

*Routledge Studies in Religion*

# RELIGION IN THE MARKET ERA

THE RISE OF MARKET ISLAM, THE REVENGE OF  
CONFUCIUS, AND OTHER STORIES FROM A  
GLOBAL AGE

François Gauthier



# Religion in the Market Era

This book aims to expand the limits of the social-scientific study of religion and define a coherent model of recent global transformations of religion, challenging the paradigm of secularisation and post-secularisation. Using a wide-ranging selection of case studies, including global Islam, post-Soviet Eastern Europe, and China, the author argues that since the 1980s, religion has been dramatically shaped around the world by neoliberalism and consumerism. Providing a global, macro-level history of how religion has changed in the past four decades, this book contends that the rise of economics as a dominant social sphere is central to understanding the ongoing changes in contemporary world religions.

**François Gauthier** is Professor of Religious Studies in the Department of Social Sciences at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland.

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of Confucius, and Other Stories From a  
Global Age

François Gauthier

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# Contents

<i>Preface</i>	<i>vi</i>
1 Introduction	1
2 The Rise of Market Islam I: Islamism, from State Focus to Lifestyle	54
3 The Rise of Market Islam II: Halalising Islam, from Fashions and Foods to Finance	106
4 Religion in Orthodox-Majority Eastern Europe: From Communism to the Global-Market	150
5 Chinese Revolutions I: The Making of Religion in the Nation-State Regime	205
6 Chinese Revolutions II: Booming Economy, Booming Religion	254
7 Conclusion	321
<i>Index</i>	<i>331</i>

# Preface

This book is a follow-up to *Religion, Modernity, Globalisation: Nation-State to Market*. In the latter, I developed a heuristic model for thinking religion globally from the late nineteenth century to the present. As the theory has not suffered much change since then, I have therefore chosen to simply recall the main elements in the introduction so as to leave as much place as possible for three case studies: the Muslim Middle-East, Orthodox-majority Eastern Europe, and China. *Religion, Modernity, Globalisation* was indeed very heavy on theoretical discussions, and I needed a lot of space to bring some material into the discipline that was entirely foreign to it for the most part, especially in the area of economics (liberal economic theory, consumption and consumerism, and neoliberalism). I also needed space for substantial discussions on some complex and polemic issues, such as secularisation and Rational Choice theory. Only two of the eleven chapters—one on Indonesia and one on global trends—were devoted to applying the Nation-State to Global-Market theory analytically.

In *Religion, Modernity, Globalisation*, I announced that the next book would cover the case studies found in the present volume as well as several that I need to push back again due to lack of space, specifically those from India and Sub-Saharan Africa. The idea behind this theoretical model, which should be understood as an alternative narrative—to secularisation, Rational Choice, and postmodern fragmentation—to think about religion in modernity and globalisation, was not meant to serve only broad-scale historical analyses of cultural geographies, as you will find here. Yet, one thing that has struck me is precisely the lack of transversal and synthetic analyses over these regions and the importance of the issues that such analyses bring up for the wider discipline. Essentially, this book is the result of “armchair” research, as I am not a field specialist of any of the regions under study. I am tremendously indebted to the research of the scholars whose work I refer to. I have been trained in part by historians and particularistic social scientists, and I have written these chapters with them in mind. This is why the reference apparatus is as bulky as it is. I have systematically sought support from as many sources as possible every step of the way. I have also had leading specialists in each field read versions of the chapters and comment on them. In the end, though, I am the only one responsible for any shortcomings.

This book starts with *The Rise of Market Islam*. Close to fifteen years ago, when my horizon was still mostly Western, I was profoundly impressed by Patrick Haenni's book *L'islam de marché*, which has still to be translated in English. In this small book, and in an article that I commissioned from him, Haenni showed how a lot of trends I was seeing in the West were also developing in the Muslim world. Later, I collaborated with my friend Maryam Ben Salem on an article in which we analysed the material from her doctoral research on Tunisian women's sporting of the veil, during Ben Ali's secularist regime. Then, at a conference organised by Linda Woodhead in Cambridge in 2012, I experienced a true electroshock when I heard Humeira Iqtidar expose how the Islamists of the Jamaat-e-Islami, in Pakistan, had replaced the State with the Market in their political imaginary and strategies. I had never thought that I would be writing on Islam one day, but have published a series of articles since then, thanks namely to the wonderful people with whom I had the pleasure to exchange and think with. Thank you, therefore, to the aforementioned, but also to Julia Day Howell, Özlem Sandicki, Daromir Rudnyckyj, Samir Amghar, Houès Seniguer, Farhad Khosrokar, Stéphane Dudoignon, Hamit Bozarslan, Aurélie Biard, and Birgit Krawietz.

Eastern Europe is a much-overlooked region, and a fascinating one. The chapter I devote to it here was written before the Russian invasion of Ukraine, but many elements in the analysis are pertinent for thinking about its causes, meaning, and what it foreshadows. This region was also not at all on my radar, even though my wife Doritt grew up in communist East Germany. I would never have become interested in the region, and especially Eastern European Orthodox-majority countries, had it not been for Maria Hämmerli. Maria, who is Romanian of birth, did her PhD with me in Fribourg on Eastern European Orthodox-Christian diasporas. I must also thank Sorin Gog and Anca Simionca from the Universitatea Babeş-Bolyai in Cluj-Napoca, Romania, for their invitation to the 'New subjectivities of global capitalism: spirituality, personal development and the world of work' conference in September 2017. This was the occasion for me to get deeply involved with the literature on the region and to think out the lineaments of the analysis I present here. The chapter has greatly benefited from their input, as it did from many of the Romanian scholars present, including Lucian Cirlan, Florin Faje, and Laszlo Foszto. I especially thank Simion Pop, Alexandru Racu, and Sebastian Rimestad for their generous comments and critique of a draft version of this chapter. I thank Victor Roudometof, Alexandre Agadjanian, and Vasilios Makrides for the discussion we had around my thesis of the shift from a Nation-State to Global-Market regime in May 2019, in Fribourg. Thanks as well to Alessandro Testa and Tobias Köllner. Thanks finally to Victoria Fomina and Polina Batanova for giving me access to their work-in-progress. Finally, thanks to Sergei Zakharov, who had to flee Russia in February 2022 and who I met at the Institut d'études avancées in Nantes, where I was a Fellow. No thanks to Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin.

I knew close to nothing about China when I came across Vincent Goossaert and David Palmer's *The Religious Question in China*. Vincent is a colleague

at the GSRL laboratory (EPHE/CNRS) in Paris where I have been an associate member since 2007, yet we never crossed paths before I contacted him after reading his book. This book was a revelation (yes, another). I could not have imagined, prior to reading it, that China fit the Nation-State to Global-Market framework so perfectly. I thank him dearly for accepting to comment *Religion, Modernity, Globalisation* at the GSRL in 2021 and for sharing his publications and thoughts with me since then. He has been a tremendous resource. Following his lead, I literally dove into the literature on China for about two years, continuously astonished by what I found. I often had the impression that I could not have scripted the destinies of religion in mainland China over the last century any better. The two chapters I devote to China attest to how I believe that what happened there is important for sociologists of religion outside of China, and that knowledge of this can have a profound impact on how we understand religion within the discipline. These chapters are those in which I have been most faithful to my method of considering religion from a *total social fact* approach, inspired by Marcel Mauss. There were no other ways to find out if the ethics of authenticity, for example, or neoliberalism, are pertinent concepts in the Chinese context, and how they are manifested. I would also like to thank LiAnne Yu for her illuminating book *Consumption in China* and the time she allotted me, Zhe Ji for coming over to Fribourg, Mayfair Yang for the wonderful time spent together in Los Angeles and her remarkable book *Reenchanting Modernity*, David Palmer for his very generous insights and encouragements, and Adam Chau for his contribution in solving an enigma.

Any book, any article is a collective work. This opus is also indebted to many people, who have been essential for its realisation. Shout outs to Linda Woodhead, Tuomas Martikainen, Marcus Moberg, and Titus Hjelm. Many, many thanks to Jim Spickard, not the least for inviting me to do the Paul Hanly Furfey lecture at the 2021 ASR. Thanks also to Peter Beyer, Damir Skenderovic, Alfonsina Bellio, and Philippe Portier. Thanks to Alain Caillé, Philippe Chaniel (whose sudden passing away in December 2024, at the tender age of 57, shook me and all who knew him to the core, displaying the tragedy of our times), Ilana Silber, and Frederic Vandenberghe at the MAUSS. Thanks to Diletta Guidi, Robin Jolissaint, Katri Ratia, Camille Leblanc-Liederman, Julia Itel, Julien Dessibourg, Tonia Schilling, and Ansgar Jödicke in Fribourg. I finished writing this book during my Fellowship at the Institut d'études avancées de Nantes. I extend thanks to Emmanuelle Garcia, Stéphanie Perrufel and the whole team, Anthony Clavier for ordering all those books. Special thanks to Charles Keith for spicing up my Nantes stay with some great discussions and a historian's input. Of course, last but not least, I thank my wife Doritt, as well as my children Jeanne, Octave, and Tara for reminding me every day that all work and no play makes dad a dumb boy.

# 1 Introduction

*The worldwide exportation of the nation-state went hand in hand with the diffusion of the Western concept of religion, both of which are notably related to the expansion of the Westphalian international order.<sup>1</sup>*

*The reform era (from the early 1980s onward) of the People's Republic of China has witnessed a massive reemergence of ostensibly traditional Chinese folk beliefs and practices. For more than thirty years the Communist state had tried to eradicate cultural expressions of the old, pre-Communist China, stigmatizing them as superstitious or "feudalistic," while building a new, socialist culture. Then Mao died, and the economic reforms began, accompanied by significant ideological relaxation. It is in this historical context that the folk cultural revivalism phenomenon is happening: all of a sudden people are busy rebuilding or renovating temples, ancestral halls, and graves that were torn down during the Cultural Revolution, reconstructing family genealogies that were burnt by the Red Guards, reenacting long suppressed rituals around births, weddings, and deaths, going to temple festivals, reading ritual handbooks and consulting fortune-tellers and geomancers, praying for male babies, or simply thinking feudalistic thoughts.<sup>2</sup>*

In his introduction to *The Desecularization of the World* published in 1999, Peter Berger famously disavowed his prior analysis of religion in modernity, affirming that 'the assumption we live in a secularized world is false. [...] The world today is as furiously religious as it ever was.'<sup>3</sup> Seen from *outside* the West, Berger's reckoning sounds like stating the obvious. Certainly, this later diagnosis according to which religion has not disappeared and is not disappearing does not require a rebuke. In most places around the world, modernity has not equalled a decline of religion as much as its *radical transformation*. As the forces of modernisation and globalisation proceeded to intermesh the parts of the world into a whole over the last century and a half, religion has been at the centre of the formidable changes that have affected every aspect of non-Western societies. In those regions of the globe where religion did seem to dissolve in the face of hard-edged secularist ideologies, it was only at the cost of the institutionalisation of implicit or explicit forms of *political religions*, and only for a certain period of time. Since the last two decades of the twentieth century, however, there is no doubt that,

## 2 Religion in the Market Era

wherever you look, religion is present and even thriving in new forms. In the early twenty-first century, religion is all over the place. In the news, in public debate, in politics, in plain sight, in international organisations, in the Dow Jones, at the core of warzones, in books, and online. It has seeped into the supermarkets with the booming global halal industry. It is on the world stage, as Patriarch Kirill, the head of the Russian Orthodox Church, has anointed Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine as a Holy War against the decadent and supposedly secularised West. Meanwhile, on the other side of the planet, the omnipresent Mao cult has receded in favour of the revival of popular religion, from fengshui to spirit mediums. The Chinese Communist Party has even resuscitated Confucius in order to buttress the Chinese Dream of becoming an economic, political, and cultural world power.

The aim of this book is to think outside the West. Instead of asking to what extent the non-Western world is secularised, de-secularised, re-enchanted (which supposes prior disenchantment), or trying to define non-Western forms of secularity, I want to see what the patterns are when understood in their own terms. In order to do this, a fresh gaze is required, and therefore a new epistemological and methodological approach is required. Hence, I consider secularisation to be a Western obsession that is ultimately grounded in ideological and normative concerns. This bold statement should be read as an invitation to change our perspectives rather than for its polemical value. For Western readers, my hope is that the exercise will help rethink how we conceive of religion and its destinies by showing that a different approach to religion is possible. For non-Western readers, I hope this collection will show that what they are witnessing where they are situated resonates with transversal structuring logics that are global in scope.

Strangely, social sciences seem to have a hard time defining the times we live in. In 1979, French philosopher François Lyotard coined the term "postmodern" in a "report on knowledge" commissioned by the Government of Quebec. Since then, there has been a flurry of similarly prefixed concepts, among which are post-industrial, post-Keynesian, post-Islamism, post-secular, and post-Westphalian. Parallel to this, another family of concepts emerged with the prefix "neo," from neo-paganism to neo-confucianism, neo-fundamentalism, neo-shamanism, neo-muslim brotherhood, neo-pentecostalism, and neo-indianism. What is striking with these constellations, when taken together, is how they express that *we seem to know where we no longer are, but not exactly where we are*, at least not in any positive, affirmative sense. This sense of disarray is widely distributed within the social scientific study of religion. Alongside the ebb of secularisation and the failed promises of Rational Choice approaches,<sup>4</sup> the soft consensus today among researchers seems to be that we live, at least in the West, in some sort of fragmented and transitory age whose confines, horizons, foundations, and structures are blurry.

Yet, this diagnosis of blurriness loses much of its plausibility when we adopt a more global outlook.<sup>5</sup> Nowhere is this clearer than in China, about which little is known outside specialist networks. China was never colonised

by Western powers, yet it adopted Western High Modern Ideals, Western Christian categories (“religion,” “superstition,” and “the secular”), and the radical project of doing away with tradition and building a new, modern society. The means for this were the construction of a nation-state and the destruction of most of what traditionally constituted religion in China. A triple-process ensued, by which “religion” was forced into the Christian congregational model and “superstition” was repressed, while other parts were “secularised” into martial arts, opera, traditional medicine, and qi-gong. From the Republican nationalists of the Kuomintang to the Chinese Communist Party of Mao Zedong, “religion” receded while a full-fledged political religion was implemented, culminating in the Mao cult. However, things changed anew once Deng Xiaoping initiated to transform China’s planned economy into a market economy. As the economy boomed, so did religion. Not the religion that had been institutionalised within the Christian congregational model, but temple-based popular religion, including the revival of many religious forms that were thought to belong to a long-gone past, as well as personalised religiosities that cater to new desires for self-realisation, very similar to what Western scholars call alternative or holistic “spiritualities.” Not to mention the boom, as is the case all over the planet, of charismatic forms of Christianity.

When we look at things more closely and with a fresh gaze, what happened in China shares striking similarities with what happened elsewhere on the globe, including across the Muslim world and in Eastern Europe. The Chinese case is remarkably clear-cut, with massive changes going in one direction from 1898 to 1976, and massive changes going in another radically different direction from 1978 to today. The situation has been more gradual elsewhere, as in the Muslim world, but the profound nature of the break between one direction and then another calls for a thorough examination. What happened? What are the factors that explain this putatively global redirection? These questions bring us back to the need to find an explanation for the passage from modernity to postmodernity, from Pentecostalism to neo-Pentecostalism, and from Islamism to neo-Islamism. What is the substance of “postmodernity”? What lies in a “neo”? Where were we, when we were supposedly “modern”? And where are we now, if we are “post”-modern?

### **From Nation-State to Global-Market**

*Religion in the Market Era* argues that, over a period of about a century and a half, societies around the world have become interwoven in such a way that their destinies have become significantly interdependent and synchronous. This simple assertion opens surprisingly new avenues. Secularisation theories were grounded in the idea that Western societies evolved at the spearhead of History, whether scholars recognised it or not. Researchers concentrated on Western societies, constituted as nations, which were then compared among themselves. Little attention was paid to non-Western societies, which were

#### 4 *Religion in the Market Era*

deemed by default to lag somewhere behind, and left to anthropologists, whose mission was, as Clifford Geertz saw it in the case of Indonesia, to collect data about traditional forms of religion that were bound to end up in museums. The conceptual tools that were mobilised by sociologists tended to give this understanding a significant amount of plausibility. Until “post-modernity”—whatever that is—came along. Since then, things seem to have become blurry and uncertain. National containers no longer contain transnational trends, which are accelerating. Outside of the West, religion seems on a path of rapid revival, while scholars in the West struggle to find words to come to terms with the fact that religious “nones” are not “not religious” but religious in new ways—captured by the emic and etic successes of the term “spirituality.”

This book argues that, since the late nineteenth century (more or less), “the West and the Rest” have tended to live in the same world, and at the same time in history. The West is not at the spearhead of anything apart from its own delusions. Moreover, it argues that we can divide our shared history into two distinguishable constellations, periods, or moments, which I call “regimes.” A regime is a macro-level ideal-typical construction that aims to capture how societies coalesce across their various differentiated spheres and institutionalisations. A regime is a multi-dimensional, relatively stable, and discernible ensemble organised around a series of structuring characteristics and dynamic principles. The first of these regimes, which I call the Nation-State (capitals on each term), emerged around the structuring principles of the modern State as the natural modern political institution and political form, and whose community of reference is the Nation. In this configuration, the State is much more than its factual institution: it is the imaginary and effective organisational centre of society. It is the very means by which societies must be transformed in order to become “modern.” The State in this configuration inherited the verticality of divine right monarchy and therefore stands above society: separated from it, yet its representative.<sup>6</sup> The Nation, meanwhile, according to Benedict Anderson’s famous phrase, is an “imagined community”<sup>7</sup> that is both the product and the producer of modernisation in the place of the former hierarchic, communal, familial, clan, religious, and sometimes imperial bonds. In the space of a few decades, national identities became so plausible and heartfelt that dozens of millions of people were ready to take up arms and die in their name, resulting in two World Wars and the independence movements.

Around the turn of the 1980s or later, depending on the country, the Nation-State regime ceded to the Global-Market one, in which we arguably still are. This regime change was the consequence of the shift of regulatory powers from the State to the Market and its imaginary of a horizontal and spontaneous or natural form of coordination. As the sovereignty of the State became eroded, so did the Nation lose some of its containing function in the face of economic and cultural globalisation. This erosion has not meant the end of the Nation as much as its reconfiguration, whether through new

investments, such as renewed ethnic nationalism, or its partial dissolution in the face of rising cosmopolitanisms.

A few epistemological notes in reaction to some of the feedback I have gotten with respect to the present framework. There are two competing general approaches in the social sciences: positivism and hermeneutics. As James Spickard captures it, ‘Either we mine [theories] for hypotheses, which, like good Popperians, we then attempt to disprove [positivism]. Or we let theories sensitize us to aspects of the social world, directing our attention to things that we might otherwise miss [hermeneutics].’<sup>8</sup> For positivists, science is about making theoretical models that are then applied to empirical data, which prove them and their underlying hypotheses *right* or *wrong*. Quantitative methods are usually of this type, and the underlying, implicit assumption is that survey categories are relatively neutral and enable us to actually seize social realities. Positivist social scientists (Popperians, economists, and Rational Choice theorists) model themselves on classical natural science. By classical, I mean before the twentieth-century relativity and quantum revolutions. Positivists believe that science should be value-free, and that *they* certainly are. They believe value neutrality is possible, and see themselves as not being involved in their subject. In the sociology of religion, many of those who still defend the secularisation theory are quantitative positivists.<sup>9</sup> However at odds they may be in other matters, Rational Choice and quantitative secularisation sociologists share a positivist epistemology.

From the hermeneutic perspective, theories are neither right nor wrong but rather *good* or *bad*, fruitful (heuristic) or sterile, insightful or not, or perhaps misleading. Theories are *lenses* to see through, and different theories will make us see different things while hiding others. Theories don’t only have zoom in and out powers, they also have blinders. A good theory is able to relate as many social facts together as possible and provide a significant sidestep with respect to our everyday gaze. Some theories let us see rapports of domination, but are wanting with respect to agency. Some theories are good at showing macro-level or institutional dynamics, but leave social actors out of the picture. Others do the opposite. Others still let us see women and make us realise they had been blinded out of the picture for decades. For hermeneutics, reality is constructed, and we don’t have access to it without lenses—the everyday ones or the carefully constructed ones of science. Similarly, the scientist is cast as necessarily *situated*: subjectively, culturally, socially, politically, religiously, historically, nationally, and so on. Science is not about eliminating values as it is about being aware of them as much as possible and taming their effects on the analysis.<sup>10</sup> The relevant question is not “What facts do not *fit* the theory?” (a formulation that supposes there is a “real”), as much as “What does this theory allow us to see, and what are its blind spots?”. What does it help us see and fail to see, and what does it overstate?

The Nation-State to Global-Market theory I am defending here is resolutely grounded in a hermeneutic perspective. It is not meant to be right but

to shed more light on religion globally than other theories like secularisation and postmodern fragmentation, not to mention Rational Choice. Interestingly, neither of the latter has made scholars aware of the abrupt redirection of religious change. Similarly, none of them have been sensitive to impacts of all-encompassing marketisation since the neoliberal turn of the 1980s.

### Religion as a Multi-level Complex

Within the differentiation paradigm that constitutes the framework within which the social scientific study of religion has evolved since its inception, analyses generally *start* by defining what is and what is not religion. Typically, and whatever theory is actually summoned, the institutionalised forms of the World Religions end up providing the standard for religion in practice. The logic here is one of purification and exclusion. Something is or not religion. It is a question of either/or. I want to tread a different route, for which I take inspiration from Marcel Mauss and his “total social fact” approach.<sup>11</sup> In this perspective, you do not first ask whether or not something *is* religious *rather than* political, economic, or moral, etc. Rather, any given phenomenon is assumed to be complex. It can have *putatively* religious, political, economic, *and* moral dimensions. In this context, it is better to have a definition of religion that is encompassing and comprehensive, as Mauss did. Apart from being the nephew of Émile Durkheim, Mauss was entrusted with the study of religion in his uncle’s team of scholars. The Durkheimian approach to religion is therefore functional (religion is defined by its function, what it *does* in a given society) rather than substantive (what religion *is*, i.e., a sum of given elements, such as a textual canon, a clergy, a salvation doctrine, etc.). Functional definitions aim to be universal and therefore detached from any historical and institutionalised form. For Mauss, religion is a complex phenomenon, like politics, or economics. It cannot be reduced to a given set of institutions, beliefs, individual experiences and practices, traditions, myths of Origin, or “ultimate values.” Such elements are only parts of a much wider system of dynamics and relations that traverse society from top to bottom and vice versa.

For heuristic purposes, I therefore suggest to distinguish between *three levels* of religion: macro (the religious), *meso* (religion(s)), and micro (religiosity). This is a common approach with respect to politics. In the French tradition, we distinguish between “*le politique*” (the type of community or society, the social bond), “*la politique*” (the institutional framework and the concrete exercise of politics and policy making), and political practices (actor-level power relations). The English distinction between polity, policy, and politics is similar, yet it does not as clearly highlight the macro-level that political philosopher Claude Lefort called the “shaping of society.” In the model I suggest to abide by here, the “religious” corresponds to the Durkheimian definition of religion as the mechanisms by which a social body is founded, bound, integrated, and totalised. The concepts of “civil” and

“political religion” are examples of conceptualisations of religion at this level. From a Durkheimian perspective, every society is religious, including modern societies. This is because every society sacralises a set of ideals and symbols by which it coalesces. Far from being speculative, this definition opens onto powerful empirical investigations. Nobody will doubt that our modern societies do indeed sacralise a number of ideas, even if the exact list and interpretation is debated and conflictual. The *meso* level of “religion(s),” meanwhile, refers to various institutionalisations of religion and its specific actors (shaman, priest, monk, initiator, sacrificer, virtuoso, mystic, etc.) in a given society. This is the level that spontaneously springs to mind when we think of “religion” because of the way that Western Christianity became institutionalised in church forms. Yet it is important to understand that church religion is *not* the mean but an extreme at the *meso* level in terms of its differentiation, institutionalisation, and specialisation. In most cultures in history, religion has not been packed into such a clear-cut domain. A case must be made for popular religion, which can be regulated by strict social norms without there being formal institutional structures to enforce them. The case of China provides ample illustrations of this. “Religiosity,” finally, captures *religion* on the micro level, i.e., *as it is lived* by social actors in their practices, beliefs, and the variegated interpretations they make of *meso* level orthopraxies and orthodoxies.

As we will see in the following chapters, paying attention to all three levels, including the macro level, is essential for understanding the dynamics of religious change in modernity. In the case of the USSR and China, for instance, radical secularisation in the form of the severe repression of “religion” under Stalin and Mao was made possible because of the way a macro-level political religion was institutionalised into explicit political religions that saturated the *meso* level. A particularly powerful yet implicit assumption within the secularisation paradigm is that Western societies shed religion on the macro level when they ousted the Christian God from its place as the keystone of social order. What this posits is that modernity somehow funnels religion out of the macro level and into the sole *meso* and micro levels. It is important to stress how this supposition amounts to positing some kind of extraordinary anthropological revolution led by the West. In other words, human societies are believed to have always and everywhere been totalised and integrated under a “sacred canopy” of some sort, until Western modernity. It is important to underline the evolutionist and ethnocentric component of such a strong affirmation in order to question it. It is an anthropological revolution, which basically cuts humanity in half: the modern West on the one hand, and the rest of humanity since times immemorial on the other hand? Is this a plausible working hypothesis or is it simply the translation of Western modernity’s ideology? In this era of all-out deconstruction and de-essentialisation, why is this question never debated, nor even formulated? From a hermeneutical perspective, the most important blinders in social theories are products of a given historical period’s shared and implicit ideological foundations.

## 8 *Religion in the Market Era*

There is perhaps no more effective way to “provincialize the West” than to resist the idea of macro-level secularisation and disenchantment. After all, Western societies are *human* societies.

I believe that a much less hazardous starting point is to refrain from such assumptions about a formidable Western-led revolution by remaining open to the idea that there are religious dimensions still at work on the macro level of modern societies, including Western ones. This alternative perspective is supported by the heuristic potential of macro level concepts like civil religion. Understanding religion on three levels helps explain why the bulk of religious phenomena in the Nation-State era, as we will see, were shaped in a particular way, and why they are shaped according to other characteristics under Global-Market conditions. This is because the State, the Nation, the Market, and the Global have constitutive religious dimensions at the macro level. All of these ideas were sacralised (if you are more of a Durkheimian) or were invested with foundational “charisma” (if you prefer Max Weber). The aim of this book is to show how understanding religion as a complex, multi-level phenomenon that has been changing significantly over the course of modernity, rather than funnelling it into a well-differentiated institutional sphere that has been disappearing and reappearing, allows us to better grasp the tremendous changes that have occurred over the last decades, dissipate a significant amount of the blurriness that reigns over the social scientific study of religion, and reunite the West with “the Rest.” This is evermore important since this book is devoted to transformations of religion in mostly non-Western contexts.

### **On Parts and Wholes**

Social sciences in general and the social scientific study of religion in particular have developed mostly within a paradigm founded on the idea that modernity acts to differentiate social spheres to the extent that each one can be examined as a relative isolate. According to this epistemological frame, social sciences tend to specialise, focusing on one particular sphere (politics, economics, culture, religion, morality, etc.) and then on a particular subdivision of it, and so on. The sociology of religion, accordingly, isolates religion in order to study it, eventually drawing in certain factors such as politics or culture if needed, from without. This approach works rather well in a highly differentiated society, in which religion develops within the confines defined by a regulating institution. This was approximately the case in certain parts of the world during the Nation-State regime. It does not work as well in a society in which the boundaries between social spheres are blurred and when religion appears in less distinguishable, institutionalised, and differentiated forms, as I argue is the case today in the Global-Market regime.

The concept of regime is coherent with the alternative approach I am suggesting to develop on the cases presented here. It is inspired by the Durkheimian school and Marcel Mauss in particular, for whom societies are best understood as coherent wholes. This does not mean that societies

are homogenous, nor that they are devoid of conflict, divisions, competing worldviews and conceptions of core values (as lazy interpretations of Durkheim suggest). Rather, it holds that, beyond, behind, or below these diffractions, social bodies do coalesce around assignable versions of what Durkheim called “moral ideals.” This means that what happens in one social sphere shares structural similarities with what happens in others. It means that, as Mauss indicated, social spheres are shaped by common transversal logics and dynamics. Nowhere is this clearer than in Mauss’s idea of a “total social fact.” To say that a social phenomenon is “total” means that it is simultaneously and dynamically constituted of multiple dimensions: political, aesthetic, legal, religious, economic, moral, etc. Furthermore, Mauss conceived every social fact of importance as a potential total social fact and that it should therefore be approached as such by social scientists.

In a 1927 article, Mauss synthesised the Durkheimian sociological approach by insisting that ‘There is no social phenomenon that is not an integral part of the social whole.’ As a consequence, ‘nothing can be understood if it is not related to the whole, to the community as a whole rather than in relation to parts that have been separated.’<sup>12</sup> Certainly, social science<sup>13</sup> can distinguish between different dimensions of the social, but an analysis is only complete when the connections with the other parts and the whole itself have been described and taken into consideration. Social scientists must therefore pan in and out, moving from the thick description of social facts to the ways in which they are part of and resonate with the wider society of which they are part. This constitutive rapport between the parts and the whole sheds light on the way that Durkheim and Mauss understood religion, that is: in relation to the *whole* of society and the *type* of society in a given historical and cultural context. As Camille Tarot observes, religion for Durkheim is ‘inscribed in the social morphology and physiology, it is tribal in tribal societies, national in national societies, universal in the great empires, and at the heart of social action.’<sup>14</sup> As a consequence, the first thing a social scientist must do in order to study religion is to attempt to define the type of society within which it is observed, and how religion shapes and is shaped by this society’s structuring dynamics.

The concept of regime is grounded in Durkheim and Mauss’s conception of social science, applied to the sociology of religion. It offers a surprisingly yet significantly novel platform from which to understand the workings of religion in modernity. The Nation-State and Global-Market regimes are attempts at seizing the central and defining features of modern societies. Capitalising all of these terms is a way of insisting on how they refer to more than the actual, empirical institutionalisations of the market, the state, the nation, and the global, but also, at a deeper level, to the *idea* and *ideal* that they powerfully embody. Following Durkheim, they are *moral ideals* constituted of ideas, beliefs, feelings, and emotions that constitute in turn society.<sup>15</sup> To be more precise, State and Market capture the preferred mode and societal institution for social regulation, while Nation and Global refer to the backdrop for individual and collective identities within each regime. Linking them

therefore binds a form of governmentality (the organisation and exercise of power) and polity with a form of society. Hyphenating them insists on their interdependence and co-production.<sup>16</sup>

This book follows the path opened in *Religion, Modernity, Globalisation*, in which the Nation-State to Global-Market framework was expounded at length. Because this framework required substantial development, especially as concerns market economics, consumerism, and neoliberalism, this book was lacking with respect to its analytical applications and called for further applications. In *Religion in the Market Era*, the proportions are reversed, as I bring three in-depth case studies to the discussion: Global and Middle-Eastern Islam, Orthodox-Christian Eastern Europe, and mainland China. For the sake of consistency, I have chosen large yet coherent cultural areas with very different characteristics, traditions, histories, and experiences of Western colonialism and imperialism. Taken together, they show both the underlying unity of the Nation-State and Global-Market regimes *and* some of the variations due to local contexts, cultures, histories, and conjectures.

