturation de-traditionalizes and de-contextualizes religion, transforming religion into religiosities that are either fundamentalized or liberalized. Religion becomes radicalized further and further into extremes, breaking consensus within the debates upon religion in the public square. What I argue in this chapter is that there is no longer a common ground between secular and sacred values that can offer theoretical moral framework to achieve a consensus towards human flourishing with a so called post-secular public sphere. This is due to deculturation, which leads to an exclusive humanist anthropology based on reason versus a sacred anthropology based on revelation.

Defining, Understanding and Describing the Post-Secular

The new theory of the post-secular is a consequence of the criticism of the theory of the secular. The theory of secularization has come under criticism for various reasons. Ulrich Beck points out that,

Secularization theory is based on two assumptions: first, that modernization as it emerged in the European context (Max Weber called it ‘occidental rationality’ a century ago) is a universal process which leads to similar developments all over the world; and, second, secularization is inseparable from modernization and is as irresistible.¹⁹⁷

Both assumptions have since been jettisoned. Secularization is not a universal and uniform teleological process that proceeds as an iron law, nor is it necessarily hinged to

¹⁹⁷ Beck, Ulrich (2014) A God of One's Own: Religion's Capacity for Peace and Potential for Violence

modernization, as modernization can breed high levels of religiosity. Does modernization increase or decrease levels of religiosity? For theorists such as Berger, such a question is now outdated and misplaced. Berger wants to shift the discussion to pluralization, not secularization. Peter Berger writes that, “While secularity is not a necessary consequence of modernization, I would argue that pluralism is.”¹⁹⁸ Pluralization is the paradigm that emerges in the discourse of the post-secular. But as I argued in my previous *Chapter 3: Analysis of Religion, Conversion and Secularization*, it is pluralization itself that is a part of the secularization process through its relativizing discourse, and through the fragilization of the religious beliefs that it creates within the religious consciousness of the believers. Faith is made fragile through religious diversity. Contra Peter Berger, Olivier Roy maintains that globalization is still able to maintain secularization insofar as globalization pluralizes through deculturated religion.

The failure of certain assumptions of the classical use of secularization theory has led the emergence of new theories of the post-secular. And the multivalent use of the concept secular has led to the multivalent use of the post-secular. Benjamin Schewel claims that part of the complexity and ambiguity of the concept of the post-secular is that it builds on the concept of the secular, which itself has various uses, myriad employments and multiple connotations. Schewel writes, “How, then, can we think meaningfully about what comes after the secular when we are not even sure what the secular entails?”¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁸ Beck, Ulrich (2014) *A God of One's Own: Religion's Capacity for Peace and Potential for Violence*

¹⁹⁹ Benjamin Schewel, *What is Post-Secular about Global Political Discourse? The Review of Faith and International Affairs* 12, no.4 (2014): pp.49-61, 49.

Notwithstanding this observation, Schewel proceeds to identify at least seven different approaches to post-secular discourse.

1. Secularization theory has tended to be overly simplistic. “The process of secularization is more complex than classical secularization theory envisioned” (50) Despite what was problematic with classic secularization theory, namely, that modernization inherently implied or determined secularization, post-secular theorists point out that “ the forces identified by secularization are not necessarily dead or gone.” (51)
2. Secularization theory is an accurate account for European history but lacks explanatory effect for current development in non-Western societies.
“Secularization theory accurately describes a certain limited phase of modern history but fails to make sense of recent global transformations” (51) The post-secular recognizes the disrupting impact that globalization has on the process of secularization, by making possible the condition through technology and migration the circulation and support of religious practice and belief.
3. “Secularization theory actually describes part of a broader process of religious decline and renewal” (52) This refers to macro cyclical theories of religious renewal and decline, that every decline is followed by renewal in some form, which then inevitably leads to decline and finally decadence, from which a renewal proceeds. The problem is when “secularization theorists arrive at their narrative by focusing on each of these periods of recoil and falsely presenting them as aspects of a linear process of religious decline.” (53)

4. “The forces identified by secularization theorists do not bring about religion’s marginalization and decline, but rather its transformation.” (54) Religion becomes new forms of religiosity, spiritual practices, re-enchantment, spirituality, transcendental meditation, Zen, Yoga, etc.
5. “Secularization theory overlooks religion’s intimate involvement in modernity’s historical formation” (55) Schewel makes the post-secular point “that religion played a fundamental role in stimulating and shaping many of modernity’s most distinctive features”(55) and that “this fact has been systematically overlooked by the scholarly community”. (55) Religion played a key role in the development of science, natural philosophy, religious freedom, etc.
6. “Scholarly concepts of “religion” and the “secular” have been shaped by secularization theory and must therefore be critiqued and reconstructed if we are to continue using them today.” (56) This is simply to point out that the concept of ‘religion’ and ‘secular’ were “constructed during the modern period and were unduly influenced by Western projects and assumptions”(56), and because of such, “efforts to apply these concepts to earlier periods of history and non-Western peoples...tend to misrepresent the reality on the ground and tacitly contribute to Western efforts to reconstruct the world in its own image.” (56)
7. “Purely secular accounts of human affairs hinder our ability to navigate and respond to the challenges facing contemporary society” (57) Here, “the idea is that religion’s role in the public sphere was purposefully curtailed in order to limit religion’s potential to foment violent conflict, but that subsequent experience has

shown that keeping religion out of the public sphere hinders our ability to pursue many important social goods.” (57)

Schewel finds that the failure of classical secularization theory has necessitated new approaches to the concept of the secular, and that the seven approaches or themes that he identifies in the mainstream academic literature of the post-secular all work together in a complementary fashion as “facets of a complex whole”, with each observation or approach offering its own unique insight to “what comes after the secular”. Failure of certain aspects of secularization theory leads to the notion of the post-secular.

Secularization, accurately understood, is the transformation of religion.

The earliest use of the term ‘post-secular’ begins with the Catholic priest Fr. Andrew Greeley in 1966 with his article “After Secularity: The Neo-Gemeinschaft Society: A Post-Christian Postscript”. For Fr. Greeley, the post-secular referred to the neo-gemeinschaft Catholic communities that were forming within the larger organized church, and were characterized as “small, subparochial, or transparochial fellowships of believers which will give new depth and meaning to the collegial and functional Church resulting from the Vatican Council”²⁰⁰ When one reads the literature of the post-secular, one obtains “a general intuition that classical theories of secularization are insufficient to grasp the present state between religions and contemporary societies and/ or political

²⁰⁰ Andrew M. Greeley, “After Secularity: Neo-Gemeinschaft Society: A Post-Christian Postscript”, *Sociology of Religion*, Vol. 27, Issue 3, October 1966, pp. 119-127, 126.

arrangements”, and alternatively, “a stance that there is a need, from a normative point of view, to find more just ways of accommodating religious claims in liberal institutions.”²⁰¹

The post-secular is therefore a contested concept that can serve as a normative or descriptive indicator and discourse of 21st century religion in the West. The post-secular can be described briefly through two interlocking claims. The first is the sociological claim of the resurgence or return of religion, which stands in conjunction with the second philosophical claim of religious toleration in light of this resurgence of increasing religious diversification and pluralization. De-secularization or re-enchantment of the West has placed the concepts of the ‘secular, secularity, secularization’ along with the concepts of ‘religion, religions, religious’ under critique, and in their wake we are now at the post-secular moment. The general scholarly consensus is that the classic secularization thesis—whereby modernization necessarily entails a steady, gradual, universal erasure of religion—has collapsed in light of overwhelming evidence to the contrary, that of a world that is as “furiously religious” as it ever has been.