A variety of perspectives converge around the idea that globalisation truly became effective around the end of the nineteenth century, due in large part to Western colonialism, imperialism, and capitalism. This process is best understood in the plural and has proceeded in waves, the latest of which started roughly in the 1980s with the economic and cultural globalisation that continues to shape the world we live in. Roland Robertson, for instance, famously defined globalisation as ‘the concrete structuration of the world as a whole.’<sup>17</sup> Because the world was an enmeshed whole roughly as of the late nineteenth century, it is possible to show how different parts of the world developed in similar directions over time, notwithstanding the uniqueness of each particular context. The consequence of globalisation is that societies live synchronically rather than dispersed on the arrow of time, as modern evolutionism purported and most Western-centric secularisation theories imply. Robertson, who did not adhere to secularisation, proposed the concept of “glocalisation” to capture how globalisation entails two-way relations between the supranational and the local, giving shape to both. This book is an attempt to bring these complex processes into focus to understand how globalising logics penetrate local realities (through various degrees of coercion or appropriation), which in turn give shape to the former.

The following sections present a synthesis of the Nation-State to Global-Market framework, with an attempt to bring in some fresh insights and references. Readers are invited to refer back to *Religion, Modernity, Globalisation* for full developments and references.

### **The Rise of the Nation-State Regime**

Modernity is usually thought of as a historical period, with disagreements on when to place its beginning. When we talk of the Enlightenment, however, we refer to another aspect of modernity that is fundamental. From this

angle, modernity was the project of creating a utopian society from scratch, based on “Reason.” To do so, and for the first time in human history, the need was felt to do away with inherited traditions and make a tabula rasa out of history. Both the State and the Market as moral ideals and preferred modes of social regulation emerged are key actors in this utopian project. Both appeared as answers to the question raised by Thomas Hobbes in his *Leviathan* (1651), which was written in the midst of the English Civil War: On what foundations could and should societies be based on if no longer on the theological-political frame that Christianity provided for centuries? In other words, on what other than God could a social and moral order be founded? Zygmunt Bauman captures it beautifully:

Modern science, which displaced and replaced God, removed that obstacle [limits on freedom]. It also created a vacancy: the office of the supreme legislator-cum-manager, or the designer and administrator of the world order, was now horrifyingly empty. It had to be filled or else... The emptiness of the throne was throughout the modern era a standing and tempting invitation to visionaries and adventurers. The dream of an all-embracing order and harmony remained as vivid as ever, and it seemed now closer than ever, more than ever within human reach. It was now up to mortal earthlings to bring it about and to secure its ascendancy.<sup>18</sup>

Yet for all of the effervescence, these adventurers actually came up with a single ideal to replace God in his throne: the individual. And they devised only two mechanisms to administrate the social order: the State, through a social contract between sovereign individuals, and the Market, through the spontaneous harmonisation of these individuals’ competing interests.

Hobbes himself proposed that divine right monarchy replace God with a social contract between its citizens. By doing so, Hobbes gave new foundations—the sovereignty of the people instead of God and God’s Word—to the Republican idea of an overarching and benevolent State regulating society for the common good. For Hobbes, a strong state was required since individuals, if left alone, were supposed that they would naturally follow their self-interest, leading to a “war of all against all.” In the following century, this predicament was challenged by a new political philosophy called Liberalism, which introduced the idea of the self-regulating Market as an alternative to the Republican state. According to this alternative perspective, self-interested individuals were best left about their business. Through the magical workings of the Market, competing interests would not result in civil war, but rather, ‘as if led by an invisible hand’ (Adam Smith), a form of spontaneous harmonisation that would inevitably produce the ‘greatest happiness for the greatest number’ (Jeremy Bentham<sup>19</sup>). The State and the self-regulating Market were therefore first and foremost answers to the question of the foundation and regulation of society outside of a Christian frame.

They were invested in the place left vacant by modernity's doing away with the figure of God as the keystone of social order.

Beyond the world of ideas, the modern nation-state<sup>20</sup> grew out of the treaties known as the Peace of Westphalia, which were ratified in 1648 to put an end to the Thirty Years' War, and over a century of religious and civil wars in Europe more generally. Exemplified by the Latin maxim "*cuius regio, ejus religio*" (the religion of the ruler is the religion of the land), the Peace of Westphalia laid the foundations of the modern sovereign state: one ruler, one territory, one religion. For the first time in European history, religion (Christianity) was submitted to state rule, rather than the contrary. Defining the religion of the majority would be a top-down thing, territorialised, and linked to an enclosed community that would become the nation. Majority churches would become national churches. Religion would build the nation, the nation would be sacralised, and religion would be nationalised. The full effects of these changes would take two centuries to materialise, yet under the new guidance of a new soaring figure: the State.<sup>21</sup> While founded on the rejection of the theological-political Christian frame, the modern state inherited its verticality and transcendence with respect to society. From these heights, the State could both represent society and transform it at will from above.<sup>22</sup>

The Peace of Westphalia did result in a significant increase in peaceful years, allowing the state to develop into an extraordinary administrative machine and a nation builder. Infrastructures were planned and constructed (roads, railroads, telegraph), statistics were devised, income tax was generalised, and the means of the state extended while its mission evolved towards the production of the general interest and the main actor in the March of Progress. This political mission had a (macro level) religious dimension to it, which allowed it to endorse and forward an all-encompassing programme of moral reform that coalesced in the nineteenth-century hygienic state. This is when institutions like the prison and the asylum were designed as means to heal the social body of its diseases. The state became the State, and its mission was to produce a New Society in which a New Man could thrive.

Contrary to what mainstream economists believe and teach undergraduates and the general public, market economics did not spontaneously arise from free human interactions. As Karl Polanyi and other historians have shown, "self-regulating free markets" were actively produced by state intervention over the course of the nineteenth century, namely through the marketisation of labour, soil, and money.<sup>23</sup> Meanwhile, capitalist economies developed within the national container. The free market policies of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century occurred within a frame that was regulated by the state. In other words, the development of the economy was embedded in the Nation-State, as were other sectors of society like electricity, gas, telephone, postal services, and media (newspapers, radio). By the turn of the twentieth century, in Western Europe at least, the state's outreach stretched out to almost all regions, and to almost every individual.

From the Declaration of Independence of the United States in 1776 onwards, modern states were founded in the Americas and Europe, then elsewhere. These were preceded, accompanied, or followed by the creation of nations. Until as late as the 1960s, empires dislocated into nations, and colonial territories achieved their independence by becoming nations.<sup>24</sup> Yet, as Shmuel Eisenstadt noted, the nation-state had been institutionalised as the natural political form of modernity by 1914. The formation of both states and nations was a global affair. As Eric Hobsbawm writes, by 1870, ‘History [...] became world history.’<sup>25</sup> Similarly, Peter van der Veer has shown how modernisation processes developed through the two-way relations linking colonisers and colonised.<sup>26</sup> Categories like race and religion were born out of these experiences and the construction of nation-states in the West and the colonies but also in territories like China, which was profoundly affected by the importation and application of what Eisenstadt called the “modern cultural programme.”<sup>27</sup>

### **High Modern Idealism**

It is impossible to understand the last two centuries of world history without taking the ideological fabric of “modernity” into account. The project of the Enlightenment was to bring forth a utopian New Society and a New Man by making a tabula rasa of history and tradition. Societies were to become modern by reorienting themselves towards the future, and the state was invested with realising this soteriological, messianic, and millenarian—i.e., religious—mission. The works of Bruno Latour and James C. Scott are particularly relevant to shed light on some of the fundamental characteristics of the modern utopian project.

For Latour, modernity entails a generalised process of purification that starts with the separation of society (culture) from nature, and the bracketing of God.<sup>28</sup> Modernity similarly separates the exteriority of civil society from the interiority of subjective experience, creating a space for the expansion of both scientific objectivity (once freed from the intervention of religion) and the rise of “spirituality” (the interiorisation of the rapport with the divine).<sup>29</sup> In his usual caustic style, Latour writes: ‘Modernity has nothing to do with the invention of humanism, the irruption of sciences, the secularisation of society, or the mechanisation of the world.’<sup>30</sup> It is rather the joint production of three mutually exclusive categories: society/culture, nature, and metaphysics. The combination of these categories opened a space for the radical transformation of humankind and human living conditions. Latour’s characterisation of modernity as a project of purification provides valuable insights into the process of differentiation of social spheres, and the separation between religion and the rest of society (religion vs “the secular”). Secularism, whether in its Republican or Liberal form, is indeed first and foremost the project of the purification of politics and society from “religion” (read: Christianity). For Latour, modernity’s generalised process of purification manifests how

the foundations of the social order shifted from the transcendent figure of the Christian God to the transcendent-immanent “Laws of Nature.”<sup>31</sup>

In *Seeing Like a State*, Scott seeks to define the active principles of the modern state. With the concept of “High Modernism,” he aims to capture modernity’s ‘aspiration to the administrative ordering of nature and society’<sup>32</sup>. High Modernism, Scott writes,

is best conceived as a strong [...] version of the beliefs in scientific and technical progress that were associated with industrialization in Western Europe and North America from roughly 1830 to World War I. At its center was a supreme self-confidence about continued linear progress, the development of scientific and technical knowledge, the expansion of production, the rational design of social order, the growing satisfaction of human needs, and not least, an increasing control over nature (including human nature) commensurate with [the] scientific understanding of natural laws. High modernism is thus a particularly sweeping vision of how the benefits of technical and scientific progress might be applied—usually through the state—in every field of human activity.<sup>33</sup>

The so-defined modern state stands above society and believes in the capacity to radically transform—i.e., better—society—and thereby all of its citizens—from the top down. As Scott writes, ‘The scope of intervention was potentially endless. Society became an object that the state might manage and transform with a view toward perfecting it.’<sup>34</sup> Case in point, the ideal political figures in this period were the medical doctor and the engineer.

What is remarkable in hindsight is the extent to which this a priori Western mythology was disseminated, appropriated, and implemented across the globe, in all types of societies, through ‘military and economic imperialism and colonisation’<sup>35</sup> and the influence of Christian (especially Protestant) missionary enterprises.<sup>36</sup> Writing about China, Mayfair Yang insists on how the purification and separation process highlighted by Latour were implemented with even more radicality and effectiveness than in the West.<sup>37</sup> Scott meanwhile illustrates the global dimension of the application of High Modern Ideals through top-down state engineering with examples ranging from Russia to Brazil, India, and Tanzania. Hence the nation-state and its supporting High Modern Ideals were successfully globalised. According to Eisenstadt, ‘Modernity first moved beyond the West into different Asian societies—Japan, India, Burma, Sri Lanka, China, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Malaysia, Indonesia—to the Middle Eastern countries, coming finally to Africa.’<sup>38</sup> By the twentieth century, ‘the basic model of the territorial state and later of the nation-state was adopted, as were the basic premises and symbols of Western modernity.’<sup>39</sup>

These processes were neither monolithic nor homogeneous. Eisenstadt’s useful idea of “multiple modernities”<sup>40</sup> rather implies a spectrum of possibilities

within a given framework, with processes developing in a non-linear fashion. This is why the characteristics of the Nation-State regime are globally coherent while showing strong path dependencies and sometimes surprising local inflexions. An important task is to map out these possibilities and identify some of the main determining factors. One of these is certainly the existing local political and social structures. The extent to which the state could be effectively invested and put to work in view of the radical project of a New Society founded on rational and scientific ordering depended highly on the existing polities. The Chinese imperial state, for instance, with its traditional system of examination and meritocracy that stretched out to the remotest countryside, provided the basis for an all-encompassing and totalitarian administrative structure. On the other hand, the very different traditional political structures in important parts of South-Saharan Africa, for instance, along with the absence of modern state-like structures and assimilable elites, did not dampen the attraction and millenarian impulse of High Modern Ideals as much as it severely hindered the construction of an actual territorial state with the means to realise these ideals in practice.

I argue that, without these powerful mythological driving forces, the state could never have become the State. It is because of this contagious utopianism and the macro-level religious dimensions invested in it that the state could effectively shape society. It could do so by mobilising a particular type of governmentality, or mode of exercise of power. The type of state governmentality that developed during this period is described by scholars as “government”: top-down, vertical, hierarchical, rationalised, centrifugal, and centripetal.<sup>41</sup> In order to exert its authority and regulate society, the state must differentiate, compartmentalise, homogenise, and institutionalise social realities in a way that looks like it does and is thereby manageable. An example of this brand governmentality is the Taylorist-Fordist brand of capitalism that developed from the late nineteenth century onwards. Capitalist corporations pursued the state’s rationalisation project while mirroring the state’s bureaucratic and vertical governmentality, within the container of the national economy. In other words, management in the private sector was modelled on that in the public sector. As strange as this might seem for us who now live in a neoliberalised world, corporations thought state-style administration to be the most efficient and scientific.<sup>42</sup> Industrial production was consequently massified (homogenised) and the state was the arbiter of the social contract between the capitalist class and the (syndicated) workers, crystallised in what is called the Keynesian compromise. Economic development occurred within prioritised domains defined and regulated by the state. The economy, in other words, was modelled by the state, on the model of state administration, and within the container of the nation. This led to the post-War situation in which communist and socialist states opposed liberal Welfare states, all of which pretended to be able to take care of their citizens “from cradle to grave.” Post-colonial states, meanwhile, that is the states produced by the independence movements around

the world, were built on either of these models, with soteriological and millenarian investments in the capacity of the state to produce the nation, shed the shackles of tradition, and advance their societies on the road to progress and development.

While state and nation are inseparable, their order of appearance varies in practice. In Western Europe, different countries display different patterns. In France, it is common to say that the state produced—and continues to produce—the nation.<sup>43</sup> In Germany, the nation preceded political unification and the federal state, leaving Austria on the side. In Italy, the difficult political integration within a single state preceded the production of a unified nation. As Garibaldi is reported to have said in the 1870s: “We have made Italy, now we must make Italians.” Nation-state-building processes are similarly variegated in the rest of the world, with the state sometimes producing the nation, the nation otherwise producing the state, both emerging together, or both failing (in part) to emerge. In the Muslim world, national frontiers were carved out of the colonial empires, with more (Egypt, Turkey) or less (Jordan, Lebanon) adequation with precolonial Islamic political forms. In Eastern Europe, former empires disintegrated into proto-national entities whose conversion into nations was halted by the communist experience. In China, the Han majority within the mainland territories formed the core of a proto-nation to which periphery minorities were integrated. An important feature of this period is how nations tended to be bigger than smaller, and multi-ethnic (China, Spain, Great Britain, France, Sub-Saharan Africa, and the Americas). Similarly, nations were imagined as part of an *inter*-national world—a world made of nations. The nation, in other words, was *the* vehicle for universality. The “global” did not yet have a consistency of its own. The creation and make-up of the United Nations organisation exemplify and embody this social imaginary.

### Boxed Up Religion

One of the main theoretical, ideological, and practical concerns of the Nation-State so defined was “religion.” While religion was obviously equated with Christianity in the West, the situation varied wildly elsewhere. In most places, there was nothing indigenous that looked like Christianity. However, and remarkably, it appeared universally important to create something that did. The sociology of religion has tended to be very Western-centric and has adopted a working definition of religion—whether implicitly or explicitly—that mirrors mainline confessional post-Reformation Christianity as it appeared in the late nineteenth century, a type of religion that Peter Beyer aptly calls “churched.”<sup>44</sup> What such a focus hides in part are the complex historical processes by which Western Christianity itself became churched—i.e., defined by exclusive belonging, belief, and formal, territorialised, parochial, and national institutions. This churching process was the product of the centuries that followed the 1648 Westphalian arrangements in the West. Taking

a global look shows how *there is nothing natural about churched religion*, and how this specific (and very peculiar, when you think about it) religious form is *bound to the rise, exportation, and implementation of the modern nation-state*.

“Religion” in the Nation-State regime was typically purified and decomplexified. It was boxed up in the church form, first and foremost through the action and regulation of the state. Religion was officially channelled into a well-differentiated sphere at the *meso* level of society and contained by bureaucratic, territorialised, and national institutions regulated by the state. Religion *became* belief-based (it was not, and is not in essence<sup>45</sup>), rituals and liturgies were sobered, practice was privatised or confined to differentiated times and spaces (the church, the service), texts and theologies were brought to the fore, and religion was rationalised on every level. Following the Peace of Westphalia, belonging became exclusive, and religion’s moral powers were sought after in order to produce ethical citizens and buffer the corrosive effects of modern materialism and individualism. Ultimately, the communities of believers tended to be national, and religion was acceptable if it served the production of the nation. Religion was key to nation formation, not its antithesis. Paradigmatically, religion in the Nation-State regime was therefore *statised* (controlled by the state, modelled on state organisation and governmentality, and serving state-building) and *nationalised* (contained by the nation and serving nation-building).

The construction of what is known as the “World Religions” is integral to the constitution of the Nation-State regime. These entities were constructed over the colonial period, standardised, and rationalised on the post-Reformation Christian model out of the matrix of competing indigenous orthopraxies and orthodoxies: monotheistic, scripture-oriented, canonised, belief-centred, founded on exclusive belonging, constituted as universal, nationalised, and presented as science-compatible. Acceptable religion in modernity was therefore opposed to “superstitious,” popular, and “irrational” forms, which were repressed and even destroyed. These massive transformations challenged and unrooted religious traditions, engendering profound crises of authority. What emerged were new modernist bureaucratized institutions based on what Weber called “rational-legal” types of authority. Rational-legal authority rests on the belief in the legitimacy of the institution rather than on personality or tradition.<sup>46</sup> As Peter Beyer has shown, the newly constituted and legitimised World Religions and their institutions were created into a global system.<sup>47</sup> Through the formidable wizardry of modernisation, religion was believed to have been siphoned into this well-differentiated and relatively autonomous “communication sub-system” with its own rules and guarded by state-like institutions called “religions” like sheep in a flock, all of which under the watchful eye of the regulating state. From a pre-modern situation in which, in most societies across the world, religion was “everywhere” and penetrated all aspects of social life, religion was now to be contained in these neatly packed boxes called religions.

In hindsight, what is remarkable is how these processes unravelled in a coherent if variegated manner all over the world. Buying into the “cultural programme” of Western modernity, fuelled by the utopianism of High Modern Ideals, countries around the world initiated what is nothing short of a revolution. The case of Middle-Eastern Muslim countries shows how Islam was completely transformed into modernised, rationalised, state-centred, and nation-serving forms, of which political Islam is only one variant. Experiential, popular, emotional, and mystical forms like Sufism were repressed and even sometimes outlawed. Political Islam illustrates these transformations, as it was fostered by large, bureaucratic, and hierarchical organisations like the Sunni Muslim Brotherhood, whose objectives were to promote a rational and purified brand of Islam *and* overtake the state with the aim of Islamising society *from the top down*. In Eastern Europe, Orthodox Christianity was cut out of social life and packed into state-serving institutions, or repressed. China represents an extreme example. There, religion far exceeded the confines of the “Three Teachings” (Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism). It exulted in popular and festival forms centred around local temples, incorporating practices like geomancy (fengshui) and spirit writing. For the sake of modernisation, most of what constituted religion was weeded out as superstition. Confucianism, which infused the imperial state’s very fabric, fell out of grace. Taoism and Buddhism were institutionalised and nationalised on the church model. In China as in Eastern Europe, however, radical “secularisation” only occurred at the cost of the constitution of a very explicit political religion. The very concept of secularisation is therefore problematic, as its focus on institutionalised religion hides some of the most important developments that occurred in these countries between the *meso* and macro levels. With its focus on churchled religion, secularisation blinds us to the important qualitative changes that were imposed onto religion as a consequence of and as a means for nation-state building. In sum, the implicit assumptions built-into the secularisation paradigm produce perspectives that are misleading at best when we consider non-Western parts. In this book, I argue that processes of nationalisation and statisation as I define them here, on the contrary, can better make sense of these historical trajectories. Moreover, they provide new light on developments in the West itself. The formatting of religion into the Nation-State mould was, much more than secularisation, a truly global phenomenon.

The characteristics of religion in the Nation-State regime were naturalised within secularisation *theories*, which appeared in the 1960s, that is in the heydays of the Nation-State regime, when churchled religion could be considered the normal form of religion in the West.<sup>48</sup> These characteristics form the core of a more enduring understanding that is intrinsic to Western modernity, and which I call the secularisation *paradigm*. Beneath the explicit characteristics of secularisation *theories*—religion as a differentiated social sphere, separated from politics especially, religion as a privatised phenomenon, and the decline of the social functions of religion<sup>49</sup>—lies the secularisation paradigm.

Within this framework, research is made to pay particular attention to the political implications of religion, such as Church and state relations, secularism and secularity, and public-private issues. Similarly, the secularisation paradigm understands religion as something institutionalised, rational, and differentiated. It highlights male actors while making female actors invisible. The emotional aspects of religion are similarly downplayed, as are the dynamics of community life.<sup>50</sup> If we are to judge from today, the biggest flaw of secularisation paradigm-grounded social sciences is the fact that it was not distanced enough from the cultural ideologies of the societies that produced them. In other words, the secularisation paradigm mirrored more than it shed light on religion in the Nation-State regime as in the West.

My analysis here converges with that of Talal Asad, who argued that modernity was less about secularism leading to a separation of church and state as much as the political takeover of the regulation of religion by the state—and, we may add, within the confines of the nation.<sup>51</sup> In order for this process to be successful, it was necessary that a Western Christian understanding of religion be adopted, which is not a priori something that goes without saying, since most places outside the Christian West, and as close as the Muslim Middle-East, had religious landscapes that had little to do with this type of belief-centred, exclusive, interiorised, and institutionalised parochial religion. Yet, the cases of Indonesia and China are perfect examples of how this otherwise unlikely process did indeed occur, and forcefully so.<sup>52</sup> As Robert Weller coins it, Nation-State modernity required a process of “religionization,”<sup>53</sup> in other words the ‘development of religion as an institutionally and ideologically independent formation’ indexed on what Goossaert and Palmer call the ‘Christian-secular normative model.’<sup>54</sup> What should be added though is how this ‘institutionalization of religion through political processes’<sup>55</sup> was part of a more generalised process of differentiation by the ways of institutionalisation which affected societies, and that all of this was *a product of and a means for nation-state building*. In addition, the packing of “religion” into “religions” could only occur through the sacralisation of the state and the nation—i.e., the formation of what I call the Nation-State—and the constitution of a replacement political religion at the macro level, whether in the form of civil or full-fledged political religion.<sup>56</sup> As Durkheim would argue, one should expect to have a national religion emerge in national societies. One flaw of the social scientific study of religion has been to be charmed by this modernist magical process of religionisation by which religion in toto was presented as having been funnelled into neatly contained and institutionally regulated religions.<sup>57</sup>

### Consumerism and Expressive Individualism

Latour wrote in *We Have Never Been Modern* that it was possible for him to unravel the purification process at work in modernity because we no longer stood in the midst of its enchantments. Indeed, history seldom stagnates,

especially when it is guided by the principles of perpetual revolution that characterise modernity. In other words, Latour could write about the Nation-State regime with such lucidity because we no longer lived in its folds. Another regime, another historical configuration was taking hold.

The seeds of the dissolution of the foundations of the Nation-State regime can be located in the 1960s in the West, yet this was a gradual process. While modernisation processes and the High Modern Ideals that supported it had changed many aspects of society, familial structures and cultural values such as self-sacrifice, duty, and honour were still those of the nineteenth century a decade after the end of World War II.<sup>58</sup> The cultural revolution of the 1960s was both the culmination and the beginning of the end of the Nation-State led modern era. What undergirds the cultural revolution and the multitude of emancipatory claims that it generated is the penetration and dissemination of *expressive individualism*. Expressive individualism arose in the eighteenth century and percolated through the Sentimentalist and Romantic movements, yet it was more or less confined to the bourgeoisie as well as the intellectual and artistic elites. The Romantics led the critique of Reason and called onto the vitalising potentials of creativity, emotions, the irrational, the body, personal experience, and unbridled self-exploration and self-expression. Romanticism developed a rapport with the self that had been explored by figures like Jean-Jacques Rousseau, for whom discovering and expressing the self was the most valuable and emancipatory project one could devote oneself to.<sup>59</sup> Charles Taylor calls this the “ethics of authenticity and expressivity,” which he defines as the

understanding of life [according to which] each of us has his or her own way of realizing one’s own humanity, and that it is important to find and live out one’s own, as against surrendering to conformity with a model imposed from outside.<sup>60</sup>

According to Taylor, the ethics of authenticity made it into the mainstream because of its articulation with the post-War economic boom that catalysed what he calls a “*consumer revolution*.”<sup>61</sup> The abundance of goods meant that consumption became accessible for virtually all social classes. These goods could be turned into material signs of the unique and authentic self and made to serve its expression and need for recognition. Youth subcultures and the 1960s counterculture threaded these material signs with modes of behaviour, music styles, rituals, politics, and emancipatory ideologies, creating lifestyles that went beyond simple fashions. The Taylorist-Fordist brand of capitalism that reigned at the time was based on the mass production of homogenous goods. Earlier in the century, the affordable Ford T automobile had successfully allowed whole classes of consumers to become car owners, a logic that continued to develop from then onwards and extended to other goods, including the single-family house and household appliances. Yet, this was at the cost of standardisation. As Henry Ford is reported to have said: “Any

customer can have a car painted any colour that he wants, so long as it is black.” The expressive revolution of the 1960s, fuelled by the encroachment, dissemination, and extension of consumerism, contained the critique of this type of mass consumption and the standardisation and anonymity that it produced. This critique, coupled with the Marxist critique of the alienation of capitalism, was championed by the countercultural movement and the May ’68 events, rippling out from there.<sup>62</sup>

Parallel to this, the Keynesian compromise and the Welfare state model began to reach their limits over the course of the 1970s, starting with the first oil crisis of 1973. This is also when the Swedish Bank created the “Prize of Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel” as part of a strategy to counter socialist and Keynesian interventionist policies in the economy by providing renewed legitimation for a brand of free-market economics that had become marginalised in the 1930s—namely, because of their failure. In the coming years, the “Nobel Prize in Economics” was awarded to the tenors of the so-called “neoliberal” school, Friedrich Hayek (1974) and Milton Friedman (1976). This is also when political figures like President Valéry Giscard-d’Estaing in France started claiming that “the state cannot do everything” (*l’État ne peut pas tout*), eroding the Nation-State era myth.<sup>63</sup> Meanwhile, neoliberal policies had been implemented and tested in countries like Chile and Indonesia, where US-backed dictatorships hosted Chicago-trained economists who started to reform Welfare provisions and the economy according to a policy package that would later form the core of the “Washington Consensus”: privatisation, deregulation, and generalised marketisation. By the turn of the 1980s, belief in the all-powerful State capable of transforming society and producing emancipated individuals that it would also accompany from cradle to grave, started to wane. What followed is known as the *neoliberal revolution*. In far-away China, the death of Mao and the all-too-obvious failure of the Cultural Revolution led Deng Xiaoping to start shifting away from a planned economy to one in which “free” markets were summoned to realise the CCP’s old promise to lift hundreds of millions out of dire poverty, beyond the state-subsidised daily “iron bowl” of rice. A year later, in 1979, Methodist-raised Margaret Thatcher came to power in the UK with the project of leading a double revolution made of moral conservatism and radical free market policies. By January 1980, Evangelical-backed Republican Ronald Reagan took over the Oval Office in Washington with very similar plans. Over the next decade, the world would follow suit.

These two movements—the consumer revolution and the emerging neoliberal one—coalesced at the turn of the 1980s in the West to challenge the Nation-State founded order and catalyse a mutation away from Taylorist-Fordist capitalism. By then, consumption had rippled across the whole of society and institutionalised into what scholars call “consumerism”: consumption raised into a desirable and dominant social and cultural ethos.<sup>64</sup> Consumerism, in other words, is both the integral of social practices and the main ideology of a *consumer society* and a *consumer culture*. A consumer culture

is a culture in which the dominant values derive from the experience of consumption, and first and foremost *personal choice* as the exercise and production of subjectivity.<sup>65</sup> The expressive individualism and the ethics of authenticity carried by consumerism acted to critique the standardisation of broad-segment production and consumption patterns. As Luc Boltanski and Ève Chiapello have shown, this critique was internalised by capitalism, which transformed by adopting what they call its “new spirit.”<sup>66</sup> This coincided with the push for the economic globalisation of the 1980s and onwards: the relocation of manufacturing and industrial production in the Global South, the shift of large corporations from do-it-all nationally-embedded bureaucratic structures into transnational managers of optimised outsourcing and reactive production lines, the segmentation and diversification of products and services into an ever-increasing number of niches, the change from a production-based economy to a consumption-based one, and the move towards governance-type governmentality, that is towards a supposedly more horizontal, transparent, and efficient management and decision-making process based on shareholder interests, without a regulating “third” (i.e., the state). All of this was favoured by the neoliberal policies that were implemented and which resulted in the financialisation of the economy, widespread deregulation (of the job market, union rights, media, finance sector), privatisation, and the roll-back of the state’s mission regarding social provisions and welfare. This amounted to a profound remodelling of the state’s capacities, including its sovereignty in matters touching the economy. The role of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, which are institutions that were created at the end of World War II, grew significantly as of then, dictating norms and conditions for nation-states across the world. Free trade agreements started to appear, confirming the transfer of sovereignty from nation-states to economic interests and non-democratic supranational institutions, including the new World Trade Organisation (1995).

### Defining Neoliberalism

It is difficult to overstate the importance of the neoliberal revolution, yet the concept of neoliberalism has been used and abused, and it is therefore important to fix a workable and heuristic definition.<sup>67</sup> As concerns neoliberalism as a doctrine regarding economics (political economy), it signals the boiling down of classical liberalism to free market policies in an attempt to purify it from what its proponents believe to be the *necessarily* totalitarian nature of the state. Made up originally of three currents—the Austrian school (Ludwig von Mises, Friedrich Hayek), the Chicago School (Milton Friedman), and German *ordo-liberalism*—, neoliberalism began to triumph somewhere in the 1970s by displacing Keynesian economics as the mainstream. Hence neoliberal economists, which constitute the vast majority of “orthodox” economists today, shun the etiquette, preferring to refer to themselves as the defenders of nineteenth-century “neo-classical” economics.<sup>68</sup>

Yet the most significant innovation came from Chicago economist Gary Becker (1992 “Nobel” in economics), who expanded the application of neo-classical economic theory to non-economic phenomena (marriage, crime, household, family, discrimination, fertility, “human capital,” etc.), thereby opening the door to the submission of every parcel of human life to economic rationality. Wittingly or not, Becker sowed the seeds of the generalised “re-engineering” of statehood and the institutions of healthcare, education, welfare, and social security according to the logics of utilitarianism and the free market, and which has unravelled in the decades that followed.

On a second level, neoliberalism denotes a package of policies that culminated in the so-called “Washington Consensus” and the IMF’s “structural adjustment programs,” which have been applied and continue to be applied in a majority of countries around the world. The backbone of neoliberal policies is the ideological pursuit of economic growth (in terms of GDP modes of measurement) as the main process by which to solve not only economic but also social, cultural, and political issues and challenges. As a consequence, the meaning of “development” has been reduced to the bottom line of economic growth, while former social, cultural, sanitary, and political dimensions have been subsumed in its folds. Here, the most influential authors have been from the Chicago school, and Milton Friedman in particular.<sup>69</sup> Hallmark neoliberal policies include the privatisation of state assets, economic and financial deregulation, opening to foreign investment, the orientation of the economy towards the production of export-bound resources, products, and services, the privatisation of property rights (including the marketisation of priorly non-marketable things such as vegetal and animal life, water, vaccines, and so on), budgetary austerity (meant to actively cut state-provided social provisions), and inflation control. These policies became hegemonic after the collapse of the Soviet Union, turning Thatcher’s claim that “there is no alternative” into a self-fulfilling prophecy. All over the world, the effects of neoliberalism have been to significantly erode state power and state sovereignty, while undermining the nation as a protective container and backdrop. The development of digital technologies, namely computers and communications, has increased these effects exponentially, creating a tangible global sphere and an integrated *global* market. The “inter-national” world order—that is the world system comprised of competing and/or cooperating nation-states that characterised the Nation-State regime—has been replaced by an economically-driven global world system, in which nation-states are downgraded into shareholders among others (although significant ones) amidst complex layers of sovereignty and utilitarian rationality. It is important to insist that neoliberal reforms of the state have not meant the reduction of state budgets nor its overall shrinking. Rather, it is the rapport between the state and society that has changed, and how the latter’s expectations are no longer directed at the former with the same millenarian impulse. Furthermore, roll-back in welfare and social provisions has been accompanied by substantial investments in other functions, namely security (military, police),

law (namely in order to protect and enforce propriety rights), social control and evaluation, as well as the creation and maintain of market mechanisms.

The third level, which flows from the two others, brings us back to the Nation-State regime. Through neoliberalisation, the “Nation-State” dissolves into a “nation-state.” The ideological investments in the state as moral ideal and social regulator par excellence dried up. First, because the aims of these investments—the production of a utopian New Society and a New Subject, i.e., a Promised Land in the foreseeable future—were unrealistic, and subject to conflicting interpretations within each social body. Second, a multiplicity of actors proceeded to undermine its foundations in order to push the Market into the driver’s seat. Recall the two answers to the modern question of optimal regulation of society outside of a theological-political frame: the State and the Market. The ideal of the Market as the optimal social regulator through the “natural or spontaneous harmonisation of conflicting interests” was never abandoned, even though it was marginalised through most of the twentieth century.<sup>70</sup> This is what original neoliberal theories were about: bringing the idea of the market *back* as the necessary pathway for “true modernisation,” instead of the state. When we reread neoliberal authors today, we have to agree with Michel Foucault’s analysis according to which *neoliberalism proceeds to index the state and the whole of society* on the mechanisms of the “free market” and the maximising pursuit of self-interested individuals (*homo economicus*).<sup>71</sup> The triumph of neoliberalism means the overhaul of the State by the Market, and the erosion of the Nation in the face of the rise of the Global as a “plausibility structure.”<sup>72</sup> While supporters of neoliberalism, including the vast majority of economists and economic actors who do not identify with the term, are prone to justify themselves with claims of realism and pragmatism, the bottom line is that all of this is profoundly ideological. However “austere” the measures that come with it, the Market is as ideological as the State was, and the mythologies attached to it are as powerful. This is how consumerism’s dreams of material plenty and spiritual satisfaction function to support neoliberalism. Marketers around the world know this of course. For decades now, marketing has shifted to branding strategies that aim to “feed the soul,” promise authenticity, build “community”, and serve self-realisation projects rather than sell a material product or service. This is the lesson served by the anthropology of consumption in the wake of Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood’s seminal book, *The World of Goods*. Consumption is not so much about the exchange of goods as it is about identity, recognition, meaning, agency, and the participation in and production of a moral and social order.<sup>73</sup>

### **Marketisation as Neoliberalisation and Consumerisation**

The allures of consumerism have been key for the dissemination and development of capitalism in the post-Cold War era and the expansion of globalisation in so-called “developing” or Global-South countries. While the consumer

revolution preceded the rise of neoliberalism in the West, the scenario has sometimes been different elsewhere. In some places, both occurred at approximately the same time, while neoliberal reforms produced a consumer society in other places. The latter scenario is the most obvious in China. The situation is therefore akin to the ways in which the state and the nation were institutionalised, and historical variations nevertheless play out within a spectrum of possibilities. Sometimes it was the state that preceded and even produced the nation, and sometimes it was the contrary. Similarly, the consumer revolution sometimes preceded the neoliberal revolution (as in the West), and sometimes it was the contrary. In the context of the present book, it is important to sketch out the various pathways, yet the end result is what really matters: the production of Market societies. The concepts of *neoliberalisation* and *consumerisation* are therefore helpful to highlight how both the neoliberal and consumer revolutions are complex sets of *processes* that are bound by what scholars call “path dependency” (i.e., how local trajectories determine in part further developments) and which evolve in non-linear, non-teleological, and variegated manners.<sup>74</sup> Yet, in many places across the world, these complementary processes have been at work in a way that has profoundly impacted the institutionalisations of the prior Nation-State regime, and every social sphere.<sup>75</sup> Everywhere, the State has been disenchanted, leaving a weakened state in its stead. Everywhere, the Welfare and Socialist ideals have been eroded, and social provisions have been significantly reformed, privatised, and indexed onto market mechanisms, competition, and utilitarian cost-efficiency. Most readers will recognise how these processes continue to play out within higher education. I propose the concept of *marketisation* to capture how neoliberalisation and consumerisation processes combine in order to shape and transform global societies within the grammar of the Market.<sup>76</sup> Within this frame, and in order to ensure a maximal level of clarity in the use of concepts, I suggest to define neoliberalisation as the institutional and top-down portion of marketisation, while consumerisation captures the bottom-up processes by which the social ethos of consumerism takes shape within the wider culture.<sup>77</sup> Yet, while I deem it heuristic to distinguish the processes by which neoliberalism and consumerism play out, they are complementary and hinged in practice.

One example of how neoliberalism and consumerism combine is how the former’s preferred model of citizenship is the consumer. This is captured in the title of Milton Friedman’s famous book *Free to Choose*, in which human liberty, including political liberty, is cast in economic terms as the freedom to choose within an unregulated market.<sup>78</sup> Hence one well-reported consequence of marketisation is depoliticisation through the reduction of state and citizen sovereignty, the proceduralisation and judicialisation of decision processes, and the joint rise of authoritarianism and decline of democracy.<sup>79</sup> Catalysed by the development of digital media and the connected phone, Internet, and social media, the critique of Nation-State era institutions and institutionalisations in all spheres, including politics, science, education,

health, and religion, has been radicalised, leading to a sense of instability, uncertainty, and risk that summons security and securitising responses, including authoritarian tendencies and apocalyptic mythologies. It also opens the door for new charismatic authorities to emerge, while the rational-legal mode of authority, typical of Nation-State regime institutions, dwindles. The rise of charismatic authorities is particularly visible in the field of politics, as media-savvy figures have effectively supplanted the political parties of the twentieth century in many countries. Yet the rise of charismatic authorities, which I argue is intrinsic to the actual brand of consumerised, financialised, and globalised capitalism,<sup>80</sup> has affected a number of social domains, including culture, health, and of course religion, as we will see.

Some scholars have argued that media should be understood as its own differentiated sphere, which forces itself onto other social spheres, including religion, through a process of “mediatisation.”<sup>81</sup> This perspective is misguided, since it completely misses how the Global-Market regime blurs the boundaries between differentiated spheres and favours hybrid phenomena and fluxes. In addition, it fails to see how the media of the time (telegraph, telephone, newspapers, radio, television) were instrumental in producing and maintaining the Nation-State regime, and how the current media (Internet, mobile phones, social media, computers, connected devices) serves the production and reproduction of the Global-Market configuration. The Internet and social media, for instance, are inseparable from consumerism. They are owned by gigantic private companies, submitting the public sphere to the logics of capitalism and profit-making, almost free from state regulation or intervention. Digital media have exponentially multiplied the dissemination and outreach of consumerism as well as its coextensive ethics of authenticity and expressive individualism. This is made perfectly clear in the case studies presented here. The very logics of social media, which have exploded as a social practice in pretty much every country on the planet, including in areas without prior development, are that of expressive individualism: expressing oneself and being recognised in turn.

Charles Taylor’s analysis of the ethics of authenticity and expressive individualism is insightful and instructive. He insists on the profundity of the changes, which give rise to a new “social imaginary.” To illustrate, he cites the example of fashion, but social media works in the same way. The public sphere, he argues, now consists of mutual display and mutual categorisation, and therefore recognition. ‘The space of fashion is one in which we sustain a language together of signs and meanings, which is constantly changing, but which at any moments is the background needed to give our gestures the sense they have.’<sup>82</sup> With the Internet and social media, this public space has been de-territorialised and radically globalised, creating new possibilities for social formations and social bonds. This contributes to the erosion of the nation as container, as well as the de-differentiation of social spheres. One particularly affected divide is the public/private one, which was foundational for the Nation-State regime and the modern institutionalisations

of the regulation of religion. This has extraordinary consequences, therefore, for religion. As does the blurring of another foundational divide of the Nation-State regime in a certain number of places: the secular/religion one.

Another important characteristic of the Global-Market regime is also a consequence of consumerisation and its coextensive hyper-mediatisation:<sup>83</sup> the *lifestylisation* of social and cultural practices, as well as identity and community formation. Lifestyles are holistic constructions in which social meanings and determinations appear to fade behind social actors' agency. Lifestyles are the product of the aestheticisation of everyday life typical of a consumer culture. They embody the ultimate freedom to choose in an individualist society: to choose who one is—one's identity. This identity is constitutively expressive, meant to be displayed and publicised. Lifestyles are the expression of expressive individualism and its conception of the self. Within this socially constructed framework,

we tend to perceive our ideals as emerging from the deep within us, as opposed to the society in which we live. In other words, we see ourselves as individuals—those whose true selves pre-exist society, and whose realization is the hard-won achievement of having railed against its dictates and discourses.<sup>84</sup>

Lifestyles are more than the sum of their parts and include clothing, appearance, demeanour, musical and aesthetic preferences, tattoos and other body ornaments or modifications, values, worldviews, and so on. Lifestyles compound the expression of identity and a way of life, a way of being-in-the-world; that is, life ethics, or how to behave and live. They are market niches, the coalescences and “social configurations”<sup>85</sup> (Weber) of a market society. Taken broadly, lifestyles replace, fractalise, horizontalise, and complexify the former social structure that was divided between social classes.

Charles Taylor's discussion and analysis of expressive individualism stems from his observation of historical developments in the West, and he leaves out the rest of the world entirely. As a consequence, Taylor can convince himself (and many of his readers) that the end result has been the complete evacuation of transcendence in our social moorings and that we now live in a post-Durkheimian, secularised, “immanent frame” in which religion is but a personal choice.<sup>86</sup> Taken from a global perspective, such an argument is difficult to hold because it posits yet another version of the Grand Modern Myth of Western exceptionalism, pinned onto a washed down yet operative evolutionist timeline. Things are more complicated when we consider how consumerism and its “spirit,” expressive individualism and the ethics of authenticity, have been successfully appropriated and acculturated by non-Western societies. This is one of the surprises I had while doing research for the present book: the extent to which expressive individualism has penetrated societies across the world, including some, like China and others in the Middle East and Central Asia, with significantly different cultures from

the West. Here too, differences play out within a spectrum of possibilities that are contained within a definable structure. As the chapters in this volume show, the acculturation of consumerism in the Global South has provoked deep social and cultural changes. Furthermore, and this is another finding unearthed by this research, religion has played an extremely significant and essential role in these processes, as we will see.

The extent of the transformations over the course of the last four decades is considerable and has affected every social class, every dimension of social life, and every societal institution. The result, which has perhaps not been sufficiently appreciated, has been a major change in the direction of social change. While any rupture also comprises a certain amount of continuity, I argue that the neoliberal and consumer revolutions, which are integral to the latest wave of globalisation, have affected (and continue to affect) the very foundations and dynamics of societies worldwide, as well as the world order. This is what I seek to capture with the suggestion that there has been a shift from the Nation-State to the Global-Market regime, and I argue that this framework allows us to better understand what has been going on when we talk about the shift from modernity to post or ultramodernity.

### **The 1960s Countercultural Religious Revolution**

In the sociology of religion, the dominant secularisation narrative sees the 1960s as the tipping point of the decline of religion in the West. In its wake, the narrative goes, we are left with a fragmented, unstructured, and frankly puzzling religious landscape inhabited by people with less and less meaningful religious affiliations and who increasingly define themselves as “spiritual-not-religious.” Following the shift of focus, within the social sciences, from social structure to social actors, the fact that the latter insist that they are “not religious” has led most sociologists to conclude that they are not. If there is little doubt that a major rupture happened in the 1960s in the wake of the coming-of-age of the baby boomer generation, there are other ways of looking at things, especially when we consider them from a global perspective.

As we have seen, the 1960s is when consumerism penetrated Western societies (and beyond), and became the dominant social ethos. This is also when the “expressive revolution”<sup>87</sup> occurred and the ethics of authenticity dislodged the former rationalist and honour-based ethics. This, and the changes that affected religion at the time, are arguably linked. What did happen to religion?

One of the most striking developments of the 1960s was the countercultural surge. The 1960s countercultural movement, which exceeded the strict limits of the hippie phenomenon, had a profoundly religious dimension to it. Through a dizzying array of sources, the counterculture contributed to massify and mainstream a new brand of religion we now call holistic “spirituality.” This new highly personalised form of religiosity crystallised in the New Age movement as well as in a steady influx of “oriental” and “tribal”

practices, theologies, and symbolisms. This has been well-documented.<sup>88</sup> In this ever-changing and ever-expanding nebula, experience became the focus of a religious disposition patterned as a *quest*—a quest for meaning, and the quest for the true self sought by expressive individualism. The millenarian social and political movements of the eighteenth to mid-twentieth century postulated utopias in which individual emancipation—the modern ideal par excellence—was achievable through *collective* emancipation. Similarly, the myth of Progress encompassed society as a whole. However, as the Nation-State regime’s twilight was nearing, the counterculture inverted the terms and the meaning of emancipation and progress. Within New Age but also more widely, namely as a result of the growing social impact of psychological therapies, individual progress in the form of personal self-consciousness and self-realisation was increasingly seen as the most effective means for true and profound progress on the social and even global level.

This phenomenon has been notoriously difficult to grasp for sociologists, first of all because it is feebly or non-institutionalised, non-exclusive, and mixed with other supposedly “secular” fields like psychology, medicine, science, and health. Certainly, it does not look like church religion, which remains the discipline’s standard for “real” religion.<sup>89</sup> It also counts a majority of women, while sociologists of religion are still mostly male. Furthermore, it defies the laws of rationality, with practices and meanings collaged into vertiginous systems that are ever-changing and do not even seem to ask for firm belief. For quantitative sociologists, “these people” are very difficult to count. They do not seem to coalesce into much when using the usual survey methods.<sup>90</sup> Yet with each passing year, New Age, Buddhist, Hindu, Sufi, First Nations, Shamanic, Pagan, and so many other references and related practices become increasingly common and permeate the mainstream. Even US television mega-star Oprah Winfrey has been devoting significant parts of her broadcasts and publications to the promotion of meditation and other “spiritual” techniques for self-realisation since the second half of the 1990s, bringing this knowledge into mainstream America’s homes. Meanwhile, the nebula keeps on growing, diffracting into ever-more niches. What we see today is in many respects the development and maturation of what Thomas Luckmann called “invisible religion” already in 1967. Faced with this efflorescence, a number of scholars, most of them committed to qualitative methods, have raised to the challenge of understanding these new forms of religiosity and have asserted with some conviction that “new spiritualities,” as the New Age-related nebula is sometimes called, form the implicit majority type of religion in most Western societies today.<sup>91</sup>

The rise of “new spiritualities,” or what I have called elsewhere the “Neo-Nebula,”<sup>92</sup> is usually considered a Western phenomenon. Yet, a more global look shows that this is untrue. Already in the 1960s, the religious exoticism of the counterculture was grounded in reciprocal relationships with non-Western countries that were idealised as reservoirs of antique knowledge and wisdom, and therefore resistance to materialism and excessive

rationalism. The Beatles' famous trips to India, where they met with sitar genius Ravi Shankar and spiritual gurus, exemplify how the "spiritual turn" was a two-way process that had consequences for all parties. Just like colonisation had also been a process by which both coloniser and colonised were transformed and shaped.<sup>93</sup> The rippling effects of the countercultural shift from "religion" to "spirituality" reached the whole of Latin America<sup>94</sup> and out to the furthest outposts of Asia.<sup>95</sup> These trends are contemporary with the beginning of the rehabilitation of Sufism in Southeast and Central Asia, as well as in the Middle East. From yoga to qigong and Neo-Shamanism, their efflorescence has unfolded through increasingly intense transnational networks that make them fully global phenomena. Here again, local differences and variations are second to a shared embedment in the soteriology of self-realisation, connection with the self through nature (and vice versa), symbolic and ritual experiences of immanent types of transcendences, and expressions of the ethics of authenticity. The rise of self-oriented brands of "spirituality" is therefore a global phenomenon. It is not the particularity of the West, somewhere at the tip of the arrow of time.

### **The Rise of Charismatic Christianity**

Another set of developments took root in the 1960s in reaction to the massive changes that were happening in Western societies. Nowhere was this as clear as in the US, yet this movement has tended to remain in the shadows of the counterculture and has perhaps not been apprehended to its full extent. This seems important to correct today, especially in the light of the recent and furious backlash we have seen against the heritage of the 1960s' cultural revolution, which is at the heart of the authoritarian and populist upsurges we have seen being expressed in the most blatant of manners in the US, Brazil, Hungary, Russia, and the Philippines, among other places.<sup>96</sup> While mainstream Christian denominations seemed clueless as how to face the emptying of the pews and the tides of change, a figure stood out. A figure who, in retrospect, did face these tides and did initiate a massive wave of change of his own. Darren Dochuk narrates how, in 1969, a month after Woodstock, Billy Graham appeared before fifty thousand people and a brochette of influential actors, businessmen, and politicians in Anaheim's Big A baseball stadium, on the launching day of his Southern California Crusade. After ten straight days, Graham had drawn over 384,000 to hear his passionate sermons in which he warned against the perils brewing in nearby university campuses, where, according to him, 'student militants, inspired by reckless utopian visions, were promising to destroy America and the democratic political system it held dear.'<sup>97</sup> Railing against communism, liberation theology, and the moral depravity of the burgeoning counterculture, Graham heralded faith in Jesus, conservative moral values, the family, and the virtues of capitalism.

Billy Graham was an ordained Southern Baptist minister, with something of the Pentecostals, the Methodists, and the Presbyterians. Yet, he unabashedly

transcended these labels in favour of an overarching Evangelicalism that presented itself as an American-born, universal, and *authentic* Christianity. Graham took religion out of the box. Out of the church, out of the usual time of the service or mass, out of the intrinsic limitations of those spaces in terms of number of participants, and into the most secular [sic] of temples: the sports stadium. If these meetings are to be considered religious meetings as I believe they should, what is striking is how these rituals blew up the service format. The whole service was the sermon, peppered with sloganised and decontextualised Bible quotes, performed in a way emphasising charismatic response. His discourse called for everyone to build a personal connection with God, or Jesus, or the Holy Spirit, and to invite Him within one's heart and within one's life. He called for the *experience* of God as a marker of truth. Now, Billy Graham was by no means a revolutionary. He and other "crusaders" were aiming to further a two-century-old tradition of religion revivalism in the US. While sentimentalism was developing in Europe, later giving birth to Romanticism, evangelical movements in the US were already stressing emotion and personal transformation within a conservative agenda. Yet, belying this continuity, Graham introduced a new way of reaching out to mass audiences by making the most of the mediatic and technological means at his disposal. The experience of attending his Crusades was personal, but the social effervescence of the mass gathering was key. Religion in this sense is destined to fill people's lives completely, including in the everyday. To be a Christian means adopting a Christian *lifestyle* that was conservative but thoroughly modern, and a total assimilation of capitalism.

Billy Graham's career did not miraculously start on that day in September 1969 in Anaheim. He was also not the only prominent figure in the evangelical revival of the times nor the only one to adopt this brand of liturgy. But he became the most influential, including as the personal pastor for US presidents, starting with Harry Truman. He put up a multimedia empire (comprising of television, radio, and publications) to act as a megaphone for his message, and inundated the media, becoming a household name with extraordinary soft power. Yet he was also a global figure, bringing his "Crusades" to 185 countries by the end of the 1970s, filling stadiums, esplanades, and parking lots with tens of thousands of people. He literally changed the lives of millions who felt "called to Christ" in his meetings. He completely reformed and catalysed the development of Christianity in places like South Korea, the Philippines, and Sub-Saharan Africa, giving a massive boost to evangelical charismatic Christianity. If this brand of charismatic Christianity is one of the most dynamic religious movements worldwide in terms of growth, eating at mainline Christian denominations and making new converts, it is in part because of his tireless proselytising and the efficiency of his new method and style. Graham found a way to modernise Christianity and make it a child of its times. He also rightly identified the opposition in the rising counterculture. While defending traditional values such as the nuclear family, he also, and perhaps inadvertently, tuned evangelicalism to

expressive individualism with his focus on individualism, the American way of life, and capitalism.

Around the turn of the 1980s, as Graham took a step away from official relations with politics, he was overtaken on his political right by figures like Jerry Falwell and figures from second-wave Pentecostalism like Jim Bakker, Pat Robertson, and associations like the Assemblies of God. It is this next generation of hyper-mediatised evangelical pastors that eventually produced the mega-church movement and the prosperity theologies we see today.<sup>98</sup> Four decades later, a significant part of Graham's legacy is the radicalised "silent majority" that has overtaken the Republican Party by jumping on Donald's Trump bandwagon, with important consequences for US democracy.<sup>99</sup> The cultural war Graham initiated has grown into a deadlock, with American people alarmingly divided. Similar developments have erupted elsewhere with the rise of Pentecostals, whether in Brazil or in Africa. Yet, this culture war has avatars in other parts of the world and in other religions, from the Hindu ultra-nationalists in India to the Christian Orthodox Patriarch Kyrill in Russia. The rise of Pentecostalism is a global phenomenon and occurs against a representation of the global.<sup>100</sup> When we add to it the non-Christian phenomena that share its basic characteristics and lead a similar pro-capitalist conservative cultural war, the globality claim is reinforced significantly.

Scholars classify evangelical charismatic Christianity and Pentecostalism within Protestantism, and it is true that it is historically rooted in this tradition. Yet this way of labelling the movement downplays the revolution represented by the formidable rise of Billy Graham and conservative charismatic Christianity. The nature of the changes leads me to argue that the charismatic surge is perhaps something like a new Reformation. And as with the sixteenth-century Reformation, the Pentecostal one has forced every other current of Christianity to change in sync or at least attempt to position itself with respect to it.

### **Religion in the Global-Market Regime**

The synchronicity of the New Age and Charismatic/Pentecostal eruption, added to its global nature, is not coincidental. It should make us think that another way of telling the story of religion in modernity, and of the last few decades in particular, is perhaps less quantitative (decline, return) than *qualitative*—a change in the very nature, form, and social location of religion. Both New Age (whether in the Western forms or that of Sufism, and other spiritualities) and Global Pentecostalism do not fit the church model of religion. Instead of considering these loosely institutionalised movements as being interesting but marginal with respect to religion today, as they usually are portrayed, I argue that New Age and Global Pentecostalism form the poles between which religion takes shape in the Global-Market regime. They are two responses to the erosion of Nation-State arrangements and the neoliberal and consumer revolutions, but they are also vectors for the overall marketisation

of religion. More profoundly, they are also powerful actors in the acculturation of the dynamics of global capitalism and the new world order.

It is not coincidental once again that these religious forms have emerged as clearly in the US. The Nation-State regime of religion is the direct product, as we have seen, of European history, marked by a Westphalian legacy in the making of modern nation-states. The ideological matrix behind these formations was the product of the Enlightenment, especially in its French formulation. In the chapters that follow, it is indeed the French version of Republicanism and High Modern Idealism that was the principal reference in Russia, the Middle East, and China. The last decades, however, have seen a rapid erosion of this ideological fabric in favour of an American brand of modernism based on economic liberalism and individualism. The model is no longer European but North American. Within the parameters of the Nation-State regime, the US appeared exceptional for sociologists of religion. Within the parameters of the Global-Market regime, the exceptionalism appears to be that of Europe.<sup>101</sup> This is understandable since the US diverged from a Westphalian make-up: its territory was not fixed, it was born as the result of the expulsion of the British monarchy, and it was religiously diverse from the outset. Conversely, the Westphalian legacy of Europe, and its profound embedment within the Nation-State regime, especially as concerns religion, makes the erosion of this model and the development of Global-Market characteristics less immediately visible than in the US and many other parts of the world, even though I would argue that they are as important and structural.<sup>102</sup>

Looking at things from outside the West makes it possible to be less fixated on Western-centric stories of exceptionalism and more sensitive to the directions of religious change in the light of globalisation. In this light, New Age and Global Pentecostalism appear to be ideal-typical of religion today in many ways. Taken together, they form a system, a structure, or an episteme. They share common traits on a structural level, yet they are opposed in many respects in terms of content, almost term to term. As we will see, there are New Age avatars in Islam, namely within Sufism, but also in other forms. The same is true in China, where significant parts of the qigong phenomenon have charted New Age-like paths. Similarly, there are Pentecostal-like expressions within global Islam, for example, the emergence of Mega-mosques on the Mega-church model in places like Nigeria.<sup>103</sup> More generally, some forms of Market Islam bear a resemblance with charismatic Christianity. Pentecostalism is exploding in China, meanwhile, yet the popular religion revival shares many of its characteristics. It must be clear however that the New Age/Pentecostal couple serves a heuristic purpose rather than being another box in which to fit all types of religion. It is suggestive and points to a number of characteristics that define religion in the Global-Market regime.

Galen Watts is one of the rare scholars to have remarked on the structural convergence of New Age and charismatic Christianity, beyond their obvious differences. In *The Spiritual Turn*, he shows how both these movements

are rooted in expressive individualism and the ethics of authenticity, and how they are expressions of a wider constellation he calls the “religion of the heart.”<sup>104</sup> Similar to my idea of a religious regime, Watts refers to the religious individualism of today as a “cultural structure” that took hold in the 1960s and is driven by expressive individualism. Rather than seeing this period as “unusually irreligious”<sup>105</sup> and the turning point in the decline of religion,<sup>106</sup> Watts suggests that it represents the moment when churchd religion ceded the way to *unchurched* forms of religion. The coming of age of the baby boomer generation was therefore a ‘period of tremendous religious ferment’ rather than steep decline,<sup>107</sup> in the sense that it marks ‘the era when the religion of the heart moved from the cultural margins to the mainstream.’<sup>108</sup> By calling this underlying structure the religion of the heart, Watts draws our attention to the shift of emphasis from belief and reason to that of experience and emotions, and to the ways in which these new forms of religion are an answer to the imperatives of self-realisation intrinsic to expressive individualism and the ethics of authenticity.

In his book, Watts brings a variety of movements together that are usually held separate within the folds of the religion of the heart, namely New Age and Christian evangelicalism. Rather than labelling the latter as a “life as” form of religion, as Heelas and Woodhead did in *The Spiritual Turn*,<sup>109</sup> and therefore presenting them in continuation with mainstream Christianity, Watts emphasises evangelicalism and Pentecostalism’s structural resemblances with self-centred spiritualities. Evangelicalism insists on the immanent transcendence of God and summons its action in everyday life, contrary to the more vertical and radical transcendence of mainstream denominations, and focuses on experience. Again, this is not a particularity of Western countries. In his seminal *Pentecostalism: The World Their Parish*, David Martin writes, ‘Insofar as Pentecostalism spreads it does so principally through a charismatic movement partly inside the older churches and partly “breaking bounds” in every sense, even displaying faint affinities with New Age “spirituality”.’<sup>110</sup> Following Watts, the “faint affinities” are due to a shared structure, while the differences are oppositions of content. New Age and Pentecostalism ideal-typically define the extremities of this expressive structure, which also comprises various other phenomena, depending on where you are. In the liberal West, Watts rightly includes supposedly “secular” (yet in my view profoundly religious) movements like the Human Potential Movement, Alcoholics Anonymous, and the plethora of holistic psychological offers that cater to the self. Elsewhere, these phenomena are matched by similar investments that mix spirituality, psychology, and management in order to promote personal responsibility, self-realisation, and growth.

Rather than seeking to count self-spiritualities aficionados, Watts shows how expressive individualism and the religion of the heart have been institutionalised in a set of cultural institutional fields, both “religious” and “secular.” He examines the holistic milieu and the charismatic wing of the congregational domain, but also popular culture and entertainment media

institutions, the arts, healthcare institutions (both medical and “alternative”), educational institutions, consumption, the workplace, and management. All of these promote expressive individualism and more or less directly lead to practices that have a religious dimension partaking in the religion of the heart. Watts therefore seeks to show how the religion of the heart is institutionalised, only not on the church model.<sup>111</sup> As religion was transversal in premodern societies, so is it anew, at least in part, in the Global-Market regime.

The immanence of God and other forms of the super-empirical (Life, Love, Nature, the Universe, the Cosmos, the Self, etc.) is characteristic of religion today, as is the primacy of experience, the importance of authenticity and expressivity, the theme of healing and the teleology of self-realisation, subjectivation through choice, and the sacralisation of the individual. Rather than being focused on otherworldly salvation, religion today is made to cater to the demands brought forth by expressive individualism, especially as relates to identity, belonging, and life ethics: How to live one’s life? How to succeed, professionally but also in relationships? Overall, the forms of religion that have had success in the last few decades are those which espouse the characteristics of the Global-Market regime and have been successfully lifestyle, while those who are experiencing decline and are forced to reform are those who are institutionalised on the Nation-State model of religion. Within the frame of the Global-Market regime, religion comes out of its box, so to speak. It spills out of the church model and diffuses within society in feebly institutionalised forms. The de-differentiation of religion in particular and of social spheres in general leads to new hybrid phenomena, in which religion mixes with healthcare, education, sports, law, politics, entertainment, tourism, and fashions, and is a constant in geopolitical affairs. The actual cultural wars that have been erupting in many parts of the world are wars of religion, sometimes literally. Meanwhile, the neoliberal deconstruction of the state’s welfare mission opens new opportunities for religious organisations, at home and abroad. Religion is less and less contained by national institutions and increasingly promoted by organisations that pursue growth strategies backed by a heightened sense of branding. Even established religious institutions, such as the Western mainline Westphalian churches, are forced to change from government to governance-type governmentality, and become “customer-oriented.”<sup>112</sup> The demand for life rituals coupled with decreasing mass or service attendance defies mainline churches’ objectives and turns them into service providers. In the Global-South, where the church model was imposed rather than home-grown, the Global-Market regime opens the door for the return, in significant new guises, of traditional forms of religion, as the case of China vividly illustrates. In many places, experience-based religion flourishes, whether in formerly repressed and delegitimated mystical forms or mass gatherings fostering collective effervescence.<sup>113</sup> Communities become voluntary, and religion becomes constitutively transnational. The global now provides the backdrop, and diasporas are activated as important actors with the help of cheap travel and digital communications.

As religion in the Nation-State regime was *nationalised* and *statised*, so is it *marketised* and *globalised* in the Global-Market regime. In the same way that the state did not disappear in the process, neither does the nation. Yet the nation has been significantly reconfigured. In the Nation-State regime, the nation acted as a container and a backdrop for identities. The world order was *inter-national* in make-up, and the nation was a vehicle for the universal. Nations emerged in the ruins of empires, yet their fragmentation was halted by the idea that progress favoured large and therefore powerful territorially bounded nation-states. Many nations were in fact multi-national, from the United Kingdom to Spain, Canada, Yugoslavia, and China. It is noteworthy to recall how two conceptions of the nation emerged out of the nineteenth century. One was ethnic, and based on the homogenous idea of one language, one race, and one religion. The other was the nation as a social contract, which allowed for more pluralism within a firm sense of unity.<sup>114</sup> It is the latter conception that won in most cases, especially after the defeat of fascism in World War II.

The dissolution of the Nation-State regime has affected the nation in two major ways. First, by removing the lid: neoliberalisation has undermined state sovereignty through the establishment of essentially economic supranational regulating institutions, the de-nationalisation of the economy, and the promotion of cultural cosmopolitanism. Second, by removing the bottom: the lifestylisation of society has generated the need for both more global and more local loci of authenticity. The shaking of the pillars of the prior regime has changed so many things, and global capitalism's fluxes have created such great insecurity that it has generated the need for stability and certainty, hence the intensified search for *fundamentals*. The surge of fundamentalisms of all sorts has been one effect of this, as they seek to go back to a golden era, be it the times of the Prophet Mohammad (Salafism, ISIS), pre-Soviet imperial times (Russia), Imperial Britain (Brexit), or Post-War America (Trump, Evangelicals).<sup>115</sup> These movements market a nostalgia for the securities of the former regime, that of the strong state and impervious nation. Neo-fundamentalist movements and authoritarian populist-nationalist movements are thus two faces of the same coin. They are consequences of the shift from the Nation-State to the Global-Market regime and the destabilisation of the former.