Of course, the question is raised if there even was disappearance of religion at all. The problem was not the departure of religion, but rather the awakening of the secular public consciousness to the recalcitrant persistence and resilience of religious practice that affects the public square. This reawakening of the public consciousness constitutes the self-reflexivity of the post-secular mindset. Jose Casanova characterizes this self-reflexivity within what he calls the fundamental “European secular *Zeitgeist*” as

²⁰¹ Massimo Rossati and Kristina Stoeckl ed., “Introduction”, *Global Connections: Multiple Modernities and Postsecular Societies* (Ashgate Publishing Group, 2012), 3.

neither the naive, unreflexive secularity which accepted being without religion as the quasi-natural, modern condition, nor the secularist self-understanding which turned the particular process of European Christian secularization into a universal normative development for all of humanity are simply tenable, that is, can be simply taken for granted without questioning or reflexive elaboration any more.²⁰²

It is not that religion has returned, rather, it is that we in the West have returned our attention to religion. According to Hans Joas—“Post-secular...doesn’t express a sudden increase in religiosity, after its epochal decrease, but rather a change in mindset of those who, previously, felt justified in considering religions to be moribund.”²⁰³ The so-called ‘return of religion’ has created a critical self-reflexivity of the secular consciousness. We have transitioned into ‘post-secular’ societies, which are characterized by burgeoning mutual adjustment and “overlapping consensus” between the religious and secular communities. Religion has ostensibly returned from exile as a fully de-privatized enterprise, exerting notable global influence within the global public square. Global regions are increasingly characterized with a pluralized “religious market” of competing religions and contesting communities of faith. This global pluralization is framed within an expanding political discourse of liberal democracy and universal human rights that gives sacred privilege to the idea of religious freedom as codified in Article 18 of the UN declaration. Democratization, modernization, and globalization are generally identified as primary factors in the burgeoning global religious diversity in western societies, the proliferation of religious visibility in the public square, the demographic growth of the

²⁰² Jose Casanova, “Exploring the Post-Secular: Three Meanings of the ‘Secular’ and Their Possible Transcendence”, in *Habermas and Religion*, eds. Craig Calhoun, Eduardo Mendieta, and Jonathan Van Antwerpen, (UK: Polity Press, 2013), 44.

²⁰³ Hent de Vries and Lawrence E. Sullivan, *Political Theologies: Public Religions in a Post-Secular World*, (Fordham University Press, 2006), 2-3.

world's religions, and the renegotiation of the jurisprudence, norms, and values between religious communities and secular cohorts. The post-secular is the attempt to achieve consensus between disparate religious and non-religious bodies by re-conceptualizing the constructed space of the secular into a space of accommodation. Post-secularism hopes to achieve this without sacrificing the commitment to rationality, liberal democracy, and universal human rights.

The outcome of the post-secular debate is to recognize the trend of religious pluralism and pluralization in the public square, and by doing so this opens a space for coexistence, mutual adjustment, and overlapping consensus between secular cohorts and religious communities. Religion is given a legitimate place in public discourse alongside the secular. Both the secular and the religious are flourishing, rising, declining, developing and transforming alongside of each other. Protestant theologian Luke Bretherton defines the post-secular as “a period in which, for the first time, multiple modernities, each with their respective relationship to religious belief and practice, are overlapping and interacting within the same shared, predominantly urban spaces”.²⁰⁴ A post-secular society is heterogeneous, but not necessarily (though it can be) an enclave society; there is mutual recognition of the other within the shared public square. The post-secular is thereby characterized by “optionality”, in which secular beliefs, along with religious beliefs, are relativized, and the secular along with the religious are perceived as one option among many. Pluralistic societies are characterized by choice. The individual is no longer bound the religious bond inherited either by country, or ethnic

²⁰⁴ Luke Bretherton, “A Post-Secular Politics? Inter-faith relations as a Civic Practice”, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, June 2011, pp. 346-377, 354.

and parental affiliations, which are traditional markers of civilizational religion.

Deculturated religion is defined by the choice of the individual.

One must also notice the historical chronological assumption posited when speaking in terms of ‘post’ or ‘beyond’ or ‘after’. For instance, Vincent Geoghegan writes that,

Post-secularism is a contested concept that lends itself to ambiguity. It could suggest a deeply antagonistic stance towards secularism, involving the call for a resurgent religiosity, where ‘post’ really implies ‘pre’- a dismantling of the secular culture of the past few centuries (see, for example, Blond 1998).²⁰⁵

Yet, Roy would qualify this resurgent religiosity as characterized with his notion of deculturated religion, and not the return of civilizational religion itself, as in evidenced in the model of Samuel Huntington. For sociologist Craig Calhoun, he writes that “post-secularism can hardly mean ‘after secularism’, though it might signal an end to taking it for granted that a clear, stable, and consistent demarcation has been established between secular and religious dimensions of life.”²⁰⁶ Here, Calhoun agrees that we have not reached an age in which the secular is no longer a social reality, live option or political fact. The temporal framework of the secular designated with the term ‘post’, does not mean ‘after’ secularism, such as in an established linear time frame of <pre-secular to secular to post-secular>. We must still reckon with and recognize secularism and secularity. Vincent Geoghegan gives a positive appropriation of the post-secular in that

²⁰⁵ Vincent Geoghegan (2000) “Religious narrative, post-secularism and Utopia”, *Critical Review of International and Social Political Philosophy*, 3:2-3, 205-224, 206.

²⁰⁶ Craig Calhoun, “Time, World and Secularism”, in *The Post-Secular in Question: Religion in Contemporary Society*, ed. Philip Gorski, David Kyuman Kim, John Torpey, and Jonathan VanAntwerpen (NYU Press and SSRC, 2012), 335.

“a post-secular perspective therefore betokens not a rejection of the secular, but a recognition that the achievements of the secular will not be lost by a more nuanced approach to religion. (see, for example, Martin, 1996).”²⁰⁷ By criticizing the imperializing and totalizing characteristics of harsh secular perspective, we are able to look at religion from different lense, a different approach and different methodology that still avails a secular perspective that is modified through a balanced view of the religious experience.

It is also helpful to understand the post-secular in analogous terms of the post-modern. It is generally agreed that postmodernity and post-secularity are strongly connected. Modernity and the secular have been correlated since the founding of sociology as a discipline, therefore, to go beyond the modern is to go beyond the secular.

Phillip Gorski and et al point out,

In one reading, postmodernism claims that modernity is over and hence we live in a postmodern era; in another view, postmodernism insists that the universalistic claims associated with modernity can no longer be sustained without demurral. And so it goes with the post-secular.²⁰⁸

Post-modernity hails the end of modernity, as the post-secular hails the end of the secular. Postmodernism rejects universalistic claims of secular scientific rationality that presents itself as objectivity. Likewise, the post-secular rejects the universalistic claims associated with the secularization process that presents itself as inevitable.

It must be insisted that the “return of religion” does not mean the “end of the secular.” This interpretation of the “end of the secular” often comes from religious actors

²⁰⁷ Ibid, 206.

²⁰⁸ Philip S. Gorski, David Kyuman Kim, John Torpey, and Jonathan VanAntwerpen, *The Post-Secular in Question*, (New York University Press, 2012), 2.

who desire that there in fact be within a normative sense the end of the secular, and that with the end of the secular that there would also be a hoped for triumphant return of religion. Kristina Stoeckl consider this desired and expected return of the sacred by the religious as a kind of “regime change” that is spoken of in terms of a historical transition of “before and after”. Stoeckl points out that, “Post-secularity becomes, from their point of view, a kind of state of redemption or salvation, a return not of, but to religion.” Stoeckl, who has written works on Russian Orthodoxy and human rights, has observed that “Patriarch Kirill himself or Metropolitan Ilarion, define post-secular society in this sense. They assume that Western secular modernity has run its course, has exhausted itself, has, in fact, become “post-modern” and “post-secular”, and is now ready to return to religion.”²⁰⁹ This sense of the post-secular understood as normativity and as a “regime change” can also be seen in the work of the founder of the Catholic magazine *First Things*, Fr. Richard John Neuhaus. In 1982, he wrote in his article, “Educational Diversity in Post-Secular America” (1982), that, “We are witnessing the collapse of the 200 year old hegemony of the secular Enlightenment over public discourse.” This statement became the basis of Fr. Neuhaus’s agenda for the reinsertion of religion, not least the Catholic religion, into the public square, and the interjection of religious morality into the center of social values. Despite the necessary correction of the once prevalent and triumphalist classical secularization theory, this macro-narrative of the

²⁰⁹ Kristina Stoeckl, *Defining the Postsecular*, paper presented at the Academy of Sciences in Moscow, 2011. http://synergia-isa.ru/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/stoeckl_en.pdf

contemporary “resurgence” is problematized by its tendency of proclaiming the opposite of the triumph of the sacred by the religiously devoted. But such a triumph cannot be proclaimed uncritically, for secularization still remains a potent transformative force within the process of globalization.