The effects of these shifts are manifold. There has been a wide-ranging movement to re-legitimise formerly repressed regional identities, languages, cultures, and religions. Think of Wales, Bretagne, Catalunya, and Northern Italy in the West, but also how indigenous people in Australia, the Americas, and elsewhere have earned renewed legitimacy and have managed in some cases to reconstruct their traditions and heritages, turning their former shame into pride. Similarly, the erosion of the Nation opens the door to new investments such as a revival of ethnic-based (homogeneity-driven) nationalisms. The situation in ex-Yugoslavia is both striking and paradigmatic. Many in the Balkans in the 1990s woke up to discover themselves

Catholics, Orthodox, or Muslim, and Croats, Serbs, Bosnians, or Kosovars. Since then, neo-fascist brands of nationalisms have arisen around the world, often with a strong religious component. In many places, whether Narendra Modi's India or Jair Bolsonaro's Brazil, this brand of authoritarian religion-backed ultra-nationalism is coupled with a definitely neoliberal orientation. As we will see in the chapters to come, the situation in certain Eastern European countries, including Russia, as well as that in China under Xi Jinping, can be read through this lens. The surge of ethnic nationalism, hand in hand with authoritarianism, is therefore a consequence of the erosion of the Nation-State, rather than its prolongation. A sign of this is how the social imaginary of "empire" has made a comeback, from Hungary to Russia, China, and Turkey. It is the nostalgia of a stable and readable world in the face of the insecurities of the present Global-Market regime that feeds these dynamics, especially for certain social classes.

The very meaning of modernity has changed over the last decades. Modernity in the Nation-State regime was essentially political and realised through politics. It was the European Enlightenment's conception of modernity in many respects, especially that of France, with its focus on reason, progress, and collective emancipation. The attractiveness of the French model of secularity (*laïcité*) in places like Turkey, Iran, Egypt, and Africa is a testimony to this influence. The idea of modernity that thrives today is of another sort, and closer to the meaning that emerged in the US: less political, less state-based, more individualistic, and essentially economic. It also provides a very fertile soil for religion. The cases presented in this book certainly attest to such a mutation.

## Chapter Overview

The explicit aim of the Nation-State to Global-Market framework is to allow for an alternative understanding of the destinies of religion in the modern world. The dominant narrative until now has been secularisation, which has been intrinsic to Western thought and Western self-conceptions. It developed from a certain conception of religion inherited from West-European post-Reformation Christianity. This understanding of religion became sedimented in the secularisation paradigm, which far exceeds secularisation theories per se. The implicit assumptions of the secularisation paradigm (methodological nationalism, centrality of belief, exclusive belonging, differentiation, institutionalisation, importance of canonised texts, political focus, privatisation, etc.) carry the normative issues, hopes, and worries specific to the Western experience of modernity. Proceeding from this ethnocentric perspective, social sciences have tended to analyse non-Western situations in terms of secularisation. Hence scholarship that has been busy analysing the multiplicity of pathways of secularity in non-Western countries. Yet, because of its implicit assumptions, this scholarship has missed how these pathways of secularity have taken a curve rather than developed linearly.

In essence, the important shift in trajectories brought forth by the latest wave of market-driven globalisation has gone remarkably unnoticed.<sup>116</sup> How is this possible?

The change of gaze that I suggest here allows us to better see how the implicit assumptions making up the secularisation paradigm crystallised during the formation stage of the Nation-State regime, from the nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century. This process acted to naturalise a type of religion that is in fact contextual to this historical period. Because of this, secularisation paradigm-grounded analyses can only miss the nature and importance of the neoliberal and consumer revolutions, which have radically altered prior arrangements and reoriented the direction of change. This is why social sciences grounded in the secularisation paradigm can only understand the destinies of religion since the 1960s in terms of decline. However, if we take a side step with respect to the implicit assumptions of the secularisation paradigm, we see that it is not religion per se that is declining as it is *churched* religion—that is Nation-State regime religion. What the West is leaving behind is not religion, but rather mainline post-Reformation Christianity. And what emerges in its place is not a fragmented and disarticulated web of “not-really-religious-religion” and “spiritualities,” but a vibrant new religious landscape in which religion is no longer assignable within a neatly differentiated and institutionalised box. And finally, this landscape is structured by a new grammar: that of consumerism and neoliberalism-driven marketisation.

This book is about adopting an alternative perspective to look at religion (and life) outside the West. This perspective is grounded in the holistic epistemology and methodology of Mauss’s total social fact approach, which pays close attention to wider social transformations and analyses religion with respect to societies as a whole. We thereby set ourselves to see with better clarity how the nation-state was made to shape and regulate the whole of societies, and how the neoliberal and consumer revolutions alter the very foundations of this arrangement, and therefore every dimension of the social, including religion. I could have chosen many ways to apply this method and the Nation-State to Global-Market framework on religion, for instance by focusing on certain religious phenomena in particular. Yet my aim is to challenge the secularisation narrative that continues to underpin most current approaches in the social scientific study of religion. These include Rational Choice, which explicitly opposes secularisation theories yet proceeds from the implicit assumptions of the secularisation paradigm and its model of churched religion. In order to propose an alternative that I deem better adapted for understanding religion in today’s world (and not only in the West), I have chosen to adopt a very broad gaze by focusing on large cultural regions over the span of a century and a half.

The analyses that follow show the heuristic potential of the Nation-State to Global-Market framework. I argue that it is less ethnocentric than differentiation-bound secularisation, since Mauss developed the total social

fact approach from the analysis of non-Western and non-modern societies. At the same time, Mauss prescribed the total social fact approach for the whole of sociology, including for Western and modern, complex societies. With the following chapters, I am putting Mauss's method to work to do what I believe is necessary in this day and age of hyper-specialisation: to collect, assemble, cross, compare, and synthesise a broad range of works and approaches to show how the wild array of religious phenomena in a given cultural geography coalesce into readable and identifiable forms, structured by a set of organising principles.

The list of cases presented here is the product of the vagaries of life (which I briefly describe in the Foreword), yet it is not completely without logic. Reading Patrick Haenni's pioneering book *L'islam de marché* (Market Islam)<sup>117</sup> was a revelation. This prompted me to begin to look into the spectacular changes occurring within Islam, in Western diasporas but also in Muslim-majority countries. In *Religion, Modernity, Globalisation*, I devoted a chapter to the description and analysis of these changes in the world's most populous Muslim country, Indonesia. In *Religion in the Market Era*, I shift the focus to the Middle East, mainly, but also Western diasporas. What appears is how the transformations affecting Islam are global—shaped, carried, and inflexed by transnational relations. Chapter 2 therefore starts by mapping how Islam was transformed within the Nation-State regime, as newly independent Muslim-majority countries proceeded to modernise themselves. Appropriating the High Modern Ideals described above, they sought to construct new nation-states from colonial mappings and prior empires. In the wake of Kemal Atatürk, a generation of radical reformers emerged throughout the Muslim world to push their countries on the road to Progress. Religion was at the centre of their attention. Islam had to be purified of its irrational, superstitious, popular, and traditional elements and made to be modern: rational, modernity-compatible, and nation-state serving. I show how developments can be summarised within an epistemological structure that opposes secularist understandings of Islam (Islam as a privatised phenomenon and shared cultural *fond*) and two different forms of Islamism: *political Islam*, first, devoted to the project of Islamising through the action of the state, top-down, and organised around large, bureaucratic, national institutions; and *apolitical Islam*, second, in the form of more marginal spiritualised movements. The chapter then tracks how neoliberal reforms affected these arrangements, and how this relatively stable structure diffracted into a variety of marketised movements and accomplished a change in the strategies of Islamisation. No longer state-focused, Islamism has become lifestyled and aims to Islamise through mores, bottom-up. The story shows how Turkey was at the forefront of these changes, namely through the expansion of the Gülen movement. Spiritualised Islamic movements, meanwhile, like the Tablighi and Salafi, have moved from the margins to centre stage, presenting low-threshold offers, community, experiences, recognition, and even upward mobility. This chapter ends with a discussion on the new jihadism initiated by al-Qaeda and

superseded by ISIS, showing how their power of attraction resides in part in their ability to make the most of decentralised, governance-type modes of organisation, digital-age communication strategies, and the production of the most authentic lifestyle of all, that of a “super-Muslim.”

Chapter 3 continues the analysis to include what I argue to be among the most important trends within Islam: the explosion of a global halal market. I argue that there is an ongoing process of “halalisation,” by which Islam is being made to take on consumerised and lifestyled forms. I choose to include a broad set of related phenomena in my definition of halal, showing their common, underlying logics. The chapter starts with the formidable development of Muslim fashions, including the veil and the burkini, which I cast as expressions of what Asef Bayat calls “non-movements”<sup>118</sup>—social formations typical of the Global-Market regime. Yet, Muslim fashions are only the tip of the iceberg making up authentic Muslim consumption, and an Islamic, “halalised” market of goods and services. Over the course of four decades, the halal referent has gone from being an adjective defining what Islam has nothing to say about to a noun defining what it is to be a Muslim. This has been enabled by the formidable development of an actual global market of halal goods, which has been a direct product of economic globalisation and World Trade Organisation regulation. The development of halal has been made possible by the collapse of the nuances and carefulness of Islamic jurisprudence onto an exclusive halal/haram binary unwittingly borrowed from Islamic fundamentalists and particularly adapted to industrial applications. The chapter charts this history, namely how “halal” has expanded well beyond the edible to include vacation packages and even proper Muslim behaviour, with attention paid to both the institutional sphere (“supply-side”) and the consumption practices of Muslims and the latter’s meaning (“demand-side”). Among the multidirectional developments of this global halal market figure the highbrow examples of Islamic finance, Islamic insurances, and Islamic marketing, which are all ways of acculturating capitalism within Muslim societies while marketising Islam.

As suggested above, the ways in which the Global-Market regime institutionalises and develops is highly dependent on how the Nation-State regime was institutionalised. From this angle, countries that developed extremely strong states and a planned economy over the course of the twentieth century on the communist side of the Cold War provide interesting examples. How do neoliberalisation and consumerisation play out in such cases, if at all? And what are the consequences for religion? The answers to these questions gobsmacked the author during the research process. I have chosen to align two examples for comparison and generalisation purposes: Eastern Europe and China. Post-communist Orthodox-majority Eastern Europe provides an interesting example since it is in many respects the close Other: just east of the West, communist rather than capitalist, and Christian but with a very different history. Like China, Eastern Europe presents the case of very heavy states and radical market conversions. Yet China is like no other place on

earth, and I can think of no country where the High Modern Ideals-fuelled reforms were as radical, and where marketisation has been as radical.

Chapter 4 is therefore devoted to Orthodox-majority Eastern European (OMEE) countries. Focusing on those in which Eastern Christianity is the traditional majority religion allows for relative homogeneity, while still providing significant examples of variations. For the Western reader, it is refreshing to take this side-step into the exoticism of another Christianity few know much about. The chapter charts how nation-states in the region emerged out of former empires, and how the communist destinies paused an unfinished process of nation-building. Here, religion proved a fundamental dimension of nation-building since the eighteenth century. The relation developed in two ways: Orthodoxy was a pillar of the nation, and the Churches autonomised within the national container and on the hierarchical, bureaucratic model. Things took another coloration with the chosen or imposed turn to communism. Across the region, an important corollary of state-building was the repression of Orthodoxy, which was relaxed only in countries where the Church could be made to serve the state. Overall, though, the communist experience did not as much change the direction of evolution as it radicalised Nation-State regime characteristics. In OMEE, this world collapsed suddenly between 1989 and 1991, when the Iron Curtain fissured and the Soviet Union dislocated. This happened when neoliberalism was hegemonic, and what followed were variations on radical neoliberalisation and the dismantling of the state. The most obvious feature was the immediate and strong hike in religious affiliation and the rehabilitation of Orthodox churches, coupled with nationalist effervescence. The chapter shows how quantitative data is deceptive, as it hides what are arguably more profound changes in the very nature of Orthodoxy, which becomes marketised and made to cater to the ethics of authenticity. In addition, OMEE countries have seen the rapid rise of the two paradigmatic religious forms of the Global-Market regime, New Age-related “alternative spiritualities” and Pentecostalism. One important finding is how social classes and their variegated degrees of integration within global consumerism’s cosmopolitanism results in different religious patterns, shedding light on the dynamics underlying authoritarian tendencies and the coupling between religious affiliation and nationalism.

Before conducting the research for this book, I was part of the many who knew little about China. At the point of writing, however, I believe the history of religion in China should be taught to every undergrad student in the sociology and anthropology of religion.<sup>119</sup> It exemplifies, in a completely magnified and clear-cut manner, the destinies of religion in modernity. It also shows how the implicit assumptions of the secularisation paradigm are constructions rooted in a Western, Christian history, and find little relevance in many other places on the planet, like China. Yet it also shows how the Western understanding of religion, exported by Christian missionaries, European merchants, and colonial powers was an integral part of the modern cultural programme. Chapter 5 shows how this programme and High Modern Ideals

were appropriated and applied by Chinese intellectual and political elites, putting an end to millennia of Confucianism-backed imperial rule in order to construct a modern nation-state. At the centre of this project that aimed to radically break with past traditions was religion, here again, which was forcefully channelled in the churchified form and made to fit Nation-State regime characteristics. The Chinese case shows how the Western (Christian) concept of religion came as a triad, with superstition and “the secular” as the other terms. The richness and complexity of Chinese religion were sifted and modelled to fit into either of these exclusive categories. This chapter runs from the year of the first temple destruction policies, in 1898, to the death of the Chinese Communist Party leader and founder of the People’s Republic of China, Mao Zedong, in 1976. As in the case of Eastern Europe, the communist experience in China did not so much change the course of the reformation of religion as much as it radicalised it, exhibiting with incredible rawness the bare structure of the Nation-State regime.

The shift from a planned to a market economy in 1978 provoked a second revolution with enormous consequences for Chinese society and Chinese religion. This is the story told in Chapter 6, which reveals how the economic boom that has amazed the planet and shaken the world order has been accompanied by a similarly astonishing *religious* boom. As in the preceding chapter, I spend some time mapping out important historical fenceposts and showing how it is possible to talk of neoliberalism and consumerism with Chinese characteristics. The chapter pans into the intimate lives of mainland Chinese (the rise of romantic love, marital practices, issues of morality) to assess the extent to which expressive individualism and the ethics of authenticity have spread in such a short period of time. The answers to this question are surprising and can be directly related to the changes in religion if one accepts to shed the lenses of the secularisation paradigm. Immediately following the first economic reforms, temples began to be reconstructed, especially in the countryside, as well as the ancestor halls that housed the rituals of “ancestor worship”. Parallel to this, in the cities, a “qigong fever” erupted, drawing in up to 20% of the urban population. These booms were not predicted, willed, or controlled by the state, whose policies towards religion remained basically the same. Faced with the massive revival of forms of popular religion that did not fit the neatly institutionalised (and strictly controlled) churchified religion (*zongjiao*) mould, Chinese authorities decided to file them under “culture” and promote them as a way to attract foreign investment, fuel economic development, and kick-start a pilgrimage-based tourism industry. Not only has religion been marketised in China; it has been essential for the acculturation of capitalism and consumerism. As a consequence, religion has reappeared in an array of marketised forms, providing valuable insights into the ways in which the Global-Market regime develops in countries where the religious traditions are extremely different from those of the Christian West or the Muslim Middle East. One unexpected development has been the return and rehabilitation of a man called Confucius, China’s *persona non*

grata par excellence just two decades or so ago. Reacting and adjusting to the bottom-up religious surge, Chinese authorities have reintegrated imperial symbols, rituals, and traditions into the new Global-Market version of the political religion Xi Jinping calls the Chinese Dream.

These case studies present an encompassing yet partial insight into the global destinies of religion over the course of the last century in a way that allows for a different understanding and a different apprehension of today's landscape and dynamics. They open avenues for thinking outside the West. In my view, there is potential here for refreshing the perspectives, methods (the total social fact approach instead of the differentiation paradigm), and themes of the discipline as we go forward in our attempt to make sense of the complexities of the world of today. The conclusion returns to some of the take-aways of this book, to which it adds a reflection on where things might be headed in the future, or if we are still truly in the Global-Market regime or already shifting towards new configurations. The conclusion ends with a question that is meant to pave the way for further research. From the Muslim world to Eastern Europe and China, the shift from the Nation-State to the Global-Market regime occurs in complex and hierarchical societies with inherited polities characterised by at least a proto-state. Yet, if the pretention (or the aim) of this theoretical framework is as global as I propose it may be, we might ask what happens in societies where there is not something like a proto-state to begin with? I reserve the topic of Sub-Saharan Africa for further research and another book, but for the time being, I suggest looking at the case of tribal societies. Using the Baruya of Papua New Guinea as an example, we can see how remarkably the last wave of globalisation and the characteristics of the Global-Market regime have penetrated even some of the most remote societies on the planet, bypassing the Nation-State regime altogether.

## Notes

- 1 Cesari (2022: 9).
- 2 Chau (2006: 1).
- 3 Berger (1999: 2).
- 4 On the critiques of secularisation and Rational Choice, see Gauthier (2020a, 2020b) and Gauthier and Spickard (2022).
- 5 For a collection of examples of religious trends across the world, see Cornelio et al. (2020).
- 6 Rosanvallón (1989), Gauthier (2020a: Chapter 2).
- 7 Anderson (2016).
- 8 Spickard (2022: 1).
- 9 See the debate between Jörg Stolz, myself, and other scholars published in *Social Compass* Vol. 67 No. 2 (2020).
- 10 Lemieux (1999).
- 11 The idea of a “total social fact” appears in Mauss's *The Gift* (2016) and is developed into a model for social science in a later essay (Mauss 1949). Bruno Karsenti's (1994, 1997) unfortunately un-translated works on Mauss's total social fact are an essential read.

- 12 Mauss (1949: 51).
- 13 Durkheim and Mauss envisioned the unity of social sciences and the possibility of a social science in the singular, although with different inflexions. See Caillé and Vandenberghe (2021), as well as the contributions in the *MAUSS International* journal.
- 14 Tarot (2003: 39).
- 15 Durkheim (1990: 10).
- 16 I invite the reader to be aware of when I use these terms with or without capitals as a way to distinguish between these different meanings.
- 17 Robertson (1992: 53).
- 18 Zygmunt Bauman, in *Modernity and the Holocaust* (1989), quoted by Scott (2020: 87). Scott does not give the page number for this citation.
- 19 While Bentham himself believed in the natural harmonisation of interests in economic affairs, he saw the necessity of implementing a form of artificial harmonisation through a judicial system and the Rule of Law, based on the utility maximising principle.
- 20 As Mauss's (1969) essay on the nation showed, the state requires the nation and vice versa.
- 21 Both Hobbes and Westphalia opened the door to a complexification of the exercise of power and the multiplication of decision levels. The *Ancien Régime* as it is called answered by reaffirming itself, as in the absolutism of Louis XIV in France. Yet at no time in prior centuries had the power of the state been so *effectively* absolute.
- 22 Rosanvallon (1989).
- 23 Polanyi (2001). See also Appleby (2010) and Gauthier (2020a: chapter 3).
- 24 Anderson (2016).
- 25 Hobsbawm (1975: 63).
- 26 Van der Veer (2001).
- 27 Eisenstadt (2002).
- 28 Latour (1997: 47). Latour rightly differentiates religion from its Christian avatar, in the sense that doing away with God as the keystone of the social order by no means entails an exit from religion. To paraphrase Durkheim (1990), there is much more to religion than God, who was a historical latecomer.
- 29 Latour (1997: 51).
- 30 Latour (1997: 52, my translation).
- 31 For Latour, nature, society, and the individual are all either of this world (immanent) and transcendent, depending on how they are approached.
- 32 Scott (2020: 88).
- 33 Scott (2020: 89–90).
- 34 Scott (2020: 92).
- 35 Eisenstadt (2002: 13).
- 36 M. Yang (2020: 6).
- 37 M. Yang (2020: 87).
- 38 Eisenstadt (2002: 14).
- 39 Eisenstadt (2002: 14).
- 40 Eisenstadt (2002).
- 41 Rosanvallon (1989), Portier (2008), Donegani and Sadoun (2007).
- 42 Hobsbawm (1987), Appleby (2010), Lapavitsas (2005).
- 43 For historians, the French people constituted a proto-nation before the 1789 Revolution.
- 44 Beyer (2012).
- 45 Belief is only foremost in modern, post-Reformation Western Christianity, and potentially in Islam with the Shahada (double profession of faith in the unicity of God and to the special status of Mohamed as Prophet). The Christian Inquisition

- did not question potential heretics on belief issues, but rather on their practices. Orthodox Judaism is defined by the scrupulous respect of the hundreds of rules of the halakha, which contain no reference to belief. Putting importance on belief in the case of non-monotheistic religious forms, meanwhile, makes no sense, as historians and anthropologists have made abundantly clear.
- 46 Gauthier (2021a).
  - 47 Beyer (1994, 2006).
  - 48 As I argue below, the 1960s were when another type of religion started to emerge and the Nation-State regime began to erode, at least in the West. Secularisation theories were therefore out of step from the moment of their inception. See Watts (2022).
  - 49 Casanova (1994).
  - 50 Nancy Ammerman (2021) and Meredith McGuire (2008), both women unsurprisingly, have been pioneers in retrieving the importance of these dimensions.
  - 51 Asad (1993, 2003). I thank Iqtidar Humeira for pointing that out to me with much clarity. See also Ashiwa and Wank (2009).
  - 52 On Indonesia, see Gauthier (2020a: chapter 9).
  - 53 Weller (2012). See Katz (2014: 11).
  - 54 Goossaert and Palmer (2012: 74).
  - 55 Ashiwa and Wank (2009: 8).
  - 56 I expand on the difference between civil and political religion in the chapters on China.
  - 57 This is one of the things I critique Asad for: following religion into the Christian box and concluding that the concept was fatally flawed, instead of simply returning to Durkheim and Mauss and de-Christianising the concept of religion.
  - 58 Willaime (2006: 80). US cinema and literature is replete with references to the cultural battle that emerged from the 1950s onwards between this *Ancien Régime* of duty and the emancipatory aspects of the sexual revolution and generalised hedonism.
  - 59 On Romanticism and its roots, see Campbell (1987).
  - 60 C. Taylor (2002: 83). This is rooted of course in the very pulse of the Enlightenment, as expressed by Immanuel Kant's urge for his contemporaries to free themselves of all external authorities to find the Moral Law within oneself. The difference here is that Reason was the means for this inquiry.
  - 61 Taylor (2002: 80), emphasis added.
  - 62 Boltanski and Chiapello (1999).
  - 63 Foucault (2004).
  - 64 Max Weber (2005) defined an ethos as the dispositions and spirit of constellations of social actors which are instituted in social practice.
  - 65 On consumerism, see Douglas and Isherwood (1979), Slater (1997), Slater and Tonkiss (2001), Lury (2004, 2011), Arvidsson (2006), Heilbrunn (2006, 2014), Sassatelli (2007), Gauthier, Martikainen and Woodhead (2013a), Gauthier (2014a, 2020c). For a synthesis, see Gauthier (2020a: Chapter 5).
  - 66 For these authors (Boltanski and Chiapello 1999), there have been three spirits of capitalism since the late nineteenth century. The first was identified by Max Weber in his famous *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, that of the pioneer entrepreneurs, the second was Fordist-Taylorist, and the third is the present brand of consumerised, financialised, globalised, neoliberal capitalism. There are signs that we may be entering a new phase in the face of social and environmental critiques and challenges.
  - 67 On neoliberalism, see especially Harvey (2005), Saad-Filho and Johnston (2005), Brenner, Peck and Theodore (2010), Springer, Birch and MacLeavy (2016), and Cahill, Cooper, Konings and Primrose (2018). For a synthesis, see Gauthier, Martikainen and Woodhead (2013b) and Gauthier (2020a: Chapter 4).

- 68 For a thorough discussion, see Audier (2012).
- 69 Nelson (2014), Nik-Khah and van Horn (2016).
- 70 Rosanvallon (1979).
- 71 Foucault (2004).
- 72 Robertson (1992).
- 73 Douglas and Isherwood (1979). See also Slater (1997), Slater and Tonkiss (2001), Trentmann (2006).
- 74 Brenner, Peck and Theodore (2010), Bohle and Greskovits (2012), Ban (2016).
- 75 I think a case could be made upon examination that these processes have also affected a priori isolated countries like North Korea and Cuba.
- 76 For more developments, see Gauthier (2020a: Chapters 6, 8, 2020b).
- 77 Inspired by Foucault, a whole strand of research has developed in which actor level phenomena are analysed through the lens of neoliberal subjectivity rather than consumerism.
- 78 Friedman (1980).
- 79 See Harvey (2005) and the contributions in Saad-Filho and Johnston (2005) and Cahill, Cooper, Konings and Primrose (2018).
- 80 For developments, see Gauthier (2020b).
- 81 E.g., Hjarvard (2008).
- 82 Taylor (2002: 87). Social media erupted after the publication of this book, yet Taylor remarkably captured its logics, prophesizing that they could only deepen. See also Taylor (2007).
- 83 In order to distinguish my approach from mediatisation scholars, I prefer to talk of hyper-mediatisation. This term better illustrates the novelty of the present situation, and lends itself to interpreting the effects of media as very effective means for the “social construction of reality” (Berger and Luckman 1966). See Gauthier (2015, 2020b: Chapter 7).
- 84 Watts (2022: 2).
- 85 Weber (1956).
- 86 Taylor (2007).
- 87 Parsons (1942), Parsons and Platt (1973).
- 88 On New Age, see Heelas (1996, 2008), Hanegraaff (1998) and Pike (2001, 2004), namely. On oriental spiritualities, see Altglas (2005, 2014), Lucia (2020).
- 89 As in Stolz et al. (2016), the religious content of “spirituality” is gauged against the standard of churchled religion and belief.
- 90 Heelas and Woodhead (2005) noted how “spiritualities of the self” defy the belief and exclusive belonging characteristics of churchled religion, yet still tried to assess the importance of the phenomenon by counting the number of participants in related activities over a period of a week or a month, with unconvincing results. From a mainstream quantitative perspective, Stolz et al. (2016) have estimated the hard followers of spiritualities to 13.4% of the Swiss population. In both cases, the methods are not appropriate for the object of study.
- 91 E.g., Salomonsen (2002), Blain (2002), Magliocco (2004), Blain, Ezzy and Harvey (2004), Pike (2004), Partridge (2004, 2005), Possamai (2005, 2012), Adler (2006), Clifton (2006), Blain and Wallis (2007), Berger and Ezzy (2007), Margry (2008), St John (2009, 2012), Taylor (2010), Gauthier (2012), Fedele (2013).
- 92 Gauthier (2021a).
- 93 Van der Veer (2001, 2014).
- 94 See e.g., De la Torre, Gutierrez Zuniga, and Juarez Huet (2016), Gauthier (2021b).
- 95 On Indonesia for example, see Howell (2005, 2007, 2010), Gauthier (2018, 2020a: Chapter 9).
- 96 Norris and Inglehart (2019).
- 97 Dochuk (2011: xii).

- 98 Miller (1997), Dochuk (2011), Luhrmann (2012), Kruse (2015).
- 99 Billy Graham himself was not such a radical. He refused to align against women's rights to abortion, for instance, which became the main issue around which conservative Christians coalesced from the 1980s onwards.
- 100 Martin (2002).
- 101 On this debate, see Berger, Davie and Fokas (2008).
- 102 Portier and Willaime's (2021) recent book on France shows both the resilience of Nation-State regime institutionalisations and the rise of Global-Market forms.
- 103 Obadare (2016), Janson (2020).
- 104 Watts (2022). I have made a similar argument in a number of publications over the last decade.
- 105 Voas and Chaves (2016: 1543).
- 106 As do Stolz et al. (2016) for instance.
- 107 See also Gauthier and Perreault (2013).
- 108 Watts (2022: 11).
- 109 Heelas and Woodhead (2005).
- 110 Martin (2002: 3), quoted also in Watts (2022: 46).
- 111 Watts (2022: Chapter 6).
- 112 See examples and references in Gauthier (2020a: chapter 10). See also the contributions in Martikainen and Gauthier (2013), Gauthier and Martikainen (2013).
- 113 Gauthier (2014b).
- 114 Hobsbawm (1990: 147).
- 115 The case of Great Britain is all the most remarkable, since it was a driver of globalisation and had barely any protectionist moment since the nineteenth century (Hobsbawm 1987).
- 116 Cesari (2022) is a remarkable example of this. While her analysis of Nation-State period arrangements between religion and politics is rich and insightful, especially as concerns the Muslim Middle East, recent developments such as the rise of Market Islam forms and Chinese popular religion barely show up on her radar.
- 117 Haenni (2005).
- 118 Bayat (2013).
- 119 Vincent Goossaert and David Palmer's (2012) *The Religious Question in China* should be obligatory reading. The book was a revelation, and is responsible for me taking the risk of diving into the landmass of scholarship on China with the feeling that I had a compass.

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## 2 The Rise of Market Islam I

### Islamism, from State Focus to Lifestyle

*When exported in the wagons of imperialism, the European concept of religion led to major reconfigurations of the Islamic tradition. [...]*

*The interactions with French and British powers introduced state and nation as new political concepts, changed the status of Islamic law and transformed the meaning of the Ummah and political sovereignty. [...]*

*The transition from Muslim empire to nation-state was a decisive rupture, one that drastically changed the social and cultural conditions of the millet system.<sup>1</sup>*

*At the crossroads of an Islamisation that is becoming bourgeois and its decoupling with the Islamist matrix, a new religious configuration is rising that we will call Market Islam because of its affinities with the institutions of the economic field that serve as its support, and with those of the new entrepreneurial culture to which it borrows the categories of its discourse.<sup>2</sup>*

Islam (*islām*, submission, i.e., to the message of the one and only Allah) emerged fourteen centuries ago in the cities of Mecca and Medina, at the crossroads of late antiquity trade routes, in what is now Saudi Arabia. The Prophet Muhammad (ca. 570–632 CE) had been employed in his prior life as a guide for transregional caravan trade before he started revealing/reciting his divine message (*qur'ān*). This new “religion” saw itself as being the correcting and final version of God’s prior revelations to Jews and Christians. Within a few decades, Islam spread across the Arabian Peninsula and beyond it in different directions. Over the next centuries, it successively expanded via trade relations, cultural exchange, and conquests. The Muslim world today comprises nearly fifty Muslim-majority states (some of them declaring Islam as their national religion) that stretch over a gigantic North and sub-Saharan African corridor from Morocco via the Levant to Pakistan and Bangladesh, as well as Central Asia all the way into Eastern China, and again across the ocean to the Southeast Asian archipelagos of Malaysia and the most populous Muslim-majority country of all, Indonesia. In addition to this, Muslims form minorities of varying importance from South Africa to South America, and from Europe to North America, Australia, and New Zealand. All in all,

Muslims count for an estimated 24% of the world's population today, or 1.8 billion people.