The various models of the post-secular in regards to how the secular and the religious inter-relate within the public square are manifold. The most famous models are spoken of as the consensus model, that of accommodation and mutual translation, which is founded upon the Habermasian framework. Post-secularity is a *via media* of self-reflexivity between strict atheism and religious fundamentalism. One can see this typical position within the work of social theorist Paul Vermeer, who writes:

Postsecularity, then, is a middle position. Unlike the nonsecularist position, it views religion as a discursive phenomenon which, for instance, accepts plurality or acknowledges basic human rights; unlike the secularist position, it stresses the important contribution religion can make to civil society.²¹⁰

Indeed, Paul Vermeer finds “that Europe is at the same time secular, nonsecular and postsecular.” Europe contains the various positions scattered throughout its multiple societies. But it is the secularist position that is winning out.

In sum, there are various ways of interpreting the post-secular that relate directly to the concept of the secularization thesis. And there are various models of interpreting the relation between the religious and the secular within the global public square, the most popular and paradigmatic consisting of Habermas accommodation/translation model. However, Olivier Roy’s model begs to differ, for it is the “tension model” that

²¹⁰ Paul Vermeer, “Europe: Secular or Post-Secular?” *Journal of Empirical Theology* 22, no. 2 (2009): 222-24.

best describes Roy's position on the debates. European University Institute affiliate and political scientist Kristina Stoeckl defines the post-secular as

a condition of conscious contemporarily/co-existence of religious and secular worldviews. The co-existence of religious and secular worldviews, of religious and secular outlooks on society and politics, of religious and secular modes of understanding one's individual life creates tensions. Postsecularity is a condition of permanent tension.²¹¹

Permanent tension within the public square is the outcome of deculturated religion.

Deculturation obliterates the middle position and via media, the *Sonderweg* which is the premier Habermasian model of the post-secular.

Jurgen Habermas and the Post-Secular

It was Jurgen Habermas who popularized the concept of the post-secular in his article "Notes on a Post-Secular Society".²¹² Habermas addresses the growing religious pluralism of western societies and that is engendering a crisis of secularism and the secular-self consciousness. Habermas writes in his "Notes on a Post-Secular Society" that "Today, in public consciousness in Europe can be described in terms of a 'post-secular society' to the extent that at present it still has to 'adjust itself to the continued existence of religious communities in an increasingly secularized environment". Habermas stands within the secularist tradition, in that Habermas argues that to raise the notion of the post-secular, we must first assume that there must have been a secular in the first place. The post-secular therefore is a term that is specific to the modernized, post-industrial, and highly affluent societies within the West. The global south has never reached the levels of

²¹¹ Kristina Stoeckl, *Defining the Postsecular*, http://synergia-isa.ru/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/stoeckl_en.pdf

²¹² Jurgen Habermas, "Notes on a Post-Secular Society", *Secularism's Crisis of Faith*, Kenan Institute for Ethics, Duke University, Fall 2008.

modernity achieved in the West, therefore they are still in the process of secularization. Habermas is searching for what he calls the *Sonderweg*, another third way or via media that emerges from the dialectic between the sacred and the secular.

There are, according to Habermas, “three overlapping phenomena” that “converge to create the impression of a worldwide ‘resurgence of religion’: the missionary expansion (a), a fundamentalist radicalization (b), and the political instrumentalisation of the potential for violence in many of the world religions (c).” And it is only the kinds of religion that Olivier Roy speaks of, that of deculturated religion, that Habermas observes as the paradigmatic example of the notion of the ‘return of religion’. As Habermas writes, the “most dynamic of all are the decentralized networks of Islam (particularly in sub-saharan Africa) and the Evangelicals (particularly in Latin America). They stand out for an ecstatic form of religiosity inspired by charismatic leaders.” It is these ecstatic forms of religion that elicit a response of the “change in consciousness” within secular cohorts, the move towards self-reflexivity.

Habermas theorizes his *Sonderweg* within the framework of a multi-culturalist model. And it is the multi-culturalist model that underpins the post-secular debate. As Habermas writes, “the universalist project of the political Enlightenment by no means contradicts the particularist sensibilities of a correctly conceived multiculturalism.” Out of this multi-cultural model, the debate on tolerance finds its legitimation. As Habermas points out that,

Tolerance means that believers of one faith, of a different faith and non-believers must mutually concede one another the right to those convictions, practices and ways of living that they themselves reject. This concession must be supported by

a shared basis of mutual recognition from which repugnant dissonances can be overcome.²¹³

This mutual concession of Habermas is that of mutually received translation between the dialoging cohorts: “if all is to go well both sides, each from its own viewpoint, must accept an interpretation of the relation between faith and knowledge that enables them to live together in a self-reflective manner.” Faith must be translated into the language of secular reason so that non-religious cohorts can have access to the rationale of the religious motives and actions. Habermas assumes that the theological language of the religious is essentially irrational. Habermas is therefore an icon of the Enlightenment project.

Mariano Barbato and Friedrich Kratochwil point out that

the significance of Habermas’s work becomes evident when attempting to utilize the semantic potential of religion for politics in the global sphere against the vacuum created by the collapse of the traditional political utopias. He wants to counteract the destructive tendencies of fundamentalism – and the visceral reactions it engenders – and at the same time to provide a counterweight to those developments that are likely to degenerate into an economistic dystopia of unfettered accumulation and its social pathologies.²¹⁴

Habermas is aware that secular utopias have failed. We are left in the wake of these utopias the meta-narrative of consumerism within the moral order of the immanent frame. All that remains within the enclosed box of the immanent frame after the collapse of utopias is the self-reference of the cult of the individual. Consumerism fills the vacuum

²¹³ Jurgen Habermas, “Notes on a Post-Secular Society”.
<http://kenan.ethics.duke.edu/religion/files/2017/04/Habermas-Notes-on-Post-Secular-Society.pdf>

²¹⁴ Mariano Barbato and Friedrich Kratochwil, “Towards a post-secular political order?”, *European Political Science Review*, 1 no. 3 (2009): 317-340.

left with the void of mobilizing political ideologies that were contained in fascism, communism and nationalism. The unfettered fall of fertility within the affluent post-industrial is a symptom of the social pathologies and economic dystopia that has beset the West. Habermas was prescient in pointing out the predicament of the combination of highly religious communities and fundamentalist radicalization within the backdrop of Europe. But Habermas is still too wedded to the Enlightenment project. Habermas assumes that religion is inherently irrational, which is the secular bias that William Cavanaugh critiques with his *The Myth of Religious Violence*, arguing that by constructing religion as irrational and therefore violent, the modern secular nation-state is able to justify its own sanctioned violence as rational. Secondly, Habermas, in much the same manner as Samuel Huntington, assumes that religion and culture are inherently linked and stand together within an organic relational whole. The assumption that religion and culture are one is the rationale of ‘multi-culturalism’, which is the logic that underpins much post-discourse. Yet, as Roy has shown, religion is now deculturated. Religion and culture have parted ways, and thereby multi-culturalism cannot operate as an effective mechanism within pluralized, secularized societies.

Conclusion: The Failure of the Post-Secular

The post-secular is to fundamentally recognize and come to terms with this resurgence of religion through a critique of the ‘secular’, in order to thereby constitute a deepening global consciousness, legitimacy and empathetic awareness of burgeoning diverse religious communities and their public acts of faith. The post-secular model can be described as a reflexive adjustment in secular self-understanding, or what Habermas calls a “change in secular self-consciousness” towards the religious other in shared societies,

which is a change that is characteristically marked by offering a middle position or via media between religious and non-religious cohorts. This via media is a political and philosophical openness that attempts to achieve “overlapping consensus” and obtain ‘complementarity learning’ through mutual dialogue amongst and between religious communities and religious institutions with their non-religious correspondents. Theorists of post-secularity point out that the return and revival of religion repudiates the idea of the inevitable universal triumph of secularism, while still recognizing the flourishing of secular cohorts and possibilities of further developments of secularization.

Yet what does religion mean in a secular and post-Christian West? In analyzing contemporary religion in Western societies, the *ReligioWest* project led by Olivier Roy assumes as factual basis that “European societies are highly secularized” and that secularization inhabits all its levels: legal, constitutional, cultural, and perhaps most crucially, sociological (a.k.a. “the decline of religious practice”). There has been discussion about whether or not there is a secular (i.e. ‘the myth of the secular’ by Rodney Stark and Roger Finke), and there is also ample discourse on the meaning or definition of the ‘secular’ for the sake conceptual clarity (as captured in the analytical distinctions of ‘secular, secularity, secularization’ by Jose Casanova). Foy Olivier Roy and his project of *ReligioWest*, the final conclusion is that “Secularism has won.”²¹⁵

The post-secular model proposes the idea of “overlapping consensus”, “translation”, “complementary learning”, or “reasonable accommodations” between religious and secular cohorts. Undergirding this concept is multiculturalism (whereby

²¹⁵ Olivier Roy, *Rethinking the Place of Religion in European Secularized Societies: the need for more open societies*, European University Institute, Robert Schuman Centre, *ReligioWest* 2016, p. 2. <http://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/40305>

various religious and non-religious cultures sit equally at a round table to dialogue and learn from each other's way) and the notion of a common anthropology (which assumes the 'humanity' and 'dignity' of cosmopolitan human rights, natural law or rationality), through which religious and non-religious cohorts reasonably dialogue to convince one another of the value and correctness of their worldview. Olivier Roy's analysis of the failure of the post-secular consists of at least two observations. The first is that multiculturalism is a failed project, and the second is that religious believers and secular adherents no longer share a common anthropology in which to frame a mutual discussion.

On the failure of multiculturalism, Roy proposes in *Holy Ignorance*, that religion and culture have parted ways. Dialogue between the believer and nonbeliever is based on the multicultural paradigm, which presumes the inherent, internal, and stable link between a religion and its culture. This link between culture and religion has been severed due to globalization, secularization, and individualization. Religion can no longer be reduced to culture because of the irreducibility of the absolute of religious faith. Because there is no longer a natural link between a religion and its culture, a dialogue predicated on the multi-cultural model is bound to cause more confusion than clarification because the language of the religionist stands above, against, and outside the cultural reference. Religions are becoming less a matter of thick ethnic cultural and civilizational history, and are transforming along the lines of personalized choices and individualized religiosities: think of the Charismatic church growth in central China made possible by missionaries from Michigan, or of young British and German Christian converts to ISIS.

This deculturation fragments any sacred collective canopy into myriad petit sacred canopies, and thereby any common anthropological basis within a shared society becomes increasingly uncommon to each other. There is no longer a bond or collective identity that ties the believer and the non-believer together towards an ultimate referent in Western societies. Kristina Stoeckl, proposes that in a post-secular order, the religious and the non-religious share no common dialogical ground because both have radically different starting points on anthropology. Once upon a time we referred to God or the sacred cosmological order as an ultimate referent; this shifted to nationalism in the eighteenth century, and now we are left with the human rights of the mere individual as the sole referent of sacral basis. This chasm between rival anthropologies has been exacerbated since the 1960's sexual revolution, and is made quite clear with the abortion debate: one version of anthropology argues for the sacred human personhood of a human embryo in utero while another anthropology argues for a moral human personhood status bequeathed on the human embryo after birth. Though both religious and non-religious individuals find "faith" in these competing anthropologies, it is evident that the twain shall never meet.

The failure of the post-secular resides in the conceptualization and meaning of religion with a post-Christian and secular Europe. The problem is that "the deep conflict that is dividing Europe between a secular majority and hardcore religious faith communities on abortion, same-sex marriage, bio-ethics, or gender issues shows that there is no longer a common moral ground for values". For Roy and the *Religiowest* project, *Obergefell v. Hodges* in the United States was the definitive end of the cultural war with the legalization of same-sex marriage. There is no longer a "continuity between

Christianity and modern secularism” that is undergirded with common values. The traditional position in Europe consisted of a “historically constructed mix of compromise and consensus that has shaped the relations between state, society and religion in Western countries since the end of religion.”²¹⁶ Because of deculturated religion, this is no longer the case. Religion in the public sphere must therefore be rethought.

It is at the base of the anthropological foundation in which we see change. What we see is an exclusive humanist anthropology based on reason versus a sacred anthropology based on revelation. The middle zone is being obliterated. With deculturation, what we see is that “in every religion, there is a growing split between a hard core of believers (mostly conservative or born-again) and secularized nominal members of the denomination.”²¹⁷ Faith communities become stricter with their requirements of belonging. In the Catholic Church, people attend mass that suits their taste when it comes to the kind of Catholicism, whether traditionalist or liberalized or charismatic. Religions link together along the lines of shared religiosity, whether fundamentalist or liberalized.

The Great Divide between religion and politics since the Enlightenment, spoken of by the humanist Mark Lilla, was concentrated on the political power of Church and State. The conflict today no longer involves political power, but rather it is one of values, norms and faith versus culture. After the separation of religion and state, we have the separation of faith and culture. This separation creates alienation within the religious

²¹⁶ Olivier Roy, *Rethinking the Place of Religion in European Secularized Societies: the need for more open societies*, European University Institute, Robert Schuman Centre, *ReligioWest* 2016. <http://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/40305>

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 1.

communities of faith. The religious communities are specifically set up against those of the exclusive humanist bent, which “stress the absolute freedom of the human being”. With the separation between religion and culture, we then have the separation between anthropologies. As Roy writes, “The grey zone and bridges between believers and non-believers are disappearing.”²¹⁸

The post-secular should be understood in terms of competing pluralization. Increasing religious diversity in secularized Western societies will result in increasing conflict between opposing values, because many of these religious communities will not shape up to ‘moderate’ forms of religion—religions that appear nice within the mirror of the post-secular imagination. Yet, within a post-secular model, up to what point can the liberal state make accommodation for the religious who do not tow the line towards the moderation of political liberalism? The future of political liberalism is on trial.

The relationship between religion and society has changed so that the presence of religion has taken on a more vivid color. The dark backdrop of secularization has grown so sable that pure white paint drops of religiosity sparkle ever more bright. Religion, according to Roy, “refuses to be reduced to one symbolic system among others.”²¹⁹ The stubborn persistence of religion consists of the fact that there understanding of religion does not fit easily with sociological scientific norms and taxonomic forms of classification. Those who are religious refuse to be explained away in terms of mere alienation. The break between religion and culture consists of the fact that the religious have a kind of language and understanding of reality that does not accept the rules of the

²¹⁸ Ibid., 1.

²¹⁹ Roy, *Holy Ignorance*, 5.

game from a secularist, immanent frame. Therefore, Roy concludes that, “We should avoid dissolving religion into cultures or traditions, especially at a time when globalization tends to autonomize religions from their respective cultural bedrocks. We should not approach religion through a lense of multi-culturalism...”²²⁰

The appropriate model of the post-secular is one that consists of permanent tension. Fundamentalism, as proposed by Roy, will always stand against this apparatus of the immanent frame, and against framework of political liberalism, which is in a state of crisis. The growing fundamentalism that we are witnessing is a trait of the growing secularization of culture. More secularization means more radicalization of the sacred. When asking the question about the apparent rise of fundamentalism, we need to also ask it concomitant question of the rise of secularization. The more a society or culture secularizes, the more the religious stand out, stand alone, and appear odd, exotic and as a strange phenomena. Religion will appear as *Holy Ignorance*.

²²⁰ Olivier Roy, *Rethinking the Place of Religion in European Secularized Societies: the need for more open societies*, European University Institute, Robert Schuman Centre, *ReligioWest* 2016, p. 9. <http://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/40305>

Chapter 5: Political Theology and the Post-Secular

Olivier Roy writes that “Secularization does not mean the end of transcendence but the establishment of a nontheological transcendence, in a sense of a secularized religion.”²²¹

What is the connection of Olivier Roy’s work to political theology? And does this lead to the avenue of cosmopolitan theory? The purpose of this chapter is not to look at cosmopolitanism as a whole distinct body of literature with all of the possible trajectories involved, rather, I am linking political theology as a discourse to Roy’s theory of deculturation of religion, and lay a few possible implications with the cosmopolitan, or what can be called the cosmopolitical.