The destinies of Islam in modernity are all the more interesting because of the Muslim world's intricate rapports with the Christian West, from the Omayyad conquests of Spain and Southern France starting in the eighth century to the Medieval Crusades and the 1683 siege of Vienna. From the early nineteenth century and the Napoleonic expeditions to Egypt and Syria onwards, Muslim countries became exposed to Western colonialism, until the independence movements of the twentieth century. As Edward Said and Thierry Hentsch have shown, Islam is the Christian West's "near other," an object of desire, fascination, fantasy, and fear.<sup>3</sup> Islam is also, with Christianity, the only World Religion in which belief and faith are foundational, as exemplified by the Islamic profession of faith, or Shahada: 'I bear witness that there is no deity but God [Allah], and I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of God.'<sup>4</sup> In addition, Islam presents itself as *dīn*, a term that comes closest to the Western, Christian conception of religion as a distinct system. It was therefore not "invented" as a religion as almost all other World Religions were (see Chapter 5 on China).<sup>5</sup> However, the importation of 'the European concept of religion [did lead] to major reconfigurations of the Islamic tradition,'<sup>6</sup> as we will see.

Before modernity, the Muslim world was constituted mainly of Muslim-majority entities with imperial polities, such as sultanates and caliphates, the most important being the Ottoman Empire. Contrary to what many of us would imagine, the rapports between religious and political authorities were light in comparison with the Christian West, and not centralised. There are no theological-political foundations in the Muslim world as in Christianity. As Jocelyne Cesari argues, Islam was present especially on the community level before modernity.

Before the nation-state, religious authorities provided rulings for local communities, which included Muslim and other religious groups. From this perspective, Islamic legislation was first and foremost aimed at the people, for the people and with no immediate consideration for the central political power. Islamic jurisprudence [*fiqh*], which is at the core of the traditional conceptions of political order, law and community, developed in the tension between the need for a unified authority for the Islamic world, and local established practices. The tension shaped the development of Islamic law and put the authority in the hands of scholars rather than in the hands of those with political power. The sultan was responsible for putting the law into effect, but not for formulating it. As a result, there was 'a duality in the relationship between the sultan and the law.'<sup>7</sup>

As we distance ourselves from the twentieth century, some of the underlying dynamics affecting religion in modernity become better discernible. In her book *We God's People*, Jocelyne Cesari draws our attention to how the

globalisation and institutionalisation of the nation-state lie behind the worldwide Westphalian (re)formation of religion (and politics) in modernity. In this sense, the nation-state is much more than a variable among others in the co-extensive processes of distinction between private and public, religious and secular. It is the actor by which the ideological framework of Western modernity was globalised and disseminated worldwide through complex and multidirectional processes. It is to stress this ideological and normative dimension that I take it to capitalise these hyphenated terms: Nation-State. A specialist of the Muslim world, Cesari shows how the adoption of the Western, post-Reformation Christian conception of religion and its ontological dualism (i.e., the idea of a separation between immanence and transcendence) was fundamental for creating the “proper” spheres of politics and religion, with extremely important consequences and impacts for the institutions, doctrines, practices, beliefs, and modes of belonging of *both* these spheres. The author shows how processes of “secularisation” are the result of a more profound, utopian remodelling of societies by the “natural” political form of modernity, the nation-state. The modernisation of Muslim societies acted to politicise Islam through the alignment of national and religious identities, even, paradoxically, under the highly secularist regime of Atatürk in Turkey. Over the best part of the twentieth century, the construction of nation-states meant the standardisation, homogenisation, institutionalisation, nationalisation, rationalisation, and legalisation of religion and politics, but also the whole of society, thereby unifying a people within a bounded territory and under a central power.

For Cesari, the formatting of Islam within the parameters of what I call the Nation-state regime represents a break with premodern configurations and the beginning of a new historical and sociological sequence.<sup>8</sup> Her analysis largely parallels the one I devoted to the case of Islam in Indonesia for this earlier period, yet we diverge on our understanding of the more recent period.<sup>9</sup> Interestingly, Cesari does diagnose the beginning of another sequence starting in the 1980s, in Turkey for instance, when the arrival of ‘conservative capitalists’ acted to change the make-up of political Islam (Islamism).<sup>10</sup> Yet she fails to provide as clear an analysis of the driving forces of this second sequence in comparison with the ways she powerfully details the role of the nation-state over most of the course of the twentieth century, roughly until the turn of the 1980s. The portrait she paints is therefore uncertain, made of back-and-forth movements, and oscillations. As a consequence, the inner coherence and direction of this second sequence remain indefinite. While she mentions the neoliberal reforms adopted in Turkey in the 1980s, she does not investigate the ways that they have profoundly changed the ideological ferment of the state and the rapport between it and society, not to mention the shift from an international order to a globalised one. Furthermore, she isolates religion and politics from the wider cultural changes that have to do with consumerism, hyper-mediatisation, and the formation of a unified Global Islam. Focused on relations between religion and politics and the state in particular, her analysis neglects the recent innovations and developments

of the last four decades, which have significantly impacted the ways that Muslims live their religion, from Muslim fashions to Islamic finance and the global market for halal goods.<sup>11</sup>

Reading Cesari's book, one would not even notice how some of the most spectacular religious transformations to have occurred over the last decades in the wake of economic globalisation are to be found within Islam. Looking at the developments within Islam over the course of the last century from the holistic and integrated perspective sketched in the introduction, it is possible to distinguish between two constellations that go well beyond the scope of the relations between politics and religion. This chapter and the one that follows show how Islam was transformed in modernity, and how modernity was transformed through its meeting with Islam. Focusing first on the Middle East, these chapters show that Islam was nationalised and politicised through nation-building processes before becoming global, a transnational whole. The present chapter starts by mapping out the main characteristics of Islam in the Nation-State regime and their institutionalisation in a period that stretches from the colonial regimes to the first decades of independence. Echoing Cesari, this overview shows how secularity (the distinction between politics and religion) and secularisation are only a part of wider process of *nationalisation* and *statisation* of religion, by which Islamist movements were made to adopt either political or apolitical forms. What put an end to these formations in Muslim-majority countries was the application of neo-liberal measures regarding their national economies and the media, as well as the rapid rise of consumerism, from the new urban middle classes to the lower ones. The chapter emphasises the rupture that occurred during the 1980s through the combined forces of neoliberalisation and consumerisation, effecting a significant change in direction not only of Islamism, but of Islam in general. The last part of the chapter analyses several trends, starting with the transformations of Islamist movements away from political Islam, and the emergence of new capitalism-friendly movements such as the Gülen movement, and the morphing of Jihadism into its present, lifestyle-formatted manifestations. In Chapter 3, I continue this survey by turning to phenomena that typically fall under the radar of mainstream social sciences, from Muslim fashions to Islamic finance and the global halal market, showing how they form a coherent ensemble within the framework of the Global-Market regime. My perspective takes inspiration from the pioneering work of Patrick Haenni, who showed how the shift away from political Islam was driven by the rise of a capitalist-friendly brand of Market Islam.

### **The National-Statisation of Islam in Muslim-Majority Countries**

The trends we are witnessing today took shape in relation to a prior situation characterised by variations within the frame (or episteme) of the Nation-State regime, to which we now turn. In a way, the story is well-known, yet on the other hand, this part of the story has been largely approached from

perspectives informed by the secularisation paradigm, and with normative preoccupations that have tinted scholarship in a certain way; hence a land-mass of works devoted to measuring degrees of secularity and mobilising the secular/religious distinction, or apprehending relations between the state and religions, or appreciating the compatibility of Islam and democracy, or worrying about threats of radicalisation, fundamentalism, and terrorism. From the perspective adopted here, what comes to the fore are the ways in which the Nation-State emerged as the central social, political, and religious regulator, buttressed by Western-derived High Modern Ideals. Concretely, Islam was both nationalised and statised, meaning that it was instituted within national, bureaucratic organisations, and submitted to nation and state-building processes in the name of modernisation. As a consequence, Islam was transformed within a political matrix, creating either political or apolitical forms.

European colonialism started in the early sixteenth century, yet only found interest in the Middle East at the beginning of the nineteenth century with Napoleon's adventurous invasion of Egypt, which opened an era of imperialist control over an immense portion of Muslim territories, from Asia to Sub-Saharan Africa. The colonisers and the colonised pointed to a shared diagnosis: 'the Muslim world must adopt the modern military and governmental administrative tools that were perceived to have given the Western nations their overwhelming powers.'<sup>12</sup> What crystallised these powers was the European state, with its set of laws, practices, and military capabilities that captured the imagination. As Vali Nasr writes, 'Influential Muslims in positions of power whether in royal courts or intellectual circles, were convinced that modernity was essentially brought about by the institutions of the modern state; the state *was* modernity.'<sup>13</sup>

Colonial rule carved out constituencies out of the Ottoman Empire and its Persian and Arab surroundings, promoting local aristocrats, landlords, tribal leaders, wealthy merchants, and clerics into positions of power, in a mediating position between Western rulers and the ruled. The end of World War I saw the creation of most of the Muslim world we know today out of preoccupations that had little to do with those concerned (Churchill is said to have created Jordan on the back of a cocktail napkin). By the early 1960s, countries still under direct colonial rule had fought for and achieved their independence. In all cases, the political and social project was one of modernisation through nation and state-building. Yet the model was Hobbesian (his *Leviathan*) in inspiration more than democratic, based on authoritarianism and with aims of homogenisation and national unity. The references were Republican more than liberal-parliamentarian, and often socialist or even communist more than capitalist. Furthermore, the new-born Muslim majority states looked like 'indigenized versions of colonialism,'<sup>14</sup> with leadership exerted by the ex-colonial elites, in addition to a new breed made up of Western or Western-style trained lawyers, doctors, bureaucrats, academics, journalists, and businessmen.

The template for the modernisation of the Muslim world was first drawn by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881–1938) in Turkey in the 1920s, followed closely (historically and ideologically) by Reza Shah Pahlavi (1878–1944) in Iran. The model was copied thereafter in the whole Muslim world, with variations namely with respect to the (explicit or implicit) importance of Islam in the nation-state building process. The model was Europe, and rulers from Kemal onwards used the state to accomplish a cultural revolution by which ‘European values, secularism, nationalism, and attire,’<sup>15</sup> as well as modes of administration, government, and personal behaviour were to be enforced. Economic development was state-governed, with key sectors driven by state-owned companies and state sponsorship. Central to this modernisation programme was the changing role of religion: ‘Kemalism identified Islam as the most un-European thing about Turkey, a superstitious and unscientific belief system, whose legal and educational institutions and intricate network of mosques, religious associations, and seminaries were shackles around Turkey’s ankles.’<sup>16</sup> In a highly symbolic gesture, Kemal abolished the Islamic Caliphate in 1924, putting an end to an institution that was nevertheless seen as the ‘rightful spiritual and political succession of the Prophet Muhammad himself.’<sup>17</sup> It was believed that Muslim countries had to turn towards the future, endorse the belief in Progress and Reason, and leave aside any heartfelt considerations for the glories, imperial and/or religious, of the past. Islam, which was interpreted within an orientalist framework as ‘irrational, traditional, precapitalist, and stagnant as compared with a civilized, rational, and modern Europe,’<sup>18</sup> had to be transformed into a modernity-compatible, enlightened, rational faith, and relegated to the private sphere. The concept of superstition became central to the state’s transformation of what was now to be understood as the “religious sphere,” and popular religious manifestations were condemned. Mystical Sufi orders who dared rebel against the state were repressed and outlawed.

Hakan Yavuz sums up the Kemalist project as follows: ‘Kemalism is the top-down state-imposed political and cultural reform [...] to create a secular society and state. It was a crude imitation of the European experience and an attempt to institutionalize nationalism as a substitute for Islam.’<sup>19</sup> Secularism itself became ‘a devotional creed’<sup>20</sup> for the ruling elite. In essence, *a political religion replaced Islam*, which itself fitted into a mould defined by the Nation-State. Yet, as Ahmet Insel argues, the Kemalist state did in fact implicitly support official Sunni Islam ‘as a marker of national identity but also to ensure social homogenisation around a national-statist brand of Islam.’<sup>21</sup> Islam did not disappear, far from it, but it was certainly transformed and pushed into a social location made to support the modernisation programme led by the state.

With variegations, the Kemalist programme was explicitly adopted, institutionalised, and enforced in Middle Eastern countries up to Pakistan, and under other guises in other Muslim majority countries in Southeast Asia and Africa. The national differences here are less important than the coherence of

the overarching frame. The onslaught on religion in the name of modernisation/Westernisation was met with varying degrees of opposition, for example less in Turkey and more in Iran. Yet even in Turkey, and ‘in spite of the state-led secularization policy, Islam [...] still offered a set of rules for regulating and constituting everyday life.’<sup>22</sup> Outside the ruling elite, the people never fully broke with their Islamic heritage, and Islam continued to ‘serve as a repertoire, a source of counterstatist discourse, and an organizational framework for social mobilization to deal with the stresses of development.’<sup>23</sup> In Turkey as elsewhere, Islam was nevertheless profoundly transformed as a result of the state-led nationalising and secularising project, starting with an important crisis over religious authority and authenticity.

The most defining feature of this mutation was the ‘unprecedented’<sup>24</sup> *politicisation* of Islam, in the sense that Islam became the prime means of mobilisation and identification for oppositional forces. Islam was particularly invested in such a way by the regions and social classes that were left at the periphery of the modernisation project, as a way to challenge the centralising state. Yet the state created and regulated to a large extent the ‘opportunity spaces’<sup>25</sup> available for the development of Islamic movements. These, in turn, modelled themselves on the state, adopting vertical, bureaucratised, elite-based, and state-centric organisational structures. These vanguard movements’ aims and strategies were either to Islamise society from the top down, through the mechanisms of the state, or, in more secularist countries, to Islamise society from the grassroots until the taking over of the state was possible. In both cases, the state was the aim and the means by which to achieve a fully Islamised society, and an Islamised society meant having an Islamic state. Islamist movements grew within the national container, and recognised the frontiers of the nation-state either explicitly or implicitly. According to Yavuz, Islamic social movements were either reformist, participating in the political arena in the hope of controlling the state or shaping its policies, or revolutionary, rejecting the legitimacy of the secularist state and its civilising mission. Yet even revolutionary Islamist movements projected to replace the latter (civilisation) by Islamisation through the means of the former (the state).<sup>26</sup> In what follows, I describe the bigger portrait of these mutations while maintaining a certain level of generality and abstraction. I am less interested in making a strong and detailed case for the formatting of Islam within the Nation-State regime (something which other authors such as Yavuz and Cesari have done sufficiently well) as I am about setting the table for the mutations that ensued. I refer readers to the sources referenced for more details and nuances.

### *Secularists vs. Islamists*

The nationalisation and statisation of Muslim-majority societies meant the establishment of *a new structure opposing Secularists and Islamists*. The secularist side was composed of Westernised elites who considered religion

negatively and sought to replace Islam with nationalism and a form of political and civil religion. An ideal-typical example is the Baathist movement, which rose to power in countries like Syria and Iraq. Yet, as a vague variation of Christianity served to buttress the American civil religion,<sup>27</sup> secularists could not avoid maintaining Islam as a definer of national identity.<sup>28</sup> In my understanding, the secularist side was also comprised of the Islamic authorities who promoted a nationalist and staid, modernised, and rationalised version of Islam. These authorities, such as the (often state-installed) grand muftis and the heads of the most important universities, as well as the large portions of the population who associated themselves with this brand of Islam, acknowledged the secular state and submitted to its regulation.

Facing them were an array of Islamist movements whose religious project was highly politicised. Political Islam was comprised of a variety of movements that can be classified on a spectrum that stretches from the more modernist to the more traditionalist. They also varied in terms of their strategies, which were either more reformist or revolutionary (and hence in some cases violent). Yet, even the more traditionalist of the Islamists acted to reform Islam in accordance with modernist and rationalist principles. In addition, all of these currents melted their projects in the mould of the state, and to varying degrees in that of the nation. Islamists opposed secularists on their vision of modernisation, not on the need for modernisation. For Secularists, modernisation signified the dilution of Islam in the face of the imperatives of modernisation. For Islamists, modernisation was to be conducted within an Islamic frame. However, both agreed on focusing on the state as the main actor to conduct their brand of modernisation. It is because they competed within a shared framework that Secularists felt the danger represented by political Islam and enacted repressive measures which varied in intensity but not intent.

As Figure 2.1 illustrates, this structure also allowed for a symmetrical alternative to both Secularism and Political Islamism, in the guise of *apolitical* Islamist movements. The political constitution of the Nation-State regime, in other words, encouraged the formation of either highly politicised or individual-centred, spiritualised, and therefore apolitical religious movements. The latter were comprised of groups and movements that reacted to the modernisation program (and secularist repression and modelling of religion) by becoming overtly apolitical and by promoting a privatised brand of Islam: i.e., withdrawn from political life and promoting self-purification and self-consciousness.<sup>29</sup> By turning inwards, cherishing a contemplative life, and creating smaller communities of devotees at the margin of society and the public sphere, these groups managed to weather state repression. It is useful to recall how the modern project had two complimentary heads: the utopian reformation of society on the one hand, and the equally utopian reformation of human subjects in the guise of the autonomous individual on the other. In this sense, the winds of change contained in the Western modern project similarly produced two types of social responses. While Secularists

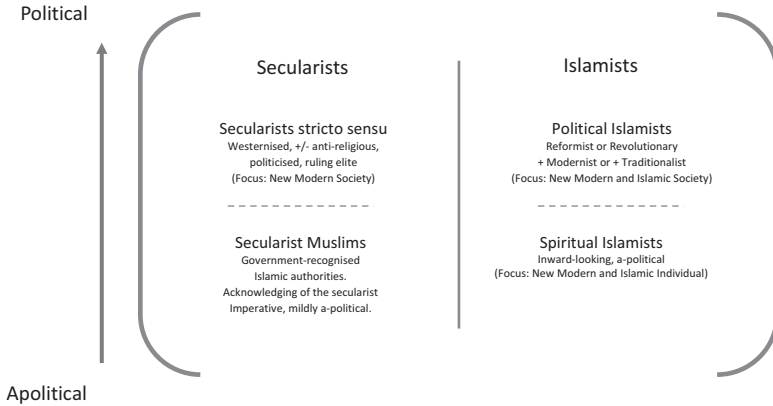


Figure 2.1 Secularist vs. Islamist structure of National-Statist Islam.

and Islamists put the construction of a modern society first, as a pre-requisite for the production of a modern subject on the one hand, on the other, apolitical spiritual movements, for which the Naksibendi (Naqshbandi) Sufi order presents an ideal-typical example, inverted this hierarchy by making the project of the new individual through personal redemption a condition for the reform (i.e., Islamisation) of society. Indeed, self-purification was understood as a first step in the purification, transformation, and salvation of society. Spiritualist movements aimed to impact society from below rather than from the mechanisms of the state.<sup>30</sup> They did not aim to ‘achieve an idealized unity’<sup>31</sup> as did their political-minded rivals but rather foster religious diversity against the homogenising aims of the state. In Yavuz’s appreciation, these movements voiced a ‘moral protest against the introduction of a new identity and code of conduct,’<sup>32</sup> as they emphasised emotions, ritual, and experience over reason and scripturalism. These movements formed a sort of counterculture, although their constitution and politics were radically different than the Western counterculture of the 1960–1970s. Like the latter, though, their spiritualised and individualised type of religion was in many ways annunciatory of the trends that would develop in the following decades.

Islamist movements, whether political or apolitical, projected to go back to the Islam of the origins, before its alleged corruption by external influences and other factors like culture and tradition. In the version promoted by reformists like Jamal-al-Din al-Afghani (1838–1897), Muhammad ‘Abduh (1849–1905), and Rashid Rida (1865–1935), who were all educated in Western style, the answer to the West’s challenge laid in the return to the Islam of the origins, which was re-interpreted and presented as being rational, ascetic, and inner-worldly—i.e., compatible with modern industrial society.<sup>33</sup> Such was also the message delivered by the quintessential political Islamist movement of this period, the Muslim Brotherhood,<sup>34</sup> founded in Egypt by Hasan al-Banna (1906–1949) in 1928, which added to late nineteenth century

reformism the idea that Islam, as a complete and total system, prescribed the foundation of an omnipotent Islamic state that would apply the Islamic law (*sharia*) and thereby act as the principal agent for the Islamisation of society. Far from being the project of returning to the premodern polity and rapport between politics of religion described at the top of this chapter, this was a radically modern re-interpretation of the foundations of Islam that had the State—the institution and the imaginary—at its centre. This ideology blossomed across the Muslim world, with avatars in Pakistan with Abu A'la Mawdudi's (1903–1979) Jamaat-e-Islami (founded in 1941), and in Iran with Ruhollah Khomeini (1902–1989), the “spiritual guide” of the only successful Islamist revolution in 1979. This powerful ideology was the main Islamic opposition to the Kemalist state, yet it borrowed or mirrored many of the latter's prerogatives, starting with its embedment in a political frame organised around the idea, ideal, and institution of the State. Political Islam included the project of a universal Welfare system and was founded on the idea of ‘an ideologically uniform and hence politically indivisible community.’<sup>35</sup> Far from being a remnant of traditionalism, Islamism championed a pristine and uncompromising yet thoroughly modern and National-Statist brand of Islam. Their rejection of Western secularist Enlightenment ideals was not a rejection of modernity as much as the expression of the need to pursue modernisation within an Islamic frame. Significantly, Saïd Arjomand argues that the Islamic Revolution in Iran resulted in ‘both the traditionalization of a modernizing nation-state and the modernization of the Shi'ite tradition, a tradition endowed with the usual transformative potential of the world religions of salvation.’<sup>36</sup> The influence of these movements and their ideology was truly global, and contributed to shape Islam worldwide, whether in Southeast or Central Asia, North or Sub-Saharan Africa, and even in remote Muslim enclaves in China.<sup>37</sup>

#### *Nationalisation and Statisation Rather Than Secularisation?*

Seen from the perspective of secularisation and secularity, the transformations of Islam from the end of the nineteenth century and throughout the major part of the twentieth appear at best as unfinished business. Gudrun Krämer has evaluated the religious landscape in Turkey with respect to the three major propositions making up secularisation according to José Casanova: privatisation, religious decline, and differentiation.<sup>38</sup> First, with respect to the privatisation of religion, and notwithstanding the Kemalist state's effort to constitute a public sphere *à l'Européenne* by clearing it of religious symbols (such as the veil), Krämer insists that religion remained more than just a faith (*'aqida*) for most Muslims. Rather, it remained a religion (*dîn*), i.e., a totalising way of life and a ‘form of communitisation.’<sup>39</sup> As Krämer writes: ‘Islam is a public religion par excellence, perhaps more so than Christianity, Judaism or Buddhism.’<sup>40</sup> While there is traditionally such a thing as a private sphere in Muslim-majority countries, in which illicit behaviour and

dissent can be expressed and tolerated, modernisation resulted in a sort of reversal of the Western private/public divide:

religion has not been relegated to, nor has it withdrawn to, the private sphere. On the contrary, it is private space that allows for critique and deviance, whereas public space is expected to conform to Islamic or religious norms more generally.<sup>41</sup>

Similarly, it is hard to diagnose anything like religious decline in Muslim-majority countries. For the most secularised sections of society, religion did fade into the background. Yet at the same time, in Turkey as elsewhere, modernisation also meant that religion ceased to be taken for granted and habitual. Rather, it became an object of investigation and explication. Muslims became self-consciously so. Thirdly, as concerns the differentiation of religion (from politics, the state, and “the secular” in general), the portrait is also a nuanced one. Krämer insists that, contrary to widespread assumptions, ‘Sharia was in fact not applied “integrally” and “exclusively” in the pre-colonial period,’ and that the ‘theocratic legacy of the Middle East is light,’<sup>42</sup> as we observed at the beginning of this chapter. In addition, ‘religion, law and politics were by no means as closely intertwined in the pre-modern Middle East’<sup>43</sup> as Islamists claim. ‘In an Islamic context, it is not so much the relation between clergy (“church”) and state that matters to articulations of security, but rather the nexus between Islamic law or normativity (Sharia) and the *ordre public* (public order).’<sup>44</sup> In sum, religion did not become ‘a less central and spatially diminished sphere within the new secular system,’<sup>45</sup> however insisting the efforts might have been. In fact, religion (Islam) became more visible in a way because it became more explicit, and because it stood at the crux of the competing Secularist and Islamist modernising projects.

The preceding discussion would merit a more thorough examination and a fair share of nuances and contextualisation regarding the trajectories in different Muslim-majority countries.<sup>46</sup> What I want to draw attention to though is how the analysis of religious transformations in the Muslim world in the era of the Nation-State regime appears uncertain when approached from the perspective of secularisation, as none of its core propositions applies otherwise than in an approximate manner. This is why scholars tend to qualify Muslim countries as ‘modern but not secular,’ and secularism as a ‘failed experiment’ or the cause of ‘tragic failures.’<sup>47</sup> Because of this, the secularisation perspective emphasises how Muslim countries are partial accomplishments of an ideal (and idealised) Western model of pure secularity, and therefore somehow “backwards” or lagging behind. In other words, secularisation-oriented analyses contain a negative implicit normative judgement on Muslim societies and suggests their inadequacy with modernity, democracy, and the Rule of Law. However, if we step aside concerns over secularity and secularisation, these normative condemnations subside while the underlying structuring dynamics of nationalisation, statisation,

politicisation, and rationalisation that combine in the modernisation trajectories of Muslim countries come to the fore. Islamist movements thereby cease to be deviations or retardations with respect to a “normal” modern programme. They rather appear as variations within the same Nation-State matrix alongside Kemalist secularism. Islamist movements, whether political or apolitical, are fully modern, and cannot be thought of as retarded resistances on the arrow of historical evolution.<sup>48</sup>

For Kemalist-type secularism, nationalism is the official religion to which Islam must cede and the framework within which it must format itself, under the supervision of the state and in the name of a unified social body. For Islamist movements, meanwhile, Islam must contain and express nationalism, once again under the stewardship of the state and in the name of a unified Muslim *and* national community. In both cases, the Nation-State is the grammar through which these competing projects are expressed. It is their *condition of possibility*.<sup>49</sup> The Nation-State perspective, a contrario to secularisation embedded ones, captures Muslim societies as a whole, without pushing some of their central and constitutive components to the periphery or cast them as remnants of the past. This perspective also better prepares us to understand what happened once the cultural belief system that supported the framework of the Nation-State started to erode and the soteriological powers of the state began to be questioned.

### Neoliberalism and the Death of Kemalism

As Turkey was the first to take the plunge into the Nation-State framework, so was it the first to liberalise its economy under Turgut Özal.<sup>50</sup> In many respects, Turkey has been a historical leader as concerns social, religious, political, and cultural trends, and as such provides a paradigmatic entry into the topic of marketisation. Turkey’s prime minister from 1983 to 1989 and president from 1989 until his death in 1993, Özal broke with former state planning and national corporations-based development and adopted measures inspired by Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan, whom he admired. Özal proceeded to shift the economy towards the private sector, privatising and deregulating welfare and education, and opening the country to foreign investment under the scrutiny of the IMF. While Kemalist economic developmentalism created a pro-statist, secular bourgeoisie, ‘Özal’s free market policies were supported by small-scale provincial businessmen and the petite bourgeoisie of the cities’<sup>51</sup> that did not benefit from state sponsorship. The turn to an export-led industry involved developing Turkey’s hinterland based on cheaper labour and shifting other parts of the economy towards services. This resulted in the ‘expansion of a countercultural bourgeoisie class with Anatolian roots’<sup>52</sup> that was critical of Kemalist secularism and its European orientation. This alternative business elite stood in favour of increased visibility for Islam *and* economic liberalisation, i.e., against state intervention in the economy and a generous welfare system. After a decade of restructuring

according to the new norms of the global economy, ‘the state relinquished its control over capital flows.’<sup>53</sup>

Joshua Hendrick argues that the ‘most significant result of these developments was a rapidly increasing domestic consumer market, a “consumer revolution” that benefited old and new producers alike.’<sup>54</sup> In Turkey, consumerism became a dominant social ethos at the turn of the 1990s.<sup>55</sup> A comparable scenario occurred in other Muslim-majority countries in its wake, and therefore consumerism was dominant pretty much everywhere by the early 2000s, whether in Malaysia and Egypt or in more unsuspecting places like Pakistan, Bangladesh, Kazakhstan, and Mali.<sup>56</sup> In a remarkably short time, neoliberalism-infused globalisation profoundly affected local economies and contributed to shift them from the “bazaar” form to integrated markets, even in some of the most remote and traditional regions on the planet.<sup>57</sup>

Market economies are neither the only nor the normal type of economy.<sup>58</sup> They are constructed and instituted as such, namely through more or less forceful coercion. Contrary to the claims of orthodox, neoclassical economists who view the economy as a purely autonomous sphere, economies are embedded in the social and governed by the norms and obligations intrinsic to social bonds rather than by the supposedly natural law of offer and demand. This is certainly the case of bazaar economies, which are expressions of underlying power structures, social hierarchies, statuses, obligations, and rights.<sup>59</sup> Thus the shift towards globally connected market economies signifies enormous changes in the very fabric of local societies, and the introduction of formerly unknown rationalities, dependencies, obligations, hierarchies, freedoms, identities, communitisations, values, aspirations, beliefs, and practices. The consequences of the neoliberal and consumer revolution in Muslim majority countries, in other words, resonate far beyond the strict confines of the economic “sphere”: they imply a major and massive change in the very fabric and structure of Muslim societies *and therefore religion*, challenging the arrangements and establishments described in the prior section.

### *Media Deregulation and the Lifestylisation of Islamisation*

Parallel to financial deregulation and transfer of power from the State to the Market, media deregulation was an all-around consequence of the implementation of neoliberal policies. Turkey can once again serve as an example. Here, the modernising Republic had institutionalised a full control over education and telecommunications: ‘This enabled the state to organize and monitor the public sphere to ensure it was adhering to the official national (i.e., Turkish) and secular (i.e., European) identity.’<sup>60</sup> At the turn of the 1990s, this power was relinquished as media and education were liberalised. The early 1990s were therefore witness to an efflorescence of new television and radio channels, independent newspapers, magazines, private educational institutions, and even financial institutions, ‘all of which provided autonomous networks of association for the production and dissemination of religious values and

ways of life.<sup>61</sup> This contributed to drastically erode the state's control over the production of subjectivities and the public sphere. Media deregulation, the development and democratisation of communication technologies (most importantly the mobile phone), including the Internet and social media as of the late 1990s, acted to multiply the impact and the penetration of consumerism and promote market orientation. One impact of new communication technologies and the omnipresence of media has been the acculturation and dissemination, within Muslim-majority societies, of expressive individualism and the ethics of authenticity. In their overview of global Muslim youth, Asef Bayat and Linda Herrera note how a 'meaningful autonomous life' today signifies access to citizenship but also and in equal measures to consumer culture, namely through the claim of a 'right to a lifestyle.'<sup>62</sup> In countries like Egypt, musical subcultures like metal and techno-raves rapidly expanded among middle class youth from 1998 onwards.<sup>63</sup> Over the course of the last two decades, Internet 'has become increasingly central to everyday [...] life'<sup>64</sup> for Muslim youth across the globe. In lower social classes and in places like Palestine, when there is nothing (Gaza especially but also the West Bank), there is always Internet, which is cheaply available in Internet cafes.