There are several theo-political aspects within Roy’s theories of globalization and religion. They are to be found within the separation of religion and culture, and with the separation between revelation and reason. For Roy, when religion parts from culture, revelation parts from reason. The break consists further within anthropology, in which because of deculturation “there is no longer a natural law common to believers and non-believers.”²²² Because of the refusal of the religious to have their faith reduced to a symbolic system, and because of their emphasis on the absoluteness of faith, there is a fundamental chasm developing between the de-cultured forms of religiosity

²²¹ Olivier Roy, *Secularism Confronts Islam*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 40.

²²² Olivier Roy, *Rethinking the Place of Religion in European Secularized Societies: The Need for More Open Societies*, European University Institute, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, *ReligioWest*, March 2016, 1. <http://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/40305>

that differs qualitatively from the secularized anthropologies that governs modern political discourse.

The question of political theology is to observe the interplay between the political and the theological, and the sacred and the secular, and to ask how they mutually transform each other. Political theology is the analysis of secularization through locating sacred dimensions and structures within the secular sphere of the political, and of observing in history the transference of the sacred to the secular political-social sphere as it takes shape in practice and beliefs. The question of secularization, religion and globalization within the work of Olivier Roy brings out the final question of the political, metaphysical and epistemological authority that separates the secularized non-believers and the religious faithful.

Roy posits that deculturated religion consists of those who refuse to have their religion subsumed under the paradigm of 'culture'. Deculturated religion consists of the true believers, the 'born-again' believers, including the so-called fundamentalists, who believe in a transcendent, irreducible absolute of revealed faith, one that resists the Habermasian model of mutual accommodation and translation within a post-secular public space. Secularization has created the decline of religious authority by locating all authority within the locus of the right of the individual, and thereby perpetuating de-traditionalized and pluralized interpretations of sacred texts, which is followed by the varieties of the governing behaviors and norms that constitute the religious communities. Because of such, secularization has transformed religion into a decentralized force, and thereby has furthered the chasm between the believer and the non-believer. The transforming globalizing and secularizing forces thereby engenders the so-called 'return

of religion' as primarily a reaction. The link between cosmopolitan theory and the counter-cosmopolitan is that of the globalized and deculturated transnational religious bodies that are developing with the aid of technological advances, and who thereby link as faith communities that are universal in their scope, absolute in their theo-political foundation, and deterritorialized within their global aspirations.

Through globalization, these deculturated forms of religiosity link together based on their mutually shared beliefs on how they interpret what is revealed in their sacred texts and required by religious faith. Some of these forms of religiosity aim for social justice and align alongside mainstream norms, as we see with some evangelical movements such as the International Justice Mission. These communities function positively within the sphere of global civil society insofar as they align with the agenda of human rights within secularized, liberal democracies. Those of the fundamentalist versions of modernity however, resist the global civil society and the attempt of sociologists, anthropologists and other mainstream models of political discourse to be reduced into culture and within an ethical framework of human rights. Through paradox, the same technological instruments of globalization are used to communicate the religious message of the fundamentalists in order to oppose their encroachment. Osama Bin Laden, in his rejection of the westernizing and globalizing forces, appropriated the technologies and materials created by those same forces. Bin Laden was the creation of globalization, but also played the role of its destruction through the explosion of the Twin Towers. It is what Jacques Derrida points to with the 'autoimmunity' of globalized religion, a self-destruction inherent within the structure of globalization, the seed that contains its own implosion. No one is outside the scope of the consequences of

globalization. We are thoroughly globalized, no matter our religious or secular disposition.

The divide between the nontheological transcendence of secularity and the religious faith of deculturated religiosity has the theo-political aspect of the universal against the particularistic, of the condition against the unconditioned, of revelation against reason. The question of the post-secular, of how to account for pluralization, of the self-reflexive critique of the secular, of the attempt to adjudicate between competing norms, is at bottom a theo-political question. The post-secular is a political theological endeavor. It is a question of normative conflict and tensions. It is in final analysis the classic question asked by the Latin Church Father Tertullian, ‘What does Jerusalem have to do with Athens?’. Politics and religion, the secular and the sacred are unable to be completely separated, but they are also unable to be completely conflated. What follows is a brief account of the definition and trajectory of political theology, and its relation to the post-secular, globalization and the theory of deculturated religion of Olivier Roy.

The Secularization and Sacralization of Politics

There is no one singular definition of political theology that explains it comprehensively. Political theology is a comprehensive and expansive concept that transforms with the political and theological questions of our times. For instance, in defining the term “political theology”, continental philosopher of religion Creston Davis writes that, “It is true that the subject of political theology resists singular definition; indeed the term functions like a nebulous concept—a Rorschach test whose ink markings

are given meaning by the individual perceiver taking the exam.”²²³ As with the definition of the concepts “religion” and the “secular”, there are as many possible definitions as there are methodological approaches to the subject at hand. Plurality is inevitably the name of the game. It is therefore appropriate to first raise the notion of plural political theologies in conjunction with the notion of political theology in the singular, for the social reality of globalized, Western secularized societies is that of pluralism and pluralization. Political theology was once upon a time a product of Christian discourse. Today it is now a cross-religion competitive sport between the major world religions and non-believers alike, inclusive of all comprehensive doctrine, whether sacred or secular.

Jacob Taubes has pointed out that theology is a problem of political theory.²²⁴ Theology has been joined to the political from the onset. The term “theology” was coined in Western history within the context of the crisis of the Greek city-states, first appearing in Plato’s *The Republic*, which is a Socratic dialogue regarding the concept of justice, the just individual and the city-state. Plato criticizes the Greek discourse and symbols of theology, myth, and poetry for their distortion of the true nature of the divine, and for their corruption of the education of the youth. In Plato’s quest for the ideal republic, Taubes observes that, “the issue of theology was for Plato intrinsically related to political theory”. The actual conjoined term of “political-theology” originates in ancient Rome. Jewish philosopher David Ohana points out that, “‘political theology’ is an old concept

²²³Creston Davis, “Editorial Introduction: Political Theology—The Continental Shift”, *Political Theology*, Vol. 11.1 2010, 5-14, 5.

²²⁴ See Jacob Taubes, “Theology and Political Theory”, in *Social Research*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (Spring 1955), 57

which made its appearance with Marcus Terentius Varro (116-27 BCE)...²²⁵ Varro outlines the concept of political theology in his *Antiquities*, a document that is no longer extant, but which is referred to in the manuscripts of Tertullian's *Ad Nationes* and of Augustine's *De Civitas Dei*. Varro's concept of political theology referred to the priests of the public civil religion of Rome. After Tertullian's and Augustine's repudiation of Roman pagan political theology, the term submerges in history only to reappear with Spinoza's *Theologico-Political Treatise*, a work that was influenced with the political psychology of Hobbes and the philosophical theology of Maimonides. For political philosopher Leo Strauss, the core issue of Spinoza's *Treatise* was about the conflict between revelation and philosophy. As Leo Strauss writes:

The chief aim of the *Treatise* is to refute claims which had been raised on behalf of revelation throughout the ages; and Spinoza succeeded, at least to the extent that his book has become the classic document of the "rationalist" or "secularist" attack on the belief in revelation.²²⁶

After Spinoza, the term "political theology" does not reemerge until Carl Schmitt, who famously defined "political theology" and set forth the anxiety of influence from henceforth. As Schmitt wrote:

All significant concepts of the modern theory of the state are secularized theological concepts not only because of their historical development—in which they are transferred from theology to the theory of the state, whereby for example, the omnipotent God became the omnipotent law giver—but also because of their

²²⁵ David Ohana, "Ambiguous Messianism: The Political Theology of Martin Buber", *Religion Compass* (Blackwell, Volume 5, Issue 1, 2011, pp. 50-60) 50.