Scores of scholars have remarked on the rise of a process of re-Islamisation that started somewhere in the mid to late 1980s. Few though have drawn attention to the synchronicity of this process of re-Islamisation and the implementation of neoliberal policies and the penetration and dissemination of consumerism in Muslim societies. Yet the forms that this process of re-Islamisation have taken are clearly shaped by the logics of lifestyle and its imperatives. As a result, Islam has been turned into visible and publicised forms and made to cater to authentic identity and ethical needs. The sporting of the veil and the beard are the most visible and widely reported of these phenomena, which have taken massive proportions. On the streets of Cairo, for instance, the Muslim veil, which was rare in 1969, was omnipresent in 2005, with around 80% of women wearing it.<sup>65</sup> Contrary to many assumptions, which portray this phenomenon as a "return" to pre-modernity and evidence of obscurantism and superstition, this massive transformation occurred among the educated middle and upper classes especially, for whom being pious and expressing one's religiosity had become valued, trendy, and respected. Bayat talks of a 'new ethos' that has 'found institutional and discursive expression in the vast, though fragmented, "Islamic sector," composed of Islamic media, publications, education, associations, business, *halaqât* (religious gatherings), art, entertainment, tastes, and fashion.'<sup>66</sup>

These changes far exceed the sole example of the veil. They testify to how a new form of active and visible piety has replaced Nation-State regime forms of religiosity. As the 1980s ceded to the post-Cold War 1990s, pop stars began to publicise their religiosity and to include religious themes in their lyrics and music. In the case of Egypt, Bayat notes how sermons in Cairo mosques in rich and poor neighbourhoods shifted from political and social to ethical and moral themes, while the profile of the star preacher changed from the

militant or traditionalist type to the necktie and shaven look popularised by Islamic televangelist Amr Khaled (see below). Breaking with the modes of Nation-State era Islamism, these new religious trends are '[t]hick on ritual and remarkably thin on dissent.'<sup>67</sup> They mark 'a shift from Islamism as a political project to one concerned primarily with personal salvation, ethical enhancement, and self-actualization.'<sup>68</sup>

As a result of this shift that resulted from the transfer of social power from politics to economics, the structure opposing Secularists and Islamists was challenged and its formative function eroded. As a result, then, both Secularist and Islamist currents came into crisis. For Islamists, it became obvious that they were not the ones who were leading the parade and that the ongoing Islamisation seemed to have grown out of the earth and amidst social segments to which they were foreign.<sup>69</sup> This has led commentators to diagnose the failure of political Islam and the concomitant rise of "post-Islamism." What seems clear is that the sources of original, political Islamism have become 'exhausted, even among its once-ardent supporters.'<sup>70</sup> Olivier Roy has pointed at the internal contradictions of the Islamist project: to construct an Islamic state purely guided by Islamic principles, but enacted by the modern institution par excellence, the state, and within the confines of a national territory. According to Roy, the religious principles underlying the Islamist project cannot hold when faced with the exigencies of the political reality and the exercise of state rule.<sup>71</sup> Whether this is entirely true or not, it is obvious that post-Islamism signals a 'qualitative shift'<sup>72</sup> in the discourse, mode of organisation, practices, and politics of Islamism. In the words of Asef Bayat,

Post-Islamism is neither anti-Islamic nor un-Islamic nor secular. Rather it represents an endeavour to fuse religiosity and rights, faiths and freedom, Islam and liberty. It is an attempt to turn the underlying principles of Islamism on its head [*sic*] by emphasizing rights instead of duties, plurality in the place of singular authoritative voice, historicity rather than fixed scripture, and the future instead of the past. It strives to marry Islam with individual choice and freedom, with democracy and modernity (something post-Islamists stress), to achieve what some scholars have termed an "alternative modernity."<sup>73</sup>

In addition, I argue that this critique of authority, the reconfiguration of Islam with respect to individualism and choice, as well as the renewed investments in the meaning of what it is to be modern can all be understood as effects of expressive individualism and the ethics of authenticity, and therefore linked to processes of marketisation.<sup>74</sup> The shift from political Islamism to post-Islamism, in other words, needs to be related to the rise of a Market imaginary and a form of disenchantment with the State.

In the case of Turkey, Hakan Yavuz argues that the losers of the shift from statist and corporatist Kemalist developmental strategies to populist free-market policies have been the Islamist movements that have 'maintained

an authoritarian and socially rigid view of Islam<sup>75</sup> coupled with a preference for a strong welfare state. The winners meanwhile have been those who are ‘tied to new businesses that [use] the marketplace to transmit a societal-centred’ (vs. state-centred) conceptions of Islamisation. The combined neoliberal and consumer revolutions have thus created “opportunity spaces”<sup>76</sup> for a new type of Islamist movement that is market rather than state-focused, and which seeks to Islamise from below, through mores sustained by Islamic consumption and Islamic lifestyles, rather than top-down, through the state.

### **The Gülen Movement**

Turkey’s Gülen movement is often referred to as an ideal-typical example of post-Islamism. Born in Eastern Anatolia in 1941, Fethullah Gülen’s main inspiration stems from Saïd Nursi (1878–1960), who aimed to preserve and regenerate the Islamic faith in a rapidly modernising Turkey. Nursi revived Anatolian Sufi thoughts and practices by cutting them from traditional Sufi orders (*tarikats*). The discrete movement that coalesced around him was of the apolitical type, as Nursi preached a rejection of political Islamism and the cultivation of personal piety while living in the world.<sup>77</sup> Gülen’s project differs significantly from that of Nursi and marks a change in direction, strategy, and means. Gülen shifted the inward-looking focus of Nursi’s movement to socially and economically active and outward-looking preoccupations. The aim was to flood Turkish society with pious and entrepreneurial Muslims destined to occupy key positions in society in order to restore conservative Muslim values.<sup>78</sup> The Gülen Movement started by investing in the sector of higher private education, coupling high-quality scientific and technical curricula with teachings on Islamic morality and theology. The Movement grew rapidly during the years of economic liberalisation, and its model was applied outside Turkey in the early 1990s, namely in rapidly changing and neoliberalising post-communist countries. From its initial introduction in Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, Russia, Ukraine, Moldova, Bulgaria, Poland, Albania, and the Balkans, the Gülen Movement expanded into a truly transnational network by the 2000s, with branches in over one hundred countries including in the US, Europe, Sub-Saharan Africa (e.g., Kenya), and South-East Asia (e.g., Thailand). Neoliberalism-induced media deregulation opened an avenue for the Movement, which founded a multi-media empire that includes an important segment of the free press. Gülen-linked entrepreneurs became active in powerful business associations such as MÜ-SIAD (Association of Independent Industrialists and Businessmen), PASIAD, IGIAD (Association of Economic Entrepreneurship and Business Ethics), and TUSKON, which all rival the longer-standing Kemalist TÜSIAD (Association of Turkish Industrialists and Businessmen). In 1996, the Gülen Movement became highly involved in the financial sector with the foundation of Bank Asya, which rose to the top of the Turkish banking sector within the following

decade. Hendrick estimates that there were between 500,000 and 2,000,000 close affiliates of the Movement in 2005 in Turkey alone.<sup>79</sup>

The Gülen Movement's mode of organisation is clearly of the governance type. Recall how governance favours a horizontal, interest-based, shareholder, and franchise type of governmentality (mode of organisation of power and means of control). Incidentally, the Movement is an informal and decentralised network of branches more than a formal, centralised, and bureaucratic organisation. It has no official membership, no rite of initiation, no official register, and employs strategies that are meant to be reactive, 'flexible,' and 'lean.'<sup>80</sup> The activities of the Gülen Movement activities have expanded out to light manufacture, construction, finance, and publishing, yet its educational institutions and their alumni form the core. Hendrick argues that the Movement cannot be defined as a social movement in the classic sense, since social movement theories presuppose the state as the ultimate focus of their activity.<sup>81</sup> Instead, the Gülen Movement focuses on civil society and aims to build influence and social power rather than establishing an Islamic state.<sup>82</sup> Furthermore, Gülen's message couples Islamic piety with a capitalist ethic: 'GM is best presented as a collective mobilization whose actors seek to normalize neo-liberal wealth accumulation with aspirations for faith-based social change.'<sup>83</sup> As a consequence, the aims of the Gülen Movement are best understood in market terms. For Hendrick, 'the community of Fethullah Gülen is best understood as a leader in a grand effort to increase "the Muslim share" in Turkey's political economy.'<sup>84</sup> The Movement, he continues, 'constitutes an economically motivated, rationally opportunistic advocacy community whose leader frames "this-worldly" objectives in terms of Islam.'<sup>85</sup>

In Indonesia, the emergence of consumerist middle classes acted as a powerful vector for the revival of Sufism.<sup>86</sup> A similar trend can be noted in Turkey, namely with the help of the Gülenists. In his Sufism-inspired books, Gülen presents Islam as a resource for the development and realisation of the self as a reflection of God. For Hendrick, Gülen's teachings amount to an entrepreneurial brand of 'applied Sufism' that is conducive of a 'market rationality'<sup>87</sup> and promotes successful living in the here and now. 'By educating future bankers, investors, accountants, and lawyers, the GM reframes the spiritual requirement to follow God's path as a social requirement to realize white-collar success and elite-level influence.'<sup>88</sup> The Gülen Movement strategically calls its members to invest in other members' projects. Religiously motivated donations, which are presented as a form of *hizmet*, or service (*hizmet* being another name for the Gülen Movement), are invested as start-up capital for profit-driven enterprises. The Movement's expansion illustrates how piety has become rationalised and marketised in Turkey, and how the politics of global participation has, in many ways, 'secularized Muslim identity politics in the interests of material expansion.'<sup>89</sup>

Fethullah Gülen ranked among the world's most influential intellectuals by the end of the 1990s. The movement he initiated reconciles capitalist entrepreneurship and neoliberal politics with morally conservative Islamism. Its success is part of a wider and more profound movement within Turkey

away from Europe-oriented Kemalism and towards a new conjunction of global-oriented capitalism and neo-Islamism. The Gülen Movement is representative of a tectonic shift that was instrumental in the accession to power of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's AKP (Justice and Prosperity Party) in 2002. Erdoğan "grew up" in the political party of Turgut Özal and pursued his economic and social re-orientation towards market liberalism while bringing Islam to the fore of his political project, officially breaking with Turkey's secularist legacy. It is the importance of this shift that Cesari fails to grasp since she falls short of recognising the consequences of neoliberalism and consumerism on the rapport between modernity, religion, and politics.

The Gülen Movement had organic relations with the AKP until their recent fall-out, and the success of the latter is widely held to have been an important factor in the electoral successes of the former.<sup>90</sup> The AKP's political discourse links nationalism, Islam, and free enterprise, and its policies have involved the privatisation of state assets and the transfer of social welfare to private Islamic foundations (*vakfi*), which, in tune with the neoliberal creed, are presented as being more efficient than public institutions. These orientations could build on the work done by Gülen, for whom 'working hard and privatization are an integral part of religion,'<sup>91</sup> and whose movement sought to forward and legitimise neoliberal integration.<sup>92</sup> As the track record of the AKP since its coming to power shows, neoliberal reforms mean state reform in terms of market access and welfare cuts, but not increased political liberalism and democracy, on the contrary. The AKP has since become an extremely influential example across the Muslim world, whether Sunni or Shia.

The formidable rise of the Gülen Movement and Turkey's economic (neo) liberalisation were drivers for what Hendrick calls a 'passive revolution,' a term borrowed from Gramsci that means the progressive and non-violent reform of a society's 'dominant social paradigm, a shift in the discursive structure of norms, values, and beliefs [that constitute] a society's political and economic social structures.'<sup>93</sup> The Gülen Movement is a vibrant example of how post-Islamism has developed into 'faith-inspired articulation[s] of capitalist accumulation that' have the power to redefine the 'relationship between Islam, markets, and society.'<sup>94</sup> It embodies the shift from the Nation-State to the Global-Market regime, which erodes the Secularist/Islamist matrix and operates a shift from the State to the Market as the focus and means by which re-Islamising processes develop. Breaking with the national container, the Gülen Movement branched out transnationally and represents a remarkable force leading some of the changes within global Islam. While it has no direct equivalent in other Muslim-majority countries, it exemplifies a major trend by which Islamism now espouses economic liberalism and favours entrepreneurship.

### **The Rise of Market Islam**

The Gülen Movement is an example of what Hendrick calls 'post-political, market Islam.'<sup>95</sup> By this he means that the Movement stands as the first private producer of Turkish Islam. It is involved in the production of religious

goods and services (ideas, messages, media, books, videos, music, fashions) for the new market for Islamic goods, as well as goods and services destined for the markets of global capitalism.<sup>96</sup> This constitutive involvement in economic activities provides the means for the dissemination of the Gülen Movement's ideas, its growth, and its reproduction. This constitution, as well as the content of Gülen's doctrine, signifies that the Movement *marketises Islam* while *Islamising the market*. By presenting itself as a product for mass consumption, the Gülen Movement expresses 'the degree to which free markets have the power to reframe traditional mores in their image.'<sup>97</sup> It is the testimony of the ways in which the Market as both an economic institution but also a cultural ideology and a moral ideal provides the grammar for the recent transformations within Islam.

Hendrick is not the only one to have coined the expression "Market Islam." Daromir Rudnyckj similarly uses it to capture how Islam has been reconfigured to serve as a legitimation for neoliberal policies and the production of neoliberal subjectivities in Indonesia.<sup>98</sup> The first use of the term dates back to 2005, however, as the title of Patrick Haenni's book *L'islam de marché*, yet to be translated in English.<sup>99</sup> While most analysts at the time were focused on political issues and debates around Islam and secularism, Haenni noticed a tidal change in the popular culture and everyday practices of Muslims in Muslim-majority countries, whether in the Middle East, the Maghreb, or Southeast Asia. With great acuity, Haenni describes the dynamics that coalesced in the Arab Spring uprisings a few years later. Haenni understands the global Islamic revival as part of an exit movement from the prior Nation-State-based political, social, and cultural structure, and as the symptom of a wider and profound reconfiguration process by which Islam is being reshaped and driven by the idea and mechanisms of the Market. For Haenni, the rise of Market Islam embodies a major reconfiguration of Muslim religiosities along life ethics, personal identities, lifestyles, expressivity, and visibility in the public sphere. Haenni chose to name this emerging constellation Market Islam 'because of its affinities with the institutions of the field of economics that serve as [this reconfiguration's] support,' and because this concatenation of terms is suggestive of 'the new entrepreneurial culture to which [contemporary Islam] borrows the categories of its discourse.'<sup>100</sup> In other words, the shift from political to Market Islam refers to how economic globalisation imprints a completely novel economic orientation to Islam. While the consensual concept of post-Islamism translates the ways in which Islamism has moved away from a State imaginary and state-oriented strategies, it does not provide keys for understanding the inner coherence and general orientation of these trends. By suggesting the concept of Market Islam, Haenni was the first to define this coherence and orientation in a positive and comprehensive way, as the formatting of Islam in a brand new structure, that of the Global-Market.<sup>101</sup>

Haenni's analysis distinguishes four concurrent trends. The first of these is the rise of an essentially inner-worldly, individualistic type of religiosity

that breaks with the collectivist projects of political Islam. The tropes of self-realisation and well-being as life objectives are central to this transformation, which Haenni argues results from the penetration of New Age-derived therapeutic techniques and language, coaching and management discourse and techniques, as well as hedonism and a positive attitude towards consumerism. This trend challenges the Nation-State era Muslim Brotherhood-type doctrine according to which access to the sacred derives from collective engagements. Rather, it promotes the idea that an Islamic state does not depend on the specific nature of its institutions as much as on the lives and morality of individuals.<sup>102</sup> Islam therefore becomes shaped according to the ethics of authenticity and expressivity carried by consumerism. As a consequence, representations of Allah become less austere, and values such as individual happiness, enjoyment, relaxation, entrepreneurship, pro-activeness, optimism, hard work, and leisure are re-interpreted as acceptable and even desirable features of what makes a good Muslim and a good Muslim life. Significantly, management and self-development literature is now routinely reinterpreted within an Islamic frame. Haenni gives the example of Stephen Covey's *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* and how it has been the model for Islamic self-help and self-management books with titles like *The Secrets of Efficient Management from the Life of the Prophet*.<sup>103</sup> Similarly, the rise of Islamic fashions contributes to reshape Islam in forms that are 'estranged from the identity programme of political Islamism' while contributing to the 'sacralisation of the individual.'<sup>104</sup>

Second, Haenni highlights the popular disenchantment regarding state-oriented Islamist projects and state utopianism as a whole. As a consequence, utopianism has shifted from the State to the Market and here-and-now concerns. 'It is no longer a question of convincing the masses about an ultimate and intangible truth, but adjusting religious offers to the real or supposed expectations of a target group.'<sup>105</sup> Haenni notes how the religious mainstream has become more conservative as a result of its marketisation and the investment of everyday symbols and practices with religious meaning. Recast to serve expressive identities and an everyday ethic, Islam spills out of its Nation-State regime box and colours elements of daily life that were hitherto devoid of religious signification. Hence the invention of a potentially infinite market for Islamised products, from Mecca Cola to vacation packages,<sup>106</sup> finance, insurance, etc. Thus marketised, the "truth" and authenticity of Islam are no longer guaranteed by theological accuracy nor traditional or National-Statist authorities but experience and "social efficacy."<sup>107</sup>

Thirdly, the shift from a State imaginary to a Market one has theological implications, such as the emergence and massive dissemination of a radically novel prosperity theology meant to support the constitution of a new *Muslim pride* that is no longer activated by political projects but economic performance.<sup>108</sup> Rebelling against the traditionally fatalist view of Islam ("*Insha Allah*") which Weber saw as a major hindrance to the adoption of the capitalist ethos, a surprising amount of Muslim voices have proceeded to

disseminate what looks like a Puritan re-interpretation of Islamic sources. Economic success is granted a religious legitimation, while “the poor and the needy,” which were the focus of prior Islamic economic thought, are recast as counter-examples of what constitutes the “good Muslim.” The good Muslim is no longer the disinterested devout but the capitalist “winner.”<sup>109</sup> “Was the Prophet not a successful businessman?” is an often-heard justification. Disengaged from collective action, Market Islam also turns its back on issues of equality, thereby providing legitimation for the explosion of inequalities produced by neoliberal policies. Breaking with the socialist affinities of many Islamist modernist movements, the poor are depicted as being poor out of personal responsibility rather than the victims of systemic causes. In accordance with the neoliberal creed, the poor simply fail to work hard enough and seize the opportunities that God sends their way and that could summon His grace in the form of material success.

Fourthly and finally, Haenni diagnoses the end of the welfare ideal in Muslim-majority countries and the end of political Islamism, replaced by a positive attitude to market economics. In addition, the triumph of economic liberalism entails a conservative rather than progressist turn regarding politics and morality. Haenni notes the similarities with the rise of Evangelical Christians and their support of radical liberal economic policies and an ultra-conservative political and moral agenda in the US. This movement lies behind the rise of the Tea Party and later Donald Trump, who has completely overtaken the Republican party. In the US and elsewhere, these trends support authoritarian politics, but not in a uniform matter. In the case of Muslim countries, the allure of consumerism and participation in the digital realm has also favoured demands for democracy, as seen during the 2011 Arab Spring and in Algeria more recently. As Bayat observes, Western commentators have perhaps downplayed the ways in which the Arab Spring protests were not only political in nature but also means of claiming a right to access the culture of choice of consumerism.<sup>110</sup> Haenni concludes that the acceptance of an essentially economic version of modernity signals the death of welfare and socialist ideals in the face of expressive individualism and moral and religious conservatism. It also signals the ousting of the Enlightenment and secularist ideals that were embedded in the idea of the modern Nation-State and its moral individualism. In other words, the American economic and libertarian conception of modernity has overtaken the Republican and political conception of the French Enlightenment that was so strongly influential in the Nation-State regime.<sup>111</sup>

Haenni’s analysis was *avant-gardist*. It put together many elements that appeared marginal from the perspectives of secularisation and secularism, yet which, once put together, are massive. As Haenni writes, ‘these trends are anything but anecdotal.’<sup>112</sup> For him, the concept of Market Islam refers to the bulk of the transformations that have affected Islam over the last decades. It encompasses Hendricks and Rudnyckij’s conceptions while providing a comprehensive framework for understanding the recent transformations of Islam

on a global scale. In the remainder of this chapter and the following, I build on Haenni's analysis and examine in more detail some of the salient new phenomena and reconfigurations that characterise Islam in the Global-Market regime.

### **New Mediatized Religious Authorities**

It is well known that the formatting of religion in the Nation-State regime provoked a crisis of religious authority in Islam, and this crisis has been revived in the passage to the Global-Market regime. A major factor has been the impact of private-owned means of digital communication, which have reconfigured 'traditional structures of authority and power'<sup>113</sup> and allowed new forces to emerge. Nothing better exemplifies this shift than Amr Khaled, who has attracted an impressive amount of academic attention. Vali Nasr celebrates him as the most important 'prophet of change' in the making of 'Islamic capitalism.'<sup>114</sup> Born in 1967 in an Alexandrian bourgeois family, Khaled is the uncontested star of 1990s/early twenty-first century Islamic TV-predication. Clad in a business suit or with jeans and a polo shirt, his black hair worn short, sporting sunglasses and a moustache, *beardless*, speaking in vernacular rather than classical Arabic, Amr Khaled is avowedly passionate about Islam and... football. His training includes a degree in accounting at the University of Cairo and excludes any extensive training in Islamic theology, apart from limited studies at the Cairo Institute for Islamic studies in 2001.

Khaled's life story is that of a modern upper-middle-class Egyptian who found his way back to Islam. As many youths in Arab countries and Western diasporas, Khaled grew up in a secularism and nationalism-drenched context devoid of sustained references to Islam. He tells the story of having rediscovered religion as a teenager. First drawn to the Muslim Brotherhood's brand of Islam rather than to the more austere and radical Salafism, Khaled began to formulate his own reformist message. He got to know the Western culture of self-realisation from up close during his studies and his experience in the business sector, namely at Chase Manhattan Bank in England, where an uncle of his held a key position. Returning to Egypt, Khaled inaugurated a series of Islamic salons for the upper middle class, intentionally 'aiming at those who are in a position to change things.'<sup>115</sup> The success of these initiatives opened the doors to television, and from there to worldwide fame and the construction of a transnational multi-media empire.

Amr Khaled's "digital Islam," which broadcasts on satellite television and the Internet, differs substantially from the "television Islam" of the 1980s and earlier media figures like Cheikh Shaarawi, and even more so from the "audio tape Islam" that played a part in the Iranian Revolution. Khaled aims to 'reconcile religion and life' and thereby emancipate Islam from the 'closed, narrow-minded, and fatalist expression' of its traditional and Nation-State regime forms.<sup>116</sup> As Haenni argues, his cosmopolitan and proactive version of Islam, open, media-savvy, global-oriented,

free-market-friendly-yet-morally-conservative, amounts to a three-fronted *Kulturkampf* within Sunni Islam. First, against Islamism as a Muslim expression of statism. Second, against the sectarian and dogmatic Islam of Salafism. Third, against the fatalism of traditionalism. To lead this fight, Khaled positioned himself at the crossroads of three contemporary tendencies in Arab societies. First, their bottom-up re-Islamisation. Second, the tendency towards state privatisation and overall neoliberalisation. And third, their adoption of consumerism and media-drenched globalisation.<sup>117</sup>

Khaled's move to television was critical as he offered something never seen before in the Arab world: a talk show reminiscent of American televangelists of the likes of Billy Graham and Jim Bakker. His guests include repentant urban youths who have found their way back to Allah, as well as varieties of Muslims who have in common to be both pious and successful. Testimonies are interspersed with commentaries and messages on the history and nature of Islam, and on how a good Muslim must conduct him or herself. His preaches couple 'motivational speeches mired with emotional stories of Prophet Mohammed with a participatory call-and-response model.'<sup>118</sup> The show is aimed at a public made of youth, women, and the affluent, yet reaches out to almost all social classes. It promotes personal ethics and praxis rather than creed and mosque attendance. Emphasising a personal relationship with Allah, Khaled embodies the shift from Nation-State "religion" to Global-Market "spirituality." As such, he is the broker of a Muslim-world version of the "spiritual-not-religious" trend. His rhetoric is soft and echoes African-American talk-show queen Oprah Winfrey<sup>119</sup> by focusing on emotions, personal contact, self-help, self-realisation, as well as mind-body-spirit balance. Khaled's message can be filed under the mantra of "life change," and presented in a poignant spectacle format. In Khaled's preaching, a God of love replaces the austere, omnipotent, and vengeful Allah of Muslim modernists and Salafists. He also insists that the Prophet and his entourage were happy and smiling, filled as they were with God's bliss. For Khaled, belief grounded in love rather than fear is the key to a more *personal, affective, and unmediated relation with Allah*.

Over a very short period of time, this outsider to religious affairs gained enormous popularity and authority. A reason for this is the way Khaled 'utilizes a full range of media to disseminate his message, including satellite television channels such as Dream TV, Iqra'a and Orbit [...] the internet with his state of the art website, and audio and videotapes,' which together reach out to the entire Arab world as well as to Muslim diasporas in the West.<sup>120</sup> By the early 2000s, Khaled's website was the third most popular in the Arab world and received more hits globally than Oprah Winfrey's. By the mid-2000s, he figured among *Time* magazine's list of hundred most influential people in the world, *Newsweek*'s top fifty global elite, and *Foreign Policy*'s top twenty world public intellectuals.

Amr Khaled exemplifies the new type of religious authority that has emerged since the 1990s, breaking with former authority models, starting

with his younger age than the traditional bearded sage. With little religious training, and without emitting fatwas, actors like Khaled have emerged from the business and media sector, independently of Islamist movements, whether traditionalist or modernist. Khaled is far from being an isolated example. Similar charismatic figures have emerged all over the Muslim world. Their outreach is constitutively transnational and aims at the global *Ummah* more than national communities. Apart from Khaled, Abdullah Gymnastiar constitutes a similar case in Indonesia, while Cherif Haidara is an example from Mali.<sup>121</sup> All of these figures share a meteoric rise to fame, fuelled by private media. They also promote consumerised and neoliberalised interpretations of Islam. They embody a type of authority that is no longer vertical and commanding. They exert their authority through seduction, by creating a climate of trustworthiness, and by presenting themselves as coaches and brothers more than fathers and sheiks. These new digital authorities constantly refer to the Prophet as both the most authentic source and ultimate role model, and stress the compatibility of piety and inner-worldly activity. An array of online forums and Islamic websites have emerged in parallel, promoting a similarly ethical and identity-based Islam (e.g., islamonline.net). In this broad current, Islam is made to cater to personal identity and provides guidelines for everyday living and ‘immediate’<sup>122</sup> rather than other-worldly salvation. This brand of Islam is depoliticised, translated into life ethics and expressed through consumption choices and an entrepreneurial, proactive spirit. Commentators have called this brand of Islam ‘pious neoliberalism’<sup>123</sup>—an Islamic alternative to “secular” Western economic globalisation.

How influential are these new charismatic authorities in the lives of Muslims? In Khaled’s native Egypt, Mona Atia has studied how Khaled, ‘through his Life Makers program, has inspired a broad movement of FBDOs [Islamic Faith-Based Development Organisations] that stretches far beyond Cairo.’<sup>124</sup> These organisations represent some of the milieus in ‘which pious neoliberalism emerges,’<sup>125</sup> adapting ‘Islamic principles of charity to promote neoliberal practices like financial investment, entrepreneurship, self-help strategies, and management science.’<sup>126</sup> Another study conducted on veil-wearing women in Tunis at the end of Ben Ali’s dictatorship, where the practice was forbidden according to a Kemalist-inspired, secularist legal framework, provides striking data.<sup>127</sup> The sample of fifty women interviewed revealed two ideal-types. The first was comprised of a large majority (40) of “mundane” or liberal veil wearers, mostly issued from the middle classes, with inner-worldly concerns and a consumerist lifestyle. The second ideal-type was constituted by a more conservative, “sectarian” section of the population (10), issued for the most part from lower classes or presenting biographies marked by significant difficulties or trauma. These women compensated their lack of success, social integration, and affluence by visible signs of heightened spiritual and moral purity. Significantly, *all* fifty women interrogated referred to Amr Khaled when talking about their reasons for veil wearing and the sources of these legitimations. This provides strong evidence to support the

claim that, for a substantial portion of Muslims, in Western diasporas and Muslim-majority countries alike, the primary sources of religious authority today are media-borne charismatic authorities like Amr Khaled, who spread their views through books, magazines, TV, and the Internet.<sup>128</sup>

The case of Khaled also provides insights into the ways in which the ethics of authenticity integral to Western consumerism translate into non-Western cultures. Khaled's example shows how these ethics have been completely appropriated by the Muslim world and how they provide the framework for the reshaping of Islam. Through the Islamisation of the ethics of authenticity and expressivity, the acculturation process affects the content, but not the underlying structure of religion in the Global-Market regime.<sup>129</sup> In Khaled's programs, emotions are constantly shown and provoked through testimonies and images that evoke personal dramas and exemplify and promote introspection and reflexivity. Emotions are at the core of Khaled's new religiosity, and the recurring theme of repentance constructs a *born-again* type of Islam that has been widely disseminated in the Muslim world and constitutes a new norm.<sup>130</sup> Khaled and consorts construct a cult of interiority that dramatises and aggrandises subjectivities in a way reminiscent of Western trends, yet without the countercultural critical potency towards capitalism that one still finds in many New Age derived strands of spirituality.<sup>131</sup>

### The Marketisation of Islamism

The Gülen movement provided us with a paradigmatic entry into the field of post-Islamism. Such new market-oriented social movements emerged with the rise of the Global-Market regime and competed with instituted Islamist movements. The latter have not been spared by these recent changes, and have had to adapt to their new social environment. According to Yavuz, the 'fulcrum of Islamic social movements action [has] shifted from a concern for large-scale societal change to narrower, more self-oriented goals of claiming and realizing individual and group identities.'<sup>132</sup> Islamist movements are decreasingly focused on the state and the nation as a community of reference and are increasingly constituted by transnational flows against the backdrop of an imagined global community of Muslims (*Ummah*).<sup>133</sup> 'Islamic revivalism [today] is much more focused on personal forms of piety, freedom and agency,' and tends to escape 'nationalist politics altogether.'<sup>134</sup> Faced with the failure of Islamic revolts in Egypt (1981), Syria (1982), Algeria (1991), and more recently Saudi Arabia (2001), many Islamist groups have 'conceded that the creation of Islamic states was no longer in the cards.'<sup>135</sup> In the words of Nasr, 'The call for an Islamic state was not purely abandoned, but increasingly it was recognized as a distant prospect, and social activism took over as the work at hand.'<sup>136</sup> Instead, then, a score of 'bloggers, rappers, fashion designers, televangelists, human rights activists, and self-styled Islamic gurus and thinkers of all stripes'<sup>137</sup> have been leading a 'quiet and profound revolution'<sup>138</sup> in the direction of Amr Khaled's brand of Market Islam.

Research on Islamist movements points to a similar re-orientation from the State to the Market. In her study of the Muslim Modernist movement Jamaat-e-Islami in Pakistan, Humeira Iqtidar argues that ‘the idea of the market’ emerged over the last few decades as ‘the most potent challenge to the state as a mobilizer of ideas, political energies and imaginaries,<sup>139</sup> especially since the fall of the Soviet Union and the endowment of neoliberal injunctions. Under the gloss of the continuity of Islamist discourse, in which the state remains a rhetorical focus, Iqtidar notes ‘a qualitative change due to the increasing encroachment of consumerism.’<sup>140</sup> Officially, the Jamaat-e-Islami’s

relationship to the market is ambivalent: one the one hand [...] activists and leaders speak against consumerism as well as the free market [...] and on the other hand they are not immune to the allure of the market as a mechanism for bringing about societal and individual transformation.<sup>141</sup>

Iqtidar shows how activists and leaders of the Jamaat-e-Islami and Islamist political parties have ‘emphasized repeatedly [...] that the state has, in effect, been taken over by the market.’<sup>142</sup> Long-time activists within the movement report how it is increasingly difficult to attract people to political activism because of the competing desire to participate in consumer society. This is particularly acute amidst the middle and aspiring middle class, a group ‘particularly defined by its attempt at self-fashioning’<sup>143</sup> through consumption. Iqtidar argues that mainstream Islamism is increasingly turning to a form of ‘consumer activism’ by which Islamic consumption and fashion become an alternative to political militancy. As a consequence, the ‘line between entrepreneurship and political mobilization—one that had been sharply delineated by Maududi for the Jamaat-e-Islami—[has] become a blurred one.’<sup>144</sup> Iqtidar’s description matches Haenni’s reports of Muslim Brotherhood intellectuals in the orbit of the great al-Azhar mosque in Egypt, some of whom have called for the revision of traditional conceptions of *Da’wah* (proselytising) to devise new ways to provoke conversions, namely by seeking inspiration from marketing in order to think of ‘Islam as a product destined to consumers.’<sup>145</sup>

As noted by Haenni, the shift from Islamism to post-Islamism has produced significant theological developments in the sense of the legitimation of capitalist entrepreneurialism and neoliberal policies through their Islamisation. This type of discourse has also emanated from a new type of theological actor: business associations, such as Turkey’s aforementioned MÜSIAD and IGIAD. In the words of Yavuz, the foundation of MÜSIAD in 1990 ‘marked a turning point in the history of Islamic movements and the economy in Turkey.’<sup>146</sup> Apart from pushing for free-market policies, its task ‘has been the construction of “Islamic ethics in the Spirit of Capitalism”’<sup>147</sup> and the designation of the global market as a new realm for jihad.