²²⁶ Leo Strauss, "How to Study Spinoza's 'Theologico-Political Treatise'", *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research*, Vol. 17 (1947-1948), 69.

systematic structure, the recognition of which is necessary for a sociological consideration of these steps.²²⁷

It is with Schmitt's definition that I can highlight certain methodological aspects of political theology: that of 1) historical development and/or genealogy, and that of 2) a sociological consideration which analyzes the systematic and homologous structure of concepts between the political and theological found in societal development.

To explain political theology as a theoretical method, one can say that the method consists of observing and historically analyzing the transference of what is the sacred towards the secular political sphere, or what political theologian William Cavanaugh calls the "Migration of the Holy", a term that he borrows from the historian John Bossy. What Cavanaugh means by the "Migration of the Holy" is that "the kinds of public devotion formerly associated with Christianity in the West never did go away, but largely migrated to a new realm defined by the nation-state."²²⁸ Hence, the political sphere becomes its own form of an ersatz, secularized religion after the collapse of Western Christendom. This thesis of the "Migration of the Holy" echoes the thought of Olivier Roy as he writes, "Secularization does not mean the end of transcendence but the establishment of a nontheological transcendence, in a sense of a secularized religion."²²⁹ This "secularized religion" would be the loyalty and ultimate commitment to the nation-state as the sole guarantor of ethics or to the natural sciences as the sole form of epistemology.

²²⁷Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, trans. George Schwab (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985), 36.

²²⁸William Cavanaugh, *Migration of the Holy: God, State and the Political Meaning of the Church*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI, 2011, 14-15. Kindle Edition

²²⁹Roy, *Secularism Confronts Islam*, 40.

Political theology is therefore defined as the analysis of secularization through locating sacred dimensions and structures within the secular sphere of the political, and of observing in history the transference of the sacred to the secular political-social sphere as it takes shape in practice and beliefs. The modern, secular nation-state has adopted itself into the sovereign, or that of infinite value.

Yale legal theorist Paul Kahn writes in reference to the vast devastation of nuclear warfare unleashed during WWII, “How is that the political order that understands itself as characterized by the rule of law can hold forth the possibility of such destruction?”²³⁰ To which William Cavanaugh responds with his observation of the transference that occurred from the sacred into the secular: “It can only be because the nation has taken on an infinite value, and the popular sovereign, or nation as god, must retain its exceptional powers to act.”²³¹ The transference of the dimension of the sacred to the secular political sphere is covert, hidden, secret, denied and not openly acknowledged. Yet the sacred is uncovered and evidenced within the civic religious language of “sacrifice” (dying for one’s country), “pledge of allegiance” to the symbolic flag, and ultimate commitment and loyalty to nation-state above any other institution; and in these homologous resonances one notices the homologous functional structure between the liturgy of the church and the liturgy of the state. For instance, Kahn has argued in his *Political Theology: Four New Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty* (2011) that the American political imaginary is linked to the theo-political through the sacrificial violence on behalf of our American

²³⁰ William Cavanaugh, “Am I impossible: A Political Theologian’s Response to Kahn’s Political Theology”, *Political Theology*, Vol, 13.6 (2012) pp. 735-740, 735.

²³¹Ibid, 735.

Constitution, which is a text that is sacred and inviolable, and is a text that is set against the historical backdrop of the American Revolution, which was a great act of sacrificial violence for the purpose of freedom and sovereignty.

Further elsewhere, Kahn points out “the political formation of the experience of the sacred is the subject of political theology”.²³² Kahn has argued that political theology is a descriptive phenomenological method used to “identify and describe the presence of the sacred, wherever it appears.”²³³ Such a method can “pierce the [modern liberal] state’s self-presentation as an efficient means of justly advancing individual welfare and look to the experience of the political,” which at its core is imbued with the “mysterium tremendum of the sacred, with its tremendous power for both destruction and construction...”. In the end, “the state creates and makes its own sacred space and history”²³⁴ Kahn insists that political theology ought to analyze where the state has created the sacred through secularized theological concepts, and where the state

continues to support an actual theological dimension in our political practices. Political theology as a form of inquiry is compelling only to the degree that it helps recognize that our political practices remain embedded in forms of belief and practice that touch upon the sacred.²³⁵

The self-reflexive criticism of the secular consciousness has opened the gate for political theological reflection within post-secular discourse. In the post-secular context, British

²³² Paul Kahn, *Political Theology: Four New Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 23.

²³³ *Ibid*, 25.

²³⁴ *Ibid*, 19.

²³⁵ *Ibid*, 3.

theologian Graham Ward argues that the rise of political theology in conjunction with the public visibility of religion has to do with the end of the post-modern era. Post-modernity was linked to the rise of global neo-liberal capitalism and the uncoupling of currency from the gold standard, creating a consumerist world of virtual simulacra that characterized the post-modern, the era of the sensuous Alice in Wonder-Disney Land. Continental philosopher of religion Clayton Crockett argues along the same lines, as he writes: “I argue that the resurgence of determinate forms of religiosity today represents a crisis of modern liberal capitalism.”²³⁶ It is within this context of the post-secular where the emergence of political-religious identity and the assertion for equality and discourse via religious legitimation in the public sphere has risen sharply. Crockett says further, “In a post-secularist environment, we possess no absolute or certain criterion by which to claim that any phenomenon is theological as opposed to nontheological.”²³⁷ This loss of the criterion to determine and finalize theological interpretation is the result of the decline of religious authority due to secularization. In the end Crockett finds the post-secular to be a corollary to the post-modern, since modern and the secular are intrinsic to each other’s identity. In the era of the post-secular, secular political philosophy cannot be fully, rigorously, strictly, and absolutely divided, bifurcated, and separated from political theology. Politics is sacralized, and the sacred is politicized.

Lastly, Cecile Laborde, a professor of political theory at the University College of London, argues that political theology is a discourse that is critical of secular liberal

²³⁶ Clayton Crockett, *Radical Political Theology: Religion and Politics after Liberalism*, (Columbia University Press, 2011), 2.

²³⁷ *Ibid*, 2.

political theory, and she gives us three theses. Laborde writes, “Political theology denies that politics and religion are, or can be mutually autonomous. This challenge, however, can take three distinct forms—what I call three theses of political theology.”²³⁸ Laborde’s three theses are each a different model on the relation between the theological and the political:

- “Thesis 1. All states, even secular states, define shape and control religion”²³⁹
- “Thesis 2. Religious groups make theological claims on the state”²⁴⁰
- “Thesis 3. There is no essential distinction between the political and the theological”²⁴¹

Thesis 1 bears on the fact that the state has the power to define what counts as religion and what doesn’t, and does so for the sake of power; Thesis 2 is the opposite of the first thesis in that it concerns theocracy, where religion undermines the secular order, such as seen in radical political Islamism or Protestant fundamentalism; Lastly, Thesis 3 regards what Laborde calls “the most radical thesis of political theology”²⁴², which

²³⁸ Cecile Laborde, “Three Theses about political theology: some comments on Seyla Benhabib’s ‘return of political theology’”, in *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*, (17:6, 689-696), pp. 689.

²³⁹ Ibid, 689.

²⁴⁰ Ibid, 690.

²⁴¹ Ibid, 690.

²⁴² Ibid, 690.

“denies the autonomy of the political altogether”²⁴³, whereby “As Benhabib recounts, the basic categories of the political are structurally the same as the theological.”²⁴⁴

Olivier Roy and Political Theology

As I have shown, the concept of political theology has multiple interpretations and possibilities. In the final analysis, politics and religion, the secular and the sacred are unable to be completely separated, but they are also unable to be completely conflated. That is what defines political theology and creates its importance. At its most broadest sense, political theology refers to what political scientist Carlo Invernizzi Accetti defines simply as “the attempt to ground political legitimacy on a transcendent source.”²⁴⁵ Though this overlooks many other questions of ethics, culture and so forth, it captures the important crux to the debate, which is that of authority, legitimacy and power in the political sphere. And this is what Olivier Roy observes, that the nontheological transcendence that governs the immanent frame is itself a form of secularized religion. At the foundational level this is an issue of either a secular or sacred anthropology. How one interprets the nexus between the cosmos, the divine, and the human is the driving divide that we see occurring in the post-secular and post-Christian West. The Great Divide, as Mark Lilla puts it, which is that of the divide between religion and politics, has brought us to the current social reality of the separation between religion and culture.