The difficulties of conciliating Islamic ethics and the spirit of capitalism have been described by Max Weber and Maxime Rodinson, among others.<sup>148</sup>

The new generation of entrepreneurial Muslims have indeed had to face issues such as how to acquire wealth ‘without transgressing Islamic boundaries’,<sup>149</sup> as well as deal with the Quranic ban on *riba*’ (loan with interest) and *israf* (wasteful consumption). Here, obligations to conform to the imperatives of global competitiveness and profit maximisation collide with Islamic exhortations to social responsibility, other-worldly preoccupations, sobriety, and heightened morality. One way of dealing with these challenges has been to define a desirable *homo Islamicus* in opposition both to the Western utilitarian *homo economicus*, which is said to be amoral yet entrepreneurial, and to *homo traditionalis*, who respects Islamic principles but is mired in conformism and lacks entrepreneurship. *Homo Islamicus*, then, is a socially responsible, sharia-compliant, incorruptible, and ethical profit-maximising pious businessman.<sup>150</sup> These constructions aim to introduce ‘Islamic morality into capitalism’ in a way that has redefined ‘both Islam and capitalism.’<sup>151</sup> In the end, however, these efforts have tended to naturalise capitalist values, behaviour, and notions within an Islamic framework rather than create an alternative Islamic economic system. In the words of Özlem Madi, ‘In this new context, economic rationality is represented as an Islamic value by the neo-Islamist actors who were able to create a new “Islamic space” [...] within the capitalist system.’<sup>152</sup>

Theological and scriptural support for the construction of an ‘Islamic capitalism’<sup>153</sup> have relied first and foremost on the figure of the Prophet as a successful merchant and entrepreneur in order to affirm that ‘Islam is entrepreneurial.’<sup>154</sup> The so-called market of Medina, which ‘was established by the Prophet himself in the formative stage of Islam’ and which is presented as having been non-interventionist and tax-free, ‘serves as the ideal model for an “Islamic free market”.’<sup>155</sup> Some even equate Adam Smith’s invisible hand and the will of Allah, claiming that market mechanisms were founded by Islam, centuries before its “discovery” by the West. Based on a series of hadiths (sayings of the Prophet), business is said to have been encouraged by Allah as a dignified activity. Similarly, working in order to become wealthy is presented as working towards the community’s prosperity, and as such a sign of Allah’s blessings (grace, or *barakah*). Such reasoning resonates with the Puritan ethic discussed by Weber in the making of capitalism, save that seeking prosperity is not regarded here as a sign of salvation as it was for Calvinists. In an Islamised version of Mandeville’s idea that ‘private vices [produce] public benefits,’<sup>156</sup> the contradiction between the pursuit of personal enrichment and the common good is resolved by saying that the intention driving individual profit-making is the same as that of working for the betterment of the community. Reasoning of this sort finds support in the claim that Allah is the true owner of all wealth, which is only entrusted to mankind. A rich Muslim is therefore the keeper of Allah’s wealth, and not a true proprietor.<sup>157</sup> One has to stress the novelty of this type of prosperity theology within the Islamic tradition, which increasingly emanates from some of the highest authorities. These are nothing less than neoliberal exegeses of the Quranic tradition.

It is also noteworthy that post-Islamist movements tend to fit a governance model of governmentality and are often founded on personal charisma rather than rational-legal or traditional modes of authority. The vertical, hierarchical, and highly bureaucratised Islamist institutions of the Nation-State era, meanwhile, have suffered pressures for reform. As with the Muhammadiyah in Indonesia,<sup>158</sup> some have unconvincingly tried to develop economic ventures in order to address funding problems. Other Islamist movements such as the Sultanbeyli, who are particularly active in the working-class neighbourhoods of Istanbul, have remained ‘state oriented, oral, populist, and party based.’<sup>159</sup> In Turkey at least, the Islamist movements that cater to the lower classes are the ones that have maintained a state focus the most, even if they no longer aim to found an Islamic state. On the ground of his research on Sultanbeyli, Yavuz reports that lower classes aspire to consumerism while being ‘hungry for social change.’<sup>160</sup> They widely identify ‘state policies as the source of their problem [but] are extremely sceptical about the equity of the market’<sup>161</sup> at the same time. Their response to globalisation and neoliberalisation, then, has been to disengage from the Kemalist secular program in favour of radical Islamism combined with demands for generous social welfare and effective redistribution policies.<sup>162</sup> Lower classes no longer expect that Islamist movements Islamise society from above and solve every issue by applying the Shariah. In this example at least, lower classes wish for prosperity to trickle down to their level so they can participate in the bounties of consumerism. Consumerism and not Islam, in other words, is the horizon of this brand of Islamic radicalism amidst lower income strata.<sup>163</sup>

Other developments attest of the shift from a state-centred, socialist-inspired Islamism to a marketised brand of post-Islamism. In the aftermath of the 2011 Arab Spring protests, Islamist formations like the Muslim Brotherhood came to power in countries like Tunisia, Egypt, and Morocco. As Haouès Seniguer notes, Islamist governments engaged neither a socialist nor an Islamic revolution. Rather, they prolonged the neoliberal reforms of their predecessors.<sup>164</sup> In the case of Egypt, the short reign of the Muslim Brotherhood gave way to social and economic policies belonging to an extreme form of capitalism, according to Brotherhood members’ own appreciation.<sup>165</sup> Indeed, Khairat al-Shatir, the Brotherhood’s number two, as well as Hassan Malek, an extremely wealthy and powerful businessman and counsel to president Mohamed Morsi, preach an openly capitalist and entrepreneurial gospel, moving ever further from the social preoccupations of old. The model here again is Turkey, namely the neoliberal Islamism of the Gülen Movement and Erdogan’s AKP.<sup>166</sup>

### **Transnational Spiritual Movements**

Recall the structure of Islamism in the Nation-State regime (Figure 2.1). The above section has mapped out some of the directions that political Islamism has taken in shedding the Nation-State matrix for the Global-Market one.

In a nutshell, political Islamism has become less political as it has become increasingly individualist and market-friendly. What follows turns our attention to what has happened to apolitical, spiritual (inward-turned), and sectarian Islamist movements. The South Asian (India and Pakistan) born Tablighi Jamaat provides a first example. Founded in 1926 as a faith renewal movement (apolitical spiritual Islamist movement), it has grown to be one of the ‘largest of the transnational Islamic movements’<sup>167</sup> with an estimated 12–15 million adherents worldwide. It began to expand globally in the 1960s before giving birth to two rival movements, the Da’waat-e Islami (founded in 1981) and Sunni Da’wat-e Islami (founded in 1992), which together are ‘extremely influential in shaping the Islamic religious field.’<sup>168</sup> They have also been particularly successful in converting Muslim-born emigrants back to Islam. Gugler has shown how these movements have had to de-ethnicise and de-nationalise their content and focus in order to adapt to new publics and disseminate worldwide. For instance, the Tablighi centre in France has been the base from which the movement has spread to Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia, and from there on to Spain. These dynamics defy the former North-South framework with interesting new networks and trajectories of influence. For instance, the Tablighi Jamaat has extended from Pakistan to Western Europe, and from there to North Africa and back, exemplifying the more complex dynamics that are constitutive of religious life in the era of the Global-Market regime.

Benefiting from the renewed legitimacy of spiritual and mystical religiosity, as well as the possibilities opened by transnational flows and modes of communication, these movements have witnessed an impressive level of growth in the past three decades. Spiritual movements have diffracted and gone through processes of reform, moving from the margins of society deeper into the mainstream. These are pietist lay preacher movements with largely informal, networked types of organisation that bypass the traditional hierarchies and authorities of religious training. They stress a strict and literal imitation of the life of the Prophet that involves a very specific and immediately recognisable ‘Islamic etiquette in drinking, eating, walking, greeting, sleeping, brushing the teeth, combing the beard, etc.’<sup>169</sup> as well as a distinct attire (i.e., *fashion*). These movements contribute to shift Islamic fundamentalism away from state-oriented and politicised forms through the individualisation of practices and the de-territorialisation and de-culturation of religious practices. In the words of Thomas Gugler, ‘Contemporary “re-Islamization” is about the privatization of Islamic symbols and rituals and the triumph of individualistic conceptions of piety and the sacred over collective and socially mobilized Islamist projects.’<sup>170</sup> The project of Tablighi-like movements is to Islamise the world through the conversion of individuals who adopt a specific lifestyle that comprises a well-defined set of ethics (rules explaining how to live) and an immediately recognisable Islamic identity. Gugler call this process “Sunnaization”: the ‘interpretation of Sunnah [the life of the Prophet] as a normative system of lifestyles’<sup>171</sup> whereby ‘every individual establishes deep [personal] ties with the Prophet in his [...] daily life.’<sup>172</sup>

Founded on the cultivation of the self *and* the investment of the public sphere (politics of visibility), their theology bears many resemblances with quietist Salafism. They allow members to invest themselves in cycles, in other words to be highly involved for a time, and then less so, according to individual circumstances, needs, and preferences. This ‘consumer-oriented approach,’<sup>173</sup> as Gugler calls it, increasingly attracts youth, students, businessmen, traders, emigrants, and others who may feel the need for ‘a spiritual break from the Western lifestyles.’<sup>174</sup> Once the *external* signs of Sunnaization have been adopted, members are recognised and immediately empowered to Islamise their surroundings. The adoption of an outfit and lifestyle is not acquired through training and initiation: it precedes it. Tablighi-style Muslims are therefore warranted as religious authorities and invested with the right and obligation to represent the movement on the sole ground of aesthetics and ethos, *prior* to any serious religious training and doctrinal knowledge. Adherents also benefit from the movements’ networks, which are known to increase their mobility, geographical, economical, and/or social, ‘thereby creating long-term social-structural processes of middle-class formation’<sup>175</sup> in a globalised and marketised world.

A review of literature shows how similar trends are shaping other fundamentalist movements such as Salafism. Rooted in Saudi Arabian Wahhabism and constituting a major force of attraction and normativity production, Salafists define themselves first and foremost by a specific attire and way of life based on the Sunnah, sacralising and enchanting everyday life.<sup>176</sup> In their fierce competition against one another, fundamentalist movements have effectively standardised their “offers” into increasingly distinct lifestyles, a process that Gugler aptly calls ‘branding.’<sup>177</sup> These movements put forward the cognitive, emotional, and experiential rewards of their practice, and have even developed a series of mass events that aim to be “fun,” such as annual *ijtemas* (three-day meetings), ‘enthusiastic *zikr* and *nat* sessions [songs and devotional prayers], *urs* festivals [in the honour of Sufi saints] and *maulud* celebrations [poetry in honour of the Prophet].’<sup>178</sup> In other words, and to dare a witty formula, they aim “to put the fun back into fundamentalism.” All these events are promoted through a multimedia communication strategy that involves ‘active marketing measures’ involving ‘regional TV and sport-stars.’<sup>179</sup> Gugler observes that more recent movements like the Da’waat-e Islamî have an advantage over older (Nation-State era born) movements like the Tablighi Jamaat as concerns the ease with which they manage to fit themselves in the new model of consumerism-formatted religiosity. Similarly, some spiritual renewal movements have elaborated a brand of soteriological utilitarianism, by which every act is recorded as generating ‘paradise points,’<sup>180</sup> according to the idea that ‘every step you make is rewarding.’<sup>181</sup> Again, the parallels with self-help literature are striking. If other-worldly salvation has returned as a concern within certain strands of post-Islamism, other-worldly soteriology tends to be complemented with an equally important focus on inner-worldly health, wealth, and success in the here and now.<sup>182</sup>

## Jihadism 2.0

Our tour of the varieties of Islamic movements ends with the violent forms of Islamism known as Jihadism. Adventuring into this topic is perilous, and my analysis here is tentative. Too much information is missing in order to draw any definitive conclusions, in particular concerning non-Western jihadists' motivations and trajectories. This is shifting territory, and therefore my analysis will concentrate on the core of the movements themselves and especially their converts and supporters in Western countries. The emphases would have been different had I written this section a few years ago, when the Islamic State were at the apex of their Caliphate project in Syria and Iraq and was drawing in thousands of jihadists from all over the world. My main argument can be summed up by the following. Post-Islamist Jihadism participates in the Global-Market regime reformatting of Islam and Islamism through its negation of both the nation and the state, its radically globalised conception of the *Ummah*, its communication strategy, and the lifestylisation of fundamentalist Islam.

Al-Qaeda inaugurated the trends that radicalised in newer movements like Jabhat al-Nusra, Boko Haram, and ISIS, as far as modes of organisation and governance are concerned. While the core of these organisations is run top-down with a firm hand, jihadist movements today are simultaneously organised in flexible networks of autonomous cells: they are like franchises or start-ups rather than branches integrated and controlled by a centralised power.<sup>183</sup> This logic is pushed to its limits with the so-called “third wave” of “lone wolves” that have committed terrorist attacks on Western soil and elsewhere in the last few years, including in the name of ISIS, without any prior engagement with these groups.

The emergence of the new jihadist movement in the mid-1990s—which some call Jihadism 2.0—was made possible by digital means of communication. Its growth into the global phenomenon we know far too well today is directly correlated with the appearance of social media platforms, which have proven to be powerful modes of conversion and recruitment.<sup>184</sup> Digital media relays have permitted these movements to act as un-coordinated networks that are able to inspire vocations and recruit from all over the world. They have also allowed for the emergence of new religious authorities who preach a literal interpretation of the Quran, such as ISIS supporters Anjem Choudary, Ahmad Musa Jibril, and Musa Cerantonio, who have conquered an audience independently of existing radical Islamic authorities.<sup>185</sup> In Western countries, recruitment operates according to two complementary means, either through direct contact with networked actors, for example in certain neighbourhoods, in the periphery of mosques or prisons, or through the Internet and social media. In both cases, recruiters seek to create an emotional resonance triggered by propaganda images and the construction of a narrative in which Islam and Muslims are the victims of a sustained and bloody attack by the West in a kind of postmodern replay of the Medieval Crusades.

Abdelasim El Difraoui has analysed the content of al-Qaida's communication since the 1990s and shown how media are key to their strategy.<sup>186</sup> This is even truer for ISIS, a name that is contracted from the English translation of Arab '*ad-dawla al-islamiyya*', or Islamic State (in Syria). ISIS, then, has its own media and audio-visual production department, and some of its staff have previously worked in Western movie and audio-visual studios.<sup>187</sup> In this sense, a report on ISIS communication based on internal documents stipulates that 'propaganda production and dissemination is at times considered to be even more important than military *jihad*.'<sup>188</sup> ISIS and other Islamist groups 'weaponize media,' and consciously develop 'branding' schemes around their names, logos, and missions, such as 'global jihad,' or 'the Caliphate.'<sup>189</sup> The politics of Jihadism 2.0 are typical of the Global-Market regime and can be resumed in two words: publicity and visibility.

Based on Muslim Brotherhood militant Sayyid Qutb's redefinition of jihad, al-Qaeda changed the focus of jihadism over the course of the 1990s from the 'near enemy' (corrupt Muslim or occupation regimes) to the 'far enemy' (the United States and the West).<sup>190</sup> Yet, for Osama Bin Laden and al-Qaeda leaders, the restoration of the Caliphate was a long-term objective with little reality. Contrary to the situation in the Nation-State era, jihadist groups today are resolutely unhinged from any nationalist preoccupation. They rather choose to lead a global jihad that is situated on a plane that is as cosmological and messianic as it is geographic and cultural. This is why their targets are symbolic and chosen to produce as much publicity and terror as possible, rather than being commanded by some kind of military strategy. Jihadist movements in the al-Qaeda mould who target the far enemy profess a radical negation not only of the nation but also of the state as a political form.

Formerly known as al-Qaeda in Iraq, ISIS broke with its mother organisation in 2003, causing what William McCants describes as the 'biggest split ever in the global jihadist community.'<sup>191</sup> For Fawaz Gerges, the conditions for the emergence and growth of ISIS are to be found in the destruction of Saddam Husain's authoritarian, secularist, Baathist regime as a result of the post 9/11 US invasion, and with it all of Iraq's major institutions. This created a volatile society retrenched upon ethnic and religious divides rather than an integrated and democratic country, as US neo-conservatives had projected.<sup>192</sup> With the withdrawal of US forces at the end of 2011 and the lawless situation that ensued, ISIS capitalised on Sunni feelings of marginalisation in the Iraqi reconstruction process led by the Iran-supported Shia authorities. It is worth recalling that during the Iran-Iraqi war (1980–1988), a majority of Iraqi Sunni *and Shia* had put their *national* identity to the fore rather than their religious and ethnic ones, and had supported their *country* against the Iranian enemy. Two decades later, and as we move further away from the Nation-State period, this is obviously no longer the case. The support that ISIS enjoyed from the Iraqi Sunni community allowed for the proclamation of the restoration of the Caliphate by ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in Mosul in 2014.<sup>193</sup> It is important to note that this proclamation was approved

by neither al-Qaeda nor any of the radical Islamic authorities, who argued that the conditions for founding a Caliphate were not assembled. Furthermore, as all other post-Islamist movements, jihadism has moved away from concerns with the state and closer to a market imaginary. This fact is vividly exemplified by al-Qaeda theologian Abu Muhamad al-Adnani, who has been quoted as saying that ISIS was ‘spoiling the brand of global jihad.’<sup>194</sup>

### *The Paradoxes of ISIS*

The case of ISIS is therefore a paradoxical one. On the one hand, it radicalises the logics of al-Qaeda as concerns the terrorist warfare waged on the far enemy, including in cyberspace. On the other, it seems to return to prior Islamist preoccupations with the state as the necessary framework for the implementation of God’s Law on Earth, while focusing on the Middle-Eastern “near enemy”—namely the Shia, the Iraqi and Syrian regimes, as well as the secularist, pro-Western states in the Middle East.<sup>195</sup> For radical Islamists and jihadists, the importance of having a territorial anchorage flows from the interpretation of the Quran according to which the application of Islamic Law (sharia) requires the ‘coercive power of the state, since religion does not only rest on the Quran, but also on the Sword of the combatants of the faith.’<sup>196</sup> The project of restoring a Caliphate aimed at creating a place where everything would be Islamised, where there would be one homogeneous community, and where a single, monolithic, unilateral, and univocal Law would apply, all of which under one rule. From this territory, Muslims could wage war against ‘nationalism, secularism, democracy,’<sup>197</sup> as well as diversity, otherness, complexity, ambivalence, and uncertainty. According to the apocalyptic vision developed by ISIS theologians, the restoration of the Caliphate was supposed to usher in the end of time and the final judgement by the Almighty. In the minds of ISIS, the idea was to find a post-colonial totalitarian imperial state that would put an end to Islam’s submission to the West and restore Muslim pride in the face of secularism. In essence, ISIS projected to realise Sayyid Qutb and Hassan Al-Banna’s dream of an Islamic state, only emancipated of inherited colonial frontiers and emancipated from the idea of the nation-state and its bounded community. ISIS therefore gambled that it could realise something that Islamists 1.0, who had respected the framework of the inherited nation-states, had failed to do.<sup>198</sup>

On the territory that it controlled (prior to its rapid erosion over the course of 2015–2017 and the fall of Raqqa), the ISIS government collected taxes, regulated prices, operated courts, organised health care, welfare, and education as well as telecommunications. It did, in other words, seem to behave like a state, albeit one that sought to reproduce the Golden Era of the life of the Prophet, fourteen centuries ago, and one that lived on an atrophied version of the modern state’s institutions. There are many differences between the Islamic state of what I am calling the Islamists 1.0’s dream and that of ISIS. Referred to as Daesh in Arab, ISIS refuses to recognise the legitimacy

of existing nation-states, since there is no legitimacy other than Allah. The idea of restoring a Caliphate is therefore not the project of founding an Islamic alternative to the nation-state, which could draw all (Sunni) Muslims to its haven and eventually sit at the United Nations. ISIS rather rests on an apocalyptic and messianic vision according to which the proclamation of the Caliphate will usher in the end of time. In ontological terms, the restoration of the Caliphate signified the arrival of a completely enchanted immanence waiting for its own end at the hands of the transcendent.<sup>199</sup> ISIS therefore founded a very peculiar state that defies modern parameters. It is not a territorial state, but one that is territorially grounded. At the same time, the Islamic State's Caliphate had no frontiers: it was bound to expand inexorably, led by military conquest, until the encounter with the "Armies of Rome" (the Christian West) in an end-of-times epic battle, 'according to prophecy.'<sup>200</sup> Anthropologist Scott Atran, political scientist el Difraoui, and others have remarked the similarities between the ISIS mythology and video-game imagery. Its territory was therefore less geographical and strategic than symbolic and idealised. For Atran, ISIS is revolutionary precisely because it questions the very foundations of the modern nation-state.<sup>201</sup> What will become of ISIS once it is returned to its original landless, renegade status, and is condemned to survive as a guerrilla, like al-Qaeda, is open for debate. What is certain is that the rapport to the nation and the state has been significantly reconfigured in the passage from jihadism "1.0" in the Nation-State regime to jihadism "2.0" in the Global-Market one.

The collapse of Middle Eastern Arab states (Iraq and Syria) provided the conditions for the rise of ISIS, both practically and ideologically. It is not coincidental if ISIS found fertile soil for its implantation in the frontier regions of destabilised nation-states, whether in the Middle East or elsewhere. ISIS-rallied groups such as the Islamic State in Islamic Maghreb and Boko Haram in Sub-Saharan Africa have similarly become encroached in such transnational territories. A tragic effect of the 2011 pro-democratic (and pro-consumerist) Arab Spring uprisings has been the weakening of these countries' institutions, which has favoured the rise of fundamentalist pockets, such as in the Egyptian Sahel and, above all, Libya. The overthrow of Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi by Western powers has had the same broad consequences as in Iraq as concerns the brewing of jihadism.

These developments express the unresolved contradictions, tensions, and shortcomings of the institutionalisation of the nation-state in the Middle East and Africa after the experience of Western colonisation, a situation aggravated by the sheer short-sightedness of certain Western powers, the US above all others. The situation that these developments have ushered in is in many respects very different from Nation-State era configurations. A drawing by Chapatte published in the *International New York Times* captures the situation remarkably. Before a stack of smoking ruins among which figure a broken picture of Gaddafi, a bullet-holed sign labelled Libya, and two men firing weapons at each other, stands a smiling black-clad, Kalashnikov-sporting



Figure 2.2 Cartoon by Chappatte. © Chappatte in *The International New York Times*.

jihadist with the caption: ‘You see a failed state, I see a brand opportunity.’ He holds a black flag with the ISIS logo and the inscription: ‘ISIS. Opening Soon’ (Figure 2.2).

As Gerges argues, the rise of ISIS is the result of the collapse of the state-system, including the territorial foundations of state sovereignty, and the nation as the foundation of this sovereignty. For jihadists, the only sovereignty is that derived from Islam. However, and somewhat optimistically, Gerges argues that state formation in Europe was a time-consuming process that was drenched in blood, and that ISIS might be a step in the process of state formation in the Middle East rather than the proof of the breakdown of the modern state in itself.<sup>202</sup> The uncertain and very fragile processes of democratisation in Tunisia, for example, as well as the Hirak movement in Algeria, argue in favour of prudence and very relative optimism at best. Whatever may be the case, and while we must not underestimate the resilience of the nation-state, the disenchantment it faces under actual Global-Market conditions poses a series of serious challenges that spring up contradictions that will have to be addressed in the future.

### *Jihadism as Absolute Lifestyle*

Compared with al-Qaeda, ISIS has dramatically lowered its demands with respect to knowledge of Islam and the Islamic tradition. This has proven a successful strategy, as it is not theological finesse that attracted the estimated 30,000 individuals who flocked from outside the Middle East to Syria

and Iraq. This includes about five thousand Western Europeans, including 5–10% of women,<sup>203</sup> in addition to an unknown number of ‘stay home supporters.’<sup>204</sup> ISIS promises a utopia that is based on a simplistic and vacuous Manichean theology that can be reduced to a short list of slogans. The heroic and violent imaginary as well as the martyr mythology and Islamic utopia promoted through a mass of images and propaganda videos disseminated in cyberspace have proven to be far more efficient for recruiting candidates for jihad than theological arguments. Accounts converge regarding the ignorance of the basic precepts of Islam among ISIS jihadists, whatever the origin.<sup>205</sup>

Reports also converge on two ideal-typical profiles of Western “home grown jihadists.” Both of these are on the born-again model, i.e., individuals without former religious attachment or knowledge who convert to, or back to, Islam. Also, a majority of Muslim-born jihadists are second-generation immigrants, which points to the specificities of the identity issues of this generation as a major factor for radicalisation.<sup>206</sup> There are very few third-generation immigrants among those who have joined the jihadists’ Crusade. The first ideal-type is responsible for most of the terrorist attacks on Western soil, and accounts for a significant portion of all radicalised: 27%–57%, depending on the sample.<sup>207</sup> It is composed of individuals who have a criminal past, whether petty crime or more violent ones, and who are almost all originated from disadvantaged social backgrounds (*cités*, ghettos, poor districts) with little possibilities for success, affluence, and recognition. Research shows that in this case ‘the jihadist narrative [...] is surprisingly well-aligned with the personal needs and desires of criminals, and that it can be used to curtail as well as license the continued involvement in crime.’<sup>208</sup> Jihadist movements have consciously aimed prisons as prime loci of radicalisation, hand in hand with specific propaganda campaigns on the web.<sup>209</sup> Researchers have shown how crime and gang membership provide belonging, meaning, recognition, and identity for disadvantaged and immigration-originated youth.<sup>210</sup> For individuals with a criminal past, joining the global jihad provides the ultimate upgrade and an identity authenticated by the highest authority—God. ‘Just like the criminal gangs of which they used to be members, jihadist groups [offer] power, violence, adventure and adrenaline, a strong identity, and—not least—a sense of rebellion and being anti-establishment.’<sup>211</sup> Radical Islam therefore provides the ultimate transgression available for rebellious youth today.<sup>212</sup> As Atran writes, ‘ISIS represents the most radical counter-cultural discourse in the world.’<sup>213</sup> It is the perfect counter-model to the secular West and global “McDonaldisation”.

For the homegrown terrorists who commit acts of violence on Western soil, dying as a martyr not only opens the doors of paradise and its prospects of available virgins: it also promises this-worldly immortality through maximum media exposure and a guaranteed cult in jihadist networks, including virtual shrines. For the futureless petty criminal, joining the Global Jihad means participating in something bigger than themselves, without having to fundamentally change who they are and abandoning violent means.

Terrorism allows them to barter recognition among local gangster circles for instant world fame among the buzzing networks of the self-declared righteous. In the same vein, jihadism and terrorism offer the possibility, for certain individuals within this type, of ‘redemption from crime while satisfying the personal needs and desires that led them to become involved in it.’<sup>214</sup> As one jihadist explained, ‘I want to do something good for once, I want to do something pure.’<sup>215</sup>

The second profile concerns normal lower to middle-class second-generation immigrants who do not have delinquent pasts nor difficulties at school yet also radicalise over a very brief period of time via the influence of the Internet and/or a personal connection. They conceive their involvement in the Global Jihad as personal and humanitarian, and their narrative insists on the identification with the injustice and sufferings of the global Muslim community (*Ummah*), in particular at the hands of the West.<sup>216</sup> Radicalisation and the passage from word to deed appears similarly motivated by the desire for recognition, self-esteem, and self-affirmation. The individuals composing this type adopt the lifestyle (behaviour, clothing, and discourse) of a “super-Muslim,” thereby realising their ‘desire for a real quest of authenticity.’<sup>217</sup> Farhad Khosrokhavar, one of the best analysts of jihadism, points at the dissolution and reconfiguration of parental authority among second-generation immigrants as factors that produce the search for strong authority, non-ambivalent rules of life (such as strictly defined gender roles), and a Manichean worldview. In a sense, jihadists form an anti-May ‘68 or anti-countercultural counter-culture that sacralises conservative social norms and abolishes the arbitrary.<sup>218</sup> (Note the structural similarities with Trump supporters.) For Laurent Bonelli and Fabien Carrié, this second type of homegrown jihadists also reacts to the (too) high hopes of success, social standing, and integration their parents entrusted in them. Faced with the unattainability of this objective, caught between two identities, and faced with difficulties of integration, recognition, and social climbing, joining the Global Jihad represents an alternative path that allows their rebellion to be legitimised by the absolute authority of religion under the form of “pure Islam.”<sup>219</sup>

The young women—which are sometimes very young, some of them minor—who choose to leave for the ISIS battlefields in Syria with or without a partner represent a variation on this second type. Consisting of up to 10% of all departures in 2015 in a country like France, they are mainly from a middle-class background. While most of them are second-generation immigrants, surveys count up to 20% of converts.<sup>220</sup> Among the young women who leave, only a very small minority wishes to combat: the overwhelming majority wishes to marry a warrior and have children at an early age. They therefore aim at becoming a pole of permanence in a world in which men have a very limited life expectancy. Sociologists have found that these young women are paradoxically attracted by the romantic perspective of finding an ideal, truthful husband, and being recognised as “a pearl that needs to be cherished and hidden from view.” Many have a troublesome

rapport to their body, which the obligatory sporting of the integral veil (burqa) turns into a form of sacralisation. As for their male counterparts, this type of woman is reassuring, and much easier to deal with than the Western prototype of an emancipated woman, free with her sexuality as with her life choices. Such an attitude, which is the fruit of the countercultural revolution, is felt as being too difficult to bear for both female and male homegrown jihadists. Their revolt is expressed by the adoption of an anti-feminist stance that leans on theology-backed strict gender roles. Rather than facing the exigencies of conciliating a career and a family, women jihadists choose the security of becoming a divinely ordained caregiver. Female jihadists experience a mixture of recognition and abasement that channels and gives meaning to the violence they often address themselves. Far from being the passive objects of male domination and indoctrination as they are often portrayed, many of them insist that joining the Caliphate was *their choice*. Here again, radical Islam provides the highest transgression value and the most radical rebellion, even more so for non-Muslim, European converts. Female jihadism, therefore, is a lifestyle choice that paradoxically emphasises self-affirmation and self-expression through chosen submission (to God and husband). There are chances, by the way, that similar dynamics could be found among other fundamentalist currents, whether Christian-Evangelical or Jewish.