²⁴³ Ibid, 691.

²⁴⁴ Ibid, 691.

²⁴⁵ Carlo Invernizzi Accetti, “Can Democracy Emancipate itself from Political Theology? Habermas and Lefort on the Permanence of the Theologico-Political” in *Constellations* (Oxford, England Volume 17, Issue 2, pp. 254-270), 254.

There are several general connections to be made between Olivier Roy and political theology. Using Cecil Laborde's 'Three Theses of Political Theology', which gives a succinct summation of what constitutes political theology, we can make three correlations. The first of the thesis is that of: "All states, even secular states, define shape and control religion"²⁴⁶ This thesis directly correlates with Olivier Roy's notion of 'formatting' or standardization of the definition and conception of religion, a standardization that "occurs in the name of human rights, religious freedom and multiculturalism."²⁴⁷ The secular state defines, manages, and thereby re-configures religion through the courts. The assumption for the secular state, as is with Habermas, is that religion and theology is essentially irrational. The second thesis consists that of "Religious groups make theological claims on the state"²⁴⁸. This precisely what Olivier Roy points out in the failure of political-religious societies his *The Failure of Political Islam*, in that a religious faith community can never constitute itself as a true political society, because of the nature of religious belief. The religious refuse to bow to any other symbolic order, and the non-religious return the favor. According to Roy, "A society is based on sovereignty, starting with the appropriation of a territory. A society is first of all

²⁴⁶ Cecile Laborde, "Three Theses about political theology: some comments on Seyla Benhabib's 'return of political theology'", in *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*, (17:6, 689-696), 689.

²⁴⁷ Roy, *Holy Ignorance*, 9.

²⁴⁸ Cecile Laborde, "Three Theses about political theology: some comments on Seyla Benhabib's 'return of political theology'", in *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*, (17:6, 689-696), 690.

political, never religious, even if it calls on religion to legitimize power relations.”²⁴⁹ In addition, the nature of religious faith requires a purity of belief and an exclusion of those who fail to adhere, a strict system that is bound to fail within a political society.

Secularization forces religion to construct itself as mere religion, or purely religious. As Roy writes,

The tension between politics and religion cannot be resolved by establishing a ‘religious’ political system. In order to endure, a society cannot rely solely on the explicit, but must build itself on the implicit and the unspoken, even if there is a consensus on the core values. It must accept and not diminish its marginal elements, deviances and othernesses—from brothel to carnival, from homosexuality to drug or alcohol use.²⁵⁰

Marginality, deviation, and the other are all rejected through deculturated religion, which bases itself entirely on exclusion and purity and a strict religiosity. Lastly, as we see with third thesis from Cecil Laborde, that “There is no essential distinction between the political and the theological”²⁵¹ Roy makes a strong case that a religious-political system cannot exist due to the nature of religious faith and the nature of the political. On one hand for Roy, “attempts to politicize religion in this way always ends up secularizing it”²⁵² and on the other hand, Roy writes that “Secularization does not mean the end of transcendence but the establishment of a nontheological transcendence, in a sense of a

²⁴⁹ Roy, *Holy Ignorance*, 110.

²⁵⁰ Roy, *Holy Ignorance*, 110.

²⁵¹ Cecile Laborde, “Three Theses about political theology: some comments on Seyla Benhabib’s ‘return of political theology’”, in *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*, (17:6, 689-696), 690

²⁵² Roy, *Holy Ignorance*, 2.

secularized religion.”²⁵³ It is here that we see that Roy observes the structural relation between the sacred and the secular and the issue of transcendent authority, which are all decisive characteristics of political theology.

“I am human, therefore nothing human is alien to me”, wrote the ancient Latin author Terence. But the question fails in the age of globalized, deculturated religion, when the very nature of what it means to be human and the fundamental anthropological differences between the sacred and the secular have emerged. The question of globalization brings us to the imperative of cosmopolitanism, for globalization simply does not operate on the material level but is also about the ‘subjective plane of human conscious’ and the creating of the human, and therefore global imaginary. Derrida wrote in his *On Cosmopolitanism* that cosmopolitan it is a “theoretical task indissociable from its political implications”.²⁵⁴

The cosmopolitan is of the conviction that it is the ‘oneness of humanity’ that transcends the political limitations and defining borders, and that out of this oneness lends the subsequent and necessary conviction of our responsibility towards one another. Hegel wrote that it is of “infinite importance” that “a human being counts as such because he is a human being, not because he is a Jew, Catholic, Protestant, German, Italian, etc.”²⁵⁵ The interface between the global and the local can be witnessed within the

²⁵³ Olivier Roy, *Secularism Confronts Islam*, (Columbia University Press, 2007), 40.

²⁵⁴ Jacques Derrida, *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, (Routledge, 2001).

²⁵⁵ Robert Fine, “Taking the ‘Ism’ out of Cosmopolitanism: An Essay in reconstruction”, *European Journal of Social Theory*, (2003) 6(4): pp. 451-470, 451.

global civil society, which is largely a component of cosmopolitanism. It is also seen in the transnational, for cosmopolitanism seeks to get beyond state sovereignty. It realizes, as Robert Fine points out, “that some of the worst violators of human rights can be states or state like formation.”²⁵⁶ Derrida echoes this sentiment and notes that, “All Nation-States are born and found themselves in violence. I believe that truth to be irrecusable.”²⁵⁷ Within the major social transformations being effected through globalization, there is now a necessity to move our categories beyond the dated Westphalian model, and to take notice that there is a need “for a corresponding change in social theory—one which takes the world and not the nation-state as its primary unit of analysis.”²⁵⁸

The theo-political aspect of globalization can be summed up with Manfred’s Steger’s observation on of globalization: “the building of a truly democratic and egalitarian global order that protects universal human rights without destroying the cultural diversity that is the lifeblood of human evolution.”²⁵⁹ Globalization creates the possible condition for the cosmopolitan. The cosmopolitan can potentially be a differentiated universal, not a covert ‘european universalism’, not yet another masked version of the ‘occidental imaginary’, but a truly global vision, or as put by Immanuel Wallerstein a “universal universalism”, that

²⁵⁶ Robert Fine, *Cosmopolitanism*, (NY: Routledge, 2007), 2.

²⁵⁷ Jacques Derrida, *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, (Routledge, 2001), 57.

²⁵⁸ Fine, *Cosmopolitanism*, 5

²⁵⁹ Manfred Steger, *Globalization: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press: 2009), 167.

refuses essentialist characterizations of social reality, historicizes both the universal and the particular, reunifies the so-called scientific and humanistic into a single epistemology, and permits us to look with a highly clinical and quite skeptical eye at all justifications for 'intervention' by the powerful against the weak.²⁶⁰

It would be a place of global polycentric diversity, "a multiplicity of universalisms that would resemble a network of universalisms."²⁶¹

The separation of the political sphere in which we call 'secular', from the apolitical sphere which we call 'religion', is a construct of the European imaginary that separates the irrational, the absolute and the divisive inherent aspect of 'religion' from the rational, tolerant and unifying inherent aspect of what we call the 'secular'. The Great Divide was thus first in the beginning a political move. For Mark Lilla this is a tendentious and fragile experiment or achievement that is open to further revision and perhaps even failure. Crisis and failure mark our globalized age. At bottom, the concern for the new forms of public religious visibility and 'communicative action' in the public square is because of globalized religious violence and terrorism of radicalized religious sects. The rejection of the liberalized norms of sexuality (abortion, gay marriage, etc.) the wearing of headscarfs and veils, and the high fertility rates of the religious all come together as symbols that give an apparent sense of a great awakening or spiritual revival within the heartlands of the West. But as Roy has pointed out, this is not the case. Secularism engenders and transforms religion, and not the other way around. Roy's critique is that contra Samuel Huntington, we are not witnessing a clash of culture or a

²⁶⁰ Immanuel Wallerstein, *European Universalism: the Rhetoric of Power*, (New Press, 2006), 79.

²⁶¹ Ibid, 84.

clash civilizations. Globalization has uprooted the territorial concept of 'civilization'. Globalization is the end of civilizational theory, and multi-culturalism, as it is the creation of globalized cosmo-political. Instead of a clash of civilizations, we are seeing a clash of religiosities, and a clash of anthropologies. We are witnessing a competition between a deculturated religiosity and a sacred anthropology that is based on a revelation that refuses to be subsumed under the heading of 'culture' on one hand, and between an exclusive humanist secular anthropology that is based on scientific, instrumental reason or rationality on the other hand.

In works such as Emilio Gentile's *Politics as Religion* (2006) and in John Gray's *Black Mass* (2007), one breaks the binary of whether religion controls politics or whether politics controls religion by positing that politics is the new religion. This insight arises in an age where the boundary between what is religious-apolitical and secular-political is porous, permeable, fluid, transitory, transforming, whether linear, cyclical or however else. Hybridization and creolization is the watermark of globalization, which is the extension of the hypermodern. Political theology is the recognition of this permeability, and that at bottom there is no essential difference between the secular political sphere and religion, even though there may be many differences in exterior and accidentals. Political theology is, as is echoed in the writings of Catholic political theologian Johann Baptist Metz, a hermeneutics that reinterprets the religious ideas, existential yearnings, human desires and mankind's hope that is found in the secularized narrative of the political. In the secular-political one finds the theological written in palimpsest. And if the world finds itself re-enchanted and resurgent with religion, this may mean that the world has simply lost its love for its god of the nation-state, and has become harlot to other gods.

The return of religion, which does not exist in a form of the return of civilizational religion, but rather consists within the self-reflexive doubt of the post-secular conscience that recognizes the malleability and tendentious nature of a materialist ontology and the supposed scientific neutrality of a naked empirical reason. This self-reflexive nature of the post-secular consciousness runs up against the religious exception of the absolute, the irrecusable transcendent and universal, the singularity. The subtraction story that Charles Taylor posits, whereby all that is left after the husk of religion is peeled away is the kernel nature, is in the final analysis a ‘story’, an imagined construction or mythos. If there is a crisis in religion, this is because there is a crisis in secularism, and by extension, liberal democracy. If I may reverse Taube’s thesis of “in the beginning theology emerged as a problem of political theory”, I would say that in the end political theory emerged as a problem of theology.

Chapter 6: Concluding Remarks

Globalization theory best describes the dominant trends for our emerging religious future, the new forms of contemporary religions and religiosities, their future trajectories, their global trends, and their varieties of transformation within the Western public sphere.

Globalization has created the conditions necessary for the return of religion, but paradoxically has secularized the religious at the same time. The unintended consequence of secularization is that by creating an autonomous sphere for religion, a road was paved for the 21st century resurgence and revitalization of religion. Globalization and secularization has separated religion from culture, creating ‘deculturated religion’, which is at the heart and root of both fundamentalist and liberalized religion.

The public visibility of religion consists of the fact that the alternative expressions of religion, whether fundamentalist or secularized, is a symptom of secularization insofar as it manifests the de-institutionalization of religion and the decline of religious authority through the individualization of religious beliefs. Reflexive modernity, characterized by an individualization that privatizes the absolute sovereignty of the individual's choice and values, intersects with the varieties of deterritorialised religions that operate within a globalized spiritual marketplace, making the optionality of religion freely available to all. The re-configuration of the religious through secularization is characterized with individual choice and optionality.

This choice and optionality are signified through fertility rates and conversions. The religious are choosing to have more children as a sign of the repudiation of the surrounding, hostile secular culture, and in order to fulfill the mandates and spiritual demands of their religious faith. The non-religious are choosing not to have children because of post-material values and the demands of the here *hic et nunc*. Yet both the religious and non-religious are centered on individualized choice. Shall the religious inherit the earth through fertility rates and fecundity? Olivier Roy thesis of deculturation contradicts this possibility, because deculturated religion lacks the inherent ability to transmit religion to the next generation. Deculturated religion is fundamentally a “born-again” experience that requires an individual faith commitment towards the norms and codes of that religion, and such a faith cannot be passed down, as it requires each individual to decide his or her own religious identity. Modern religiosity consists of personal conversion, that of the born-again experience. And as of such, the demographic thesis of the reversal of religion through birth rates is rendered problematic, as the children of religious parents will be thrown into pluralized western societies where the tendency is to disaffiliate or liberalize within the secular milieu of the immanent frame.

Roy finds that conversions are an indicator of the so-called return of religion and deculturated religion, and globalization is a driving force behind religious conversions. Globalization secularizes, but at the same time it creates religious revival. Globalization, taken as overarching concept that embraces the totality of Western modernization in all of its forms—the political, the economic, and the cultural—is a main driver in causing religious disaffiliation and religious conversion in the West. Yet, the extreme poverty levels in the global south and non-western societies created by globalized, neoliberal

capitalism serve as a main driver of high levels of religiosity. High levels of global mass immigration from non-Western societies into Europe and other Westernized societies creates the uptick of an apparent return of religion, which in the secular public sphere appears vibrant due to their commitment towards religious practices and expressions high levels of religiosity. In this sense, globalization is a main driver of secularization in the West, and the main driver of religiosity within the south. Globalization is a dual edged sword.

Through the process of deculturation, the post-secular is rendered problematic because there is no longer a middle ground between religious and secular cohorts in which a common consensus can emerge within the public square. The post-secular consists of the condition of an uncertain, enduring tension rather than accommodation. Deculturation de-traditionalizes and de-contextualizes religion, transforming religion into religiosities that are either fundamentalized or liberalized, and that are based on incommensurable anthropologies. These emerging religiosities refuse to be reduced to culture or to any other symbolic system, and because of such, the debates on religion in the public square are radicalized by both the religious and non-religious. There is no longer a common ground between secular and sacred values that can offer theoretical moral framework to achieve a consensus between religious and non-religious values. Because religion no longer belongs to culture, multi-culturalism is a failed project, and it is multi-culturalism that often undergirds the post-secular debate. Olivier Roy finds that in the end, secularization has won the debate within the West. The post-secular is a myth.

Political theology is to observe the interplay between the political and the theological, and the sacred and the secular, and to ask how they mutually transform each

other. The question of secularization, religion and globalization within the oeuvre of Olivier Roy brings out the final question of the political, metaphysical and epistemological authority between non-believers and believers. There are several theo-political aspects within Roy's theories of globalization and religion. They are to be found within the separation of religion and culture, and with the separation between revelation and reason, and with the fundamental anthropological rift that is occurring between exclusive humanism and the "born-again" believers of the religion in question. The link between cosmopolitan theory and the counter-cosmopolitan is that of the globalized and deculturated transnational religious bodies that are developing with aid of technological advances, who link as faith communities that are universal in their scope, absolute in their theo-political foundation, and deterritorialized within their global aspirations. Graham Hammill and Julia Reinhard Lupton wrote that, "Political theology reflects and feeds on a crisis in religion, whether that crisis is understood historically (as Reformation) or existentially (as doubt, skepticism or boredom)." ²⁶² The crisis in contemporary religion is its return in new forms of de-culturated religiosity and public visibility, whether fundamentalism or pagan. The loss of centralized religious authority due to secularization has created pluralities of religious interpretation that spin either towards radicalized forms or liberalized forms of religiosity.

Holy Ignorance indicates religious fundamentalism's ignorance of its own cultural and theological traditions, and it also indicates the secular west ignorance of its own cultural religious heritage. Roy's use of the term ignorance does not intend insult, but

²⁶² Graham Hammill and Julia Reinhard Lupton, ed., with a postscript by Etienne Balibar, *Political Theology and Early Modernity* (University of Chicago Press, 2012), p.1

rather means ignorance in its most literal sense, that of the lack knowledge. Knowledge of theological tradition is no longer required for the salvation for the religious believer, and knowledge of the religious heritage of Europe from its secular societies has been forgotten, in what French sociologist Danielle Hervieu-Leger calls “amnesiac societies”. *Holy Ignorance* is therefore ignorance on both ends of the spectrum, the ignorance that proceeds from the religious, and the ignorance that proceeds from the secular. Deculturation perpetuates *Ignorance*, whether holy or unholy, whether sacred or profane, whether secular or religious.

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