If we consider both sociological types and the case of female jihadists, the analysis of sociological and psychological determinants shows how radicalisation and the conversion to jihadism is an answer to the contemporary social imperative to “become someone exceptional.” Paradoxically, jihadism is one of the possible avenues that have become available as a means to construct meaning, identity, and belonging in line with the ethics of authenticity. A case in point is the often-obsessive way that jihadists post selfies, photographs, and videos showing their daily lives, including while in Syria or even in the midst of battle or a terrorist attack. Jihadism has been successful namely because it has constructed itself into a credible, *authentic lifestyle*. The most authentic lifestyle of all: life as the Prophet’s companion, embarked upon a Holy War. It is attractive because it proposes the most exciting life of all: that of a live video game for people who have often grown up avidly playing video games. In this respect, some jihadists of the second type have confessed travelling to Syria in order to “shake off boredom.”<sup>221</sup> Material reasons are also part of the picture for individuals whose access to affluence might be cut off for a variety of reasons. Hence ‘promises of food, luxury goods, cars, and having their debts paid off’ are part of ISIS propaganda, along with promises of ‘adventure, brotherhood, fighting, and the chance of becoming a hero.’<sup>222</sup> In sum, to become a jihadist, or to imitate them, to rub shoulders or sympathise with them (e.g., on the web), means ‘to exist’<sup>223</sup> within a heroic community. The lifestyle angle into the phenomenon of jihadism and its appeal finally explains why, among all things possible, ISIS branded hijabs and menswear circulate all over the globe.<sup>224</sup>

## Conclusion

The construction of modern nation-states was the most determining factor in the shaping of Middle Eastern Muslim-majority countries over the course of the twentieth century, before and following the independence. As a marker of traditional society, Islam was at the centre of the massive changes provoked by the felt need for modernisation. Islam was challenged by secularist movements, from Turkey to Pakistan and Egypt, and reacted by fitting itself in the Nation-State mould. The birth of Muslim modernist movements changed authority structures within Islam, sifting inherited traditions using the religion/superstition/secular triad. Modernist Islam resisted the calls for the privatisation of religion yet endorsed most High Modern Ideals, including the need to do away with “corrupt” traditions and pledging to reform society from the state, top-down. Political Islam, in other words, was a product of and a vector for modernisation rather than a resistance to it.<sup>225</sup> Another option was to reform traditional Islam along National-Statist lines but avoiding confrontation with the secularist state by choosing a spiritualised and apolitical orientation while agreeing in part to the pressures for the individualisation (if not the privatisation) of religion.

What is remarkable in hindsight is how the culmination of the project of political Islam, embodied by the capture of the Iranian revolution by the Shia Islamists, occurred exactly when the neoliberal revolution started to unfold. Perhaps as a consequence, the Iranian revolution did not bear children. Rather, as Kemal Ataturk’s Turkey was a pioneer in steering Muslim majority countries on the road to the Nation-State regime, so was post-Kemalist Turkey the first to chart a course in which marketisation would now guide policy and structure society, according to a recipe that had been tried in Suharto’s Indonesia and Pinochet’s Chile. As the institutionalisation of the Nation-State regime had radical consequences for Islam and Middle Eastern Muslim-majority countries, so did Market-led globalisation. The Secularist/Islamist structure of Nation-State Islam began to erode from below, giving way to the rise of what Haenni calls Market Islam. New theological authorities from the business and media sector like Amr Khaled arose, producing a new synthesis between a decomplexified form of Islam and a consumerised, market-friendly, and entrepreneurial conception of modernity. State-focused political Islamism ceded to less institutionalised and more mediatised Islamist movements. The Nation-State institutions of Islam could no longer contain developments, which became transnationalised and globalised. Radical Islam spilled out of the Nation-State box of political Islamism and branched out in the form of al-Qaeda and ISIS. Meanwhile, the rather marginal apolitical spiritualised forms of Islamism started to rapidly expand by becoming transnational.

However, what I have described in this chapter is far from being the end of the story. In a sense, these developments are crystallisations of an even wider and deeper process of marketisation of Islam. The following chapter examines how Global-Market Islam thrives in a series of other forms that expand ever further from the Nation-State regime box.

## Notes

- 1 Cesari (2022: 25, 41, 66).
- 2 Haenni (2005: 9, my translation).
- 3 See Said (2003), Hentsch (1988).
- 4 From the Arabic: *'ašhadu 'an lā 'ilāha 'illa -llāhu, wa-'ašhadu 'anna muḥammadan rasūlu-llāh.*' The other Abrahamic monotheism, Judaism, is an orthopraxy rather than an orthodoxy. One commits to Judaism through the observance of ritual prescriptions.
- 5 Cesari (2022: 33). The definition of *dīn* as religion is contested by scholars as a later derivation. The first meaning of *dīn* is retribution or judgement (Hebraeo-Aramaic root), while the second is custom or usage (Arabic root). See Gardet (2012).
- 6 Cesari (2022: 33).
- 7 Cesari (2022: 34–5). In-text quote from Knut (2004: 85).
- 8 Cesari (2022: 24).
- 9 Gauthier (2018, 2020). The present chapter complements and synthesizes in part the contributions in Krawietz and Gauthier (2024).
- 10 Cesari (2022: 111).
- 11 See my review of Cesari's book under Gauthier (2023). The two chapters I devote to Islam in the present book were written between 2020 and 2021, before the publication of Cesari's book. This introduction has been modified as a consequence.
- 12 Nasr (2009: 89–90). In order to limit the weight of references in this section in which I recall well-known facts, I will keep as much as possible to Nasr's synthesis. Cesari's (2022) presentation converges with the analysis in this section while adding substantial evidence.
- 13 Nasr (2009: 90). Emphasis in original.
- 14 Nasr (2009: 94).
- 15 Nasr (2009: 97).
- 16 Nasr (2009: 97).
- 17 Nasr (2009: 97).
- 18 Yavuz (2003: 273).
- 19 Yavuz (2003: 273). See also Gellner (1994: 81–91), Göle (1996).
- 20 Yavuz (2003: 273).
- 21 Insel (2018: 62, my translation). See also Insel (2017).
- 22 Yavuz (2003: 273).
- 23 Yavuz (2003: 273).
- 24 Yavuz (2003: 273). This is also one of the main arguments of Cesari (2022).
- 25 Yavuz (2003: 277).
- 26 Yavuz (2003: 274).
- 27 Bellah (1967).
- 28 See Cesari (2022).
- 29 Yavuz (2003: 274).
- 30 On the Naksibendi, see Silverstein (2011).
- 31 Yavuz (2003: 275).
- 32 Yavuz (2003: 275).
- 33 Turner (1975), Njoto-Feillard (2012: 236).
- 34 On the Muslim Brotherhood, see especially Rubin (2010).
- 35 On Mawdudi and the Jamaat-e-Islami, see Nasr (1996), Iqtidar (2011a). For a compatible interpretation of the modernity of Islamist fundamentalism, see Eisenstadt's (1999) seminal book.
- 36 Arjomand (1989: 117).
- 37 On Chinese Islam, see Goossaert and Palmer (2011). For a complementary and more in-depth analysis that emphasizes the *diversity* of the Islamist currents

- rather than their common National-Statist template, see Al-Azmeh's (1996) distinction between various Islamic modernities, as well as Eisenstadt (1999) and Arjomand (2010a, 2010b, 2011).
- 38 Casanova (1994).
  - 39 I prefer the use of Weber's (1956) classic terminology here (translated from the German "*Vergemeinschaftung*") to Krämer's (2013) 'social bond.'
  - 40 Krämer (2013: 633).
  - 41 Krämer (2013: 635).
  - 42 Krämer (2013: 633, 632).
  - 43 Krämer (2013: 631).
  - 44 Krämer (2013: 632).
  - 45 Casanova (1994: 21).
  - 46 Cesari (2022) brilliantly provides a fair share of that.
  - 47 Krämer (2013), Iqtidar (2011a), Nasr (2009).
  - 48 I owe much to Eisenstadt's (1999) analysis in this respect, as well as Bayat (2007).
  - 49 Dot-Pouillard's (2018) analysis of Palestine shows how these logics played out across the board of political and Islamist currents, from the more secularist Fatah (Islam is instrumentalised to reinforce nationalism) to the Hamas (nationalism is instrumentalised to reinforce Islamisation) and the Islamic Jihad (nationalism and Islamisation combine from the beginning).
  - 50 For an overview of the different models of state-led economies in Muslim majority states, see Adas (2006).
  - 51 Yavuz (2003: 277). See also Maigre (2005).
  - 52 Yavuz (2003: 277), Hendrick (2013: 31).
  - 53 Hendrick (2013: 49).
  - 54 Hendrick (2013: 49–50).
  - 55 Yavuz (2003), Hendrick (2013), Madi (2014).
  - 56 E.g., for Turkey, see Pink (2009); for Egypt, see Abaza (2006), Bayat (2007); for Malaysia, see Wong (2007), Fischer (2009); for Yemen, see Stohrer (2009); for Syria, see Kokoschka (2009).
  - 57 Osella and Osella (2007).
  - 58 See Gauthier (2020).
  - 59 See namely Polanyi (1977), Hann and Hart (2011).
  - 60 Yavuz (2003: 276). On Turkey, see also Gökarıksel and Secor (2016).
  - 61 Yavuz (2003: 270). See also Hendrick (2013).
  - 62 Bayat and Herrera (2010: 11–4). See also Eickelman (2003).
  - 63 Bayat (2007: 162–3).
  - 64 Bayat and Herrera (2010: 16).
  - 65 Bayat (2007: 147).
  - 66 Bayat (2007: 149).
  - 67 Bayat (2007: 149).
  - 68 Bayat (2007: 149). See also Roy (2004), who was the first to describe at length many of these phenomena.
  - 69 See e.g., Haenni (2005).
  - 70 Bayat (2007: 11). On post-Islamism, see the debate between Roy (1992, 1999a, 1999b) and Kepel (2002). Although both intellectuals violently oppose themselves, it is more fruitful to read them together.
  - 71 Roy (1999a, 1999b).
  - 72 Bayat (2007: 13).
  - 73 Bayat (2007: 11).
  - 74 Bayat (2002, 2013) points in this direction with his considerations on the lifestyle of Islam in Egypt.

- 75 Yavuz (2003: 277).
- 76 Yavuz (2003). Note that the expression “opportunity space” is itself neoliberal in origin.
- 77 Tee (2016: 36–50).
- 78 Tee (2016). The main sources on the GM are Hendrick (2013), Silverstein (2011), Yavuz (2003), and Yavuz and Esposito (2003). The last two are particularly apologetic. See also Karatas and Sandikci (2013).
- 79 For all the above, see Hendrick (2013).
- 80 Hendrick (2013: 26).
- 81 Hendrick (2013: 236).
- 82 Hendrick (2013: 142). The interpretation that Gülen did believe at times in an eventual takeover of the state is plausible, yet not under the form of an Islamic State. See Tee (2016).
- 83 Hendrick (2013: 34).
- 84 Hendrick (2013: 241).
- 85 Hendrick (2013: 242).
- 86 See Gauthier (2020: Chapter 9).
- 87 Hendrick (2013: 239).
- 88 Hendrick (2013: 8).
- 89 Hendrick (2013: 8).
- 90 For the relations between the GM and the AKP, see Hendrick (2013) and Tee (2016). For details and an analysis of the fall-out between the two, which was consummated in the wake of the failed July 2016 coup, see the afterword in Tee (2016). On the AKP and Erdogan in general, see Insel (2017).
- 91 Hendrick (2013: 25).
- 92 Hendrick (2013: 23).
- 93 Hendrick (2013: 25).
- 94 Hendrick (2013: 145).
- 95 Hendrick (2013: 24).
- 96 Hendrick (2013: 24).
- 97 Hendrick (2013: 241).
- 98 Rudnycky (2009, 2010). See Gauthier (2020).
- 99 Haenni (2005). The book, which was a revelation for me, is a synthesis of his PhD thesis which he realised under the direction of Olivier Roy. Haenni has since left academia and continues to travel the Middle East, performing various missions for NGOs especially. Roy confided during his stay in Fribourg that Haenni remains his preferred interlocutor as concerns Islam and the region.
- 100 Haenni (2005: 9). My translation.
- 101 It is significant that Haenni’s book is absent from Cesari’s (2022) forty-nine-page bibliography. It is difficult to find a better illustration of how the political orientation of the secularisation paradigm imposes blinders that block out what should be obvious to all analysts: the importance taken in all aspects of life by market economics and marketisation processes. This is all the more remarkable since Cesari does distance herself from the mainstream of secularisation-driven approaches, but not from the more implicit moorings of the secularisation paradigm. I address this issue in more detail in Gauthier (2020).
- 102 Haenni (2005: 20). This shows a change in the conception of society as something greater than the sum of its parts (Republicanism) to one in which society is the sum of its individuals (Liberalism).
- 103 Haenni (2005: 22).
- 104 Haenni (2005: 31, 37). My translation.
- 105 Haenni (2005: 39). My translation.
- 106 On ‘halal hospitality and Islamic tourism’, see Hall and Prayag (2019).

- 107 Haenni (2005: 43).  
 108 Haenni (2005: 56).  
 109 Tammam and Haenni (2004).  
 110 Bayat (2013).  
 111 Haenni (2005: 87–107). This is the meaning behind the book’s subtitle: *L’autre révolution conservatrice* (The other conservative revolution). This trend is the reason behind the success of Salafism. See also Haenni (2011).  
 112 Haenni (2005: 52). My translation.  
 113 Bunt (2000), quoted in Bergeaud-Blackler (2016: 93).  
 114 Haenni (2002, 2005, 2006a, 2006b, 2008a, 2008b, 2011), Haenni and Holthrop (2002), Tammam and Haenni (2004), Nasr (2009). See also Bayat (2002, 2007), Marsaud (2003), Bayat and Herrera (2010: 46–7), Njoto-Feillard (2012), Ben Salem and Gauthier (2011), Gauthier and Uhl (2012), Atia (2012), Olsson (2013), Bendixsen (2013), Gauthier and Guidi (2016).  
 115 Quoted in Marsaud (2003). My translation.  
 116 Haenni (2006b: 3).  
 117 Haenni (2005, 2006b).  
 118 Atia (2012: 816).  
 119 On Oprah Winfrey, see Illouz (2003), Lofton (2011), Gauthier (2014, 2020).  
 120 Bayat (2002: 23). For a brief analysis of his website, see Gauthier and Uhl (2012).  
 121 On Gymnastiar, see Rudnycky (2009, 2010, 2013), Njoto-Feillard (2012), Gauthier (2018, 2020: Chapter 9). On Haidara, see Schulz (2006).  
 122 Schulz (2006).  
 123 Atia (2012). This diagnosis is shared by most if not all authors referenced listed above.  
 124 Atia (2012: 812).  
 125 Atia (2012: 812).  
 126 Atia (2012: 811).  
 127 Ben Salem and Gauthier (2011).  
 128 See e.g., Bendixsen (2013).  
 129 See Haenni (2008b, 2011) for a similar argument.  
 130 Haenni (2002: 5–6).  
 131 On the ‘cosmic aggrandizement of the self’, see Dawson’s (2011) stimulating analysis.  
 132 Yavuz (2003: 278).  
 133 See Roy (2004).  
 134 Bergeaud-Blackler, Fischer and Lever (2016: 7). See also Mahmood (2004).  
 135 Nasr (2009: 165).  
 136 Nasr (2009: 165).  
 137 Nasr (2009: 176).  
 138 Journalist Robin Wright, quoted by Nasr (2009: 176).  
 139 Iqtidar (2011b: 551–2). This is also an argument made by Bayat (2007).  
 140 Iqtidar (2011b: 556).  
 141 Iqtidar (2011b: 555).  
 142 Iqtidar (2011b: 554).  
 143 Iqtidar (2011b: 557).  
 144 Iqtidar (2011b: 559).  
 145 Quoted in Haenni (2005: 178).  
 146 Yavuz (2003: 279). On MÜSIAD see also Maigre (2005), Adas (2006). On IG-IAD, see Madi (2014).  
 147 Yavuz (2003: 279). See also Adas (2006: 115).  
 148 Rodinson (1966).  
 149 Madi (2014: 145).

- 150 Adas (2006).
- 151 Madi (2014: 145).
- 152 Madi (2014: 145).
- 153 Adas (2006), Nasr (2009).
- 154 Adas (2006: 124).
- 155 Madi (2014: 154).
- 156 See Gauthier (2020).
- 157 Madi (2014: 151). See also Adas (2006: 129).
- 158 Njoto-Feillard (2012).
- 159 Yavuz (2003: 282).
- 160 Yavuz (2003: 284).
- 161 Yavuz (2003: 284).
- 162 Yavuz (2003: 282–5).
- 163 See Bayat (2007, 2013) for comparisons with Egypt and Iran.
- 164 In his recent book, Seniguer (2020) shows how the discourses of French Brotherhood members has become embedded within a neoliberal framework.
- 165 Achcar (2013), Seniguer (2020).
- 166 Achcar (2013).
- 167 Gugler (2010: 125). See also Gugler (2008, 2011).
- 168 Gugler (2010: 130).
- 169 Gugler (2010: 132).
- 170 Gugler (2011: 344). See also Roy (2004) for a similar analysis.
- 171 Gugler (2008: 49).
- 172 Gugler (2010: 132).
- 173 Gugler (2008, 2010, 2011).
- 174 Gugler (2010: 133).
- 175 Gugler (2008: 52).
- 176 On Salafism, see Amghar (2011), Adraoui (2012), Zegnani (2013), Lauzière (2017).
- 177 On branding, see Gauthier and Martikainen (2013), Gauthier (2020: Chapter 6).
- 178 Gugler (2011: 344).
- 179 Gugler (2008: 51).
- 180 Gugler (2011: 343).
- 181 Gugler (2008: 56).
- 182 For other effects of neoliberalisation on Islamic currents, see Schielke (2012), Mittermaier (2013), and Tugal (2017). For instance, Mittermaier (2013: 275) argues that the ‘charity boom’ which has been reported in many Muslim majority countries can be read ‘as an effect of neoliberalism.’
- 183 Identifying ISIS with a start-up or a franchise is an argument made by terrorist expert Christina Schori-Liang. See Hufschmid (2015).
- 184 El Difraoui (2013), Gugler (2013).
- 185 Carter, Maher and Neumann (2014), Wood (2015).
- 186 El Difraoui (2013).
- 187 Ghys (2015), Winter (2017).
- 188 Winter (2017: 3).
- 189 Winter (2017: 17).
- 190 Gerges (2009).
- 191 McCants (2015)
- 192 Gerges (2016). Neo-conservatives are neoliberal in economics and conservative in values.
- 193 See McCants (2015), Warrick (2015).
- 194 Quoted by Fawaz Gerges, who insists on the use of the word “brand”, during a conference held at the London School of Economics, May 16, 2016. Available online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gBvSLfWJcJA>.
- 195 Gerges (2016).

- 196 Mouline (2016: 262). My translation.  
 197 Mouline (2016: 262–3). My translation.  
 198 Mouline (2016: 237–65).  
 199 Mouline (2016).  
 200 Wood (2015), in reference to Bernard Haykel.  
 201 Interview in Calvet and Daumas (2016).  
 202 Gerges (2016).  
 203 On the women who decided to join ISIS, see Benslama and Khosrokavar (2017).  
 204 Khosrokavar (2014), Basra, Neumann and Brunner (2016), Gerges (2016).  
 205 British media have reported that the most common book purchased by home grown jihadists leaving for Syria is *Islam for Dummies*.  
 206 Roy (2016), Khosrokavar (2011, 2014, 2017, 2021).  
 207 See Crettiez, Sèze, Ainine and Lindemann (2017), Basra, Neumann and Brunner (2016).  
 208 Basra, Neumann and Brunner (2016: 3). See also Khosrokavar (2014).  
 209 Khosrokavar (2014). Khosrokavar has published many books in French on the topic of prison radicalisation.  
 210 See Perreault and Bibeau (2003).  
 211 Basra, Neumann and Brunner (2016).  
 212 Roy (2016). See also Khosrokavar (2011, 2014, 2017).  
 213 Interview in Calvet and Daumas (2016). My translation.  
 214 Basra, Neumann and Brunner (2016: 24).  
 215 Quoted in Basra, Neumann and Brunner (2016: 24).  
 216 Khosrokavar (2014), Crettiez, Sèze, Ainine and Lindemann (2017).  
 217 Crettiez, Sèze, Ainine and Lindemann (2017: 92). On the super-Muslim (*surmusulman*), see Benslama (2016).  
 218 Khosrokavar (2017: 39–41). Khosrokavar (2021) provides the best synthesis to date.  
 219 Bonelli and Carrié (2018).  
 220 Benslama and Khosrokavar (2017), Khosrokavar (2021). I am also grateful to Géraldine Casutt, who is conducting her PhD research on female jihadists at the Université de Fribourg, for conversations on the topic.  
 221 Vincent (2016). This article relates the trajectory of jihadists from the quiet city of Orléans, in France.  
 222 Neuman (2015: 9).  
 223 Suc (2014).  
 224 Lewis (2016: 91).  
 225 Eisenstadt (1999).

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### 3 The Rise of Market Islam II

#### Halalising Islam, from Fashions and Foods to Finance

Chapter 2 charted the remarkable transformations brought forth by modernisation in all aspects of Islam. As elsewhere in the world, Muslim countries were made to feel an urgent need to modernise, and the main step in this direction required the constitution of nation-states. Although Islam shares with Christianity the fact that it is a monotheism, its traditional makeup was significantly different than that of Christianity in the West. This includes its rapport with the political powers, their legitimation, and the exercise of these powers, particularly with respect to law and custom. Islam was profoundly transformed as a consequence into political and apolitical forms that were truly modern, even as they set themselves against Western-type secularism and its promoters in their own societies. The discussion then illustrated the ways in which the application of neoliberal reforms, the reorientation of Muslim economies and societies on the index of growth and global integration, as well as the penetration of consumerism in every social stratum, coincided with another round of transformations and a new direction of change. Chapter 2 tracked these mutations within the matrix of Islamist movements and the move from state-centred political Islam to what scholars call post-Islamism, and which Patrick Haenni in particular captured as a prime manifestation of “Market Islam.” The chapter ended with a discussion on Jihadism in the digital age, showing how the perspective of lifestyle can shed significant light on the dynamics and attractivity of such a global phenomenon.

This chapter widens the perspective to include “non-movements” as well as an array of phenomena that have literally exploded in the last decades and which have found fertile soil in the blurred frontiers of the formerly well-differentiated social spheres. More precisely, this chapter surveys the various forms of Islamic consumption and Islamic markets that cater to the needs of Muslims in terms of authenticity and lifestyle.<sup>1</sup> Many commentators have remarked on the widespread and profound process of re-Islamisation in Muslim-majority countries and diasporas alike, but few have remarked that these processes share the exact timeline as the erosion of the nation-state container through the application of neoliberal measures and the encroachment of consumerism, in Turkey and then elsewhere. From the formidable rise of Islamic fashions and the concomitant “return” of the veil on the high streets

of the world, the focus shifts to a history and analysis of the extraordinary rise of halal consumption and its extension into an ever-expanding array of goods and services. History shows how the consumption of “halal certified” and “shariah-friendly” products today operates a radical change and reorientation with respect to traditional considerations concerning the licit and illicit. As we will see, contemporary “halal” is the product of industrialisation and neoliberalisation rather than an Islamic version of Kashrut. The chapter ends with an overview of Islamic marketing as well as Islamic finance and Islamic insurances and mortgages. All of these phenomena indicate a *major shift in the very substance and social location of Islam*, including the rise of new religious authorities and the introduction of prosperity (health and wealth) theologies. In the Global-Market regime, Islam provides authenticity, caters to lifestyles, identity, and ethics, and spills out of its monotheistic transcendence to re-enchant everyday life.

### **Muslim Fashions as Islamic Non-movements**

The passage from Nation-State societies to Market-shaped ‘societies of identities’<sup>2</sup> is marked by the de-institutionalisation of social movements and their dissolution into increasingly networked, voluntary, and spontaneous forms of organisation. This trend has also affected non-Western societies, and has led to the emergence of what Asef Bayat calls “non-movements,” understood as the ‘collective actions of noncollective actors’. In this sense, non-movements ‘embody shared practices of large numbers of ordinary people whose fragmented but similar activities trigger much social change, even though these practices are rarely guided by an ideology or recognizable leaderships and organizations.’<sup>3</sup> For Bayat, the emergence of non-movements is a corollary of the importance, for Muslim youth, of gaining access to a lifestyle. Non-movements, in other words, can be thought of as coalescences of competing lifestyles and the transformation of politics from collective ideals of emancipation towards those of expressive individualism as materialised (pun half intended) by consumption.

The evolution of Islamist movements signals a move away from state-oriented forms, be they reformist or radical/revolutionary, towards society-oriented ones, with looser and less-hierarchical modes of governance (i.e., Market-era types of exercise of power). As we have seen in the previous chapter, the effects of consumerism and market-embedded mediatisation result in the reshaping of Islam within lifestyled forms. For fundamentalist movements, the opposition to the supposed corrupt materialism and a-moralism of the West no longer supposes the foundation of an Islamic state but rather the formation of *authentically Islamic lifestyles*. In this sense, the astonishing rise of “Muslim fashions” since the late 1980s in Muslim-majority countries is neither a minor nor a peripheral phenomenon: it stands at the very core of the ongoing transformations of Islam within the Global-Market regime. Championed by the growing middle classes—the cultural carriers of

this post-secularist modernising revolution – yet affecting lower classes as well (who aspire to it or oppose it), Muslim fashions can be understood as a crucible for Islamic non-movements. This is why the present section devoted to Muslim fashions is situated in the continuation of the analysis of Islamist movements presented in the previous chapter. In fact, Muslim fashions might even be ideal-typical of wider changes within Global Islam.

The woman's veil is the most obvious manifestation of Muslim fashions. The wider processes of re-Islamisation that have shaken the Muslim world find their illustration in the new ubiquity of the veil, whether in its conservative makeups or the vibrantly coloured “fashion veils.” Muslim fashion starts with the veil, which has captured substantial attention from academics and has been at the centre of innumerable public debates and polemics. No single religious practice better illustrates the difficulties that Nation-State era politics of religious regulation are faced with in the new Global-Market era. These politics relied heavily on the effectiveness of the private/public divide and the channelling of public religion within well-defined times and spaces. The veil challenges the idea that religion should be based on belief and kept to the private sphere. As an outward manifestation of piety, studies in Muslim majority and Western countries alike have shown that sporting the Muslim veil is presented by women as a personal way to “express their faith” in a public way. In other words, the veil is the materialisation of Muslim women's religious identity into a lifestyle form. Driven by the imperatives of living an authentic life and expressing oneself which are coextensive to present day consumerism, these practices blur the distinction between private and public. These cultural politics typical of consumer cultures therefore present major challenges for the institutionalised modes of regulation of religion inherited from Nation-State-regime brands of secularism and secularity.<sup>4</sup> This helps explain the heatedness of public debates in many Western countries around the veil (but also other Islam-identified garments like the “burkini”) as religious practices move out of Nation-State regime configurations.

The Western emergences and local variations of Muslim fashions have been reported and analysed by a number of scholars, starting with Emma Tarlo.<sup>5</sup> Yet this phenomenon is constitutively transnational. It cannot be pinned down as a Western export to the rest of the world. Muslim fashions have emerged in every Muslim-majority country, and while these trends traverse Western and non-western localities, there also exists a ‘non-Western world fashion system.’<sup>6</sup> I will concentrate on non-Western examples since they are less visible to a Western audience, yet the underlying logics are universal.

### *Muslim Veil Fashions, from Trendsetters to Burkas*

The Muslim veil has been at the centre of innumerable controversies and debates in the West since the tail end of the 1980s. The coincidence with the collapse of the Soviet-led bloc, the triumph of neoliberalism, and the dissemination of consumerism on the back of economic and cultural

globalisation, I argue, is not coincidental. It is instructive to sketch out a history of veil-wearing independently of the normative debates regarding the regulation of religion in the public sphere and the question of diversity management.<sup>7</sup> The secularist regimes that dominated in Muslim majority countries during the Nation-State era widely disseminated a negative judgment on the veil as a remnant of tradition, and therefore as contrary to modernity and nation-building projects (with the notable exception of the Gulf countries<sup>8</sup>). The secularist projects of many modernists in these countries indeed included rejecting the veil and encouraging women to “unveil” themselves as a marker of modernisation. As a result, many women abandoned wearing the veil, whether in Indonesia, Afghanistan, Egypt, Morocco, Turkey, or Iran. The first successful attempts to reconcile the veil with modernity emerged in Muslim modernist currents as an affirmation of political Islam at the end of the 1970s. Far from expressing a return to tradition, veils were worn by young, urban, educated women who supported the radical state-oriented project of political Islam, in Iran and elsewhere.<sup>9</sup> Even if the designs were uniform and signified the adherence to a collectivist project, wearing the veil was legitimised for the first time as a personal decision. Things changed at fast tempo thereafter, since the practice took on new forms barely a decade later, both in Muslim-majority countries and their diasporas. By the 1990s, scholars began identifying new forms of “chosen veils” that could no longer be understood within the framework of political Islam. Rather than signifying an adherence to the collective demands of political Islam, these new forms of veil wearing were public expressions of personal faith on identity and ethical bases.<sup>10</sup> In so doing, Muslim women transformed a ‘stigma into style.’<sup>11</sup> Wearing the veil was now legitimised above all as the exercise of subjectivity through personal choice in matters of fashion and attire, and the chosen veil aimed to publicly express the authenticity of a personal relation with Allah. It was the birth of the individualised, expressive veil that is common today. The politics of the chosen veil reside in its publicity, as a readily recognisable sign of identity.<sup>12</sup>

As Kiliçbay and Binark argue, veiling is ‘inseparable from consumption, commodity, even pleasure patterns, and is stimulated by global and local trends of the market economy.’<sup>13</sup> Because of this, the expressive veil has exploded into a myriad of styles, designs, and colours. It is important to stress how the new forms of veil wearing are never the return of former, traditional forms, either in their meanings (subjective and social) or design. This is also true for the most radical and integral forms of the veil: full-body *abayas* and burkas did not look like those we now see, one century ago.<sup>14</sup> What is also new is how veil fashions, including the integral sorts, are formed, transformed, and disseminated through geographical mobility and media, from magazines to social media, Internet sites, and blogs. Styles and designs migrate and become de-ethnicised (unhinged from local traditions territorialised belonging) in the process. In Indonesia, for example, veiling was clearly not part of the obligations and customs of traditional Islam. Yet, not only has veiling exploded,

especially the fashion veils called jilbabs, but also integral veiling styles like burkas which have been imported from the Gulf countries along with the Salafi ideology.<sup>15</sup> Interestingly, the same general logics characterise the wear of integral veils like burkas and fashion veils, at least in the countries where the law or social norms do not impose them.<sup>16</sup> As a consequence, it is remarkable that women's narratives regarding the meaning and motivation for wearing the veil tend to converge, whether they are collected in Europe, South Asia, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, or even Sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>17</sup>

As Nilufer Göle remarked in her pioneer work of the mid-1990s, new expressive veil fashions, whichever the trend, are ways for women to *conciliate Islam and modernity*.<sup>18</sup> Göle does not insist enough, however, on how the meaning of "modern" has shifted imperceptibly yet significantly since the heydays of Nation-State era Muslim Modernists. For the latter, modern meant rationality, progress, science, and the nation-state. For today's *hijabis*, modern signifies the integration into global time, participation in consumerism, and the expression of personal authenticity through a visible Muslim identity. It is about being-up-to-date and true to oneself by being true to Islam. The Enlightenment ideals, particularly in their paradigmatic French version, have been evacuated from the content of what it means to be modern in favour of largely capitalist, neoliberal, consumerist, and globalised inception that is rooted in the American tradition. In addition, and even in its most fashionable, liberal, and cosmopolitan avatars, the Muslim veil tends to be synonym with a certain dose of moral and political conservatism.<sup>19</sup>

### *Muslim Fashions between Choice and Normativity*

The veil is only the tip of a much larger iceberg called Muslim fashions. However glamorous or conservative, the keyword for Muslim fashions is "modesty." The Islamic fashion-scape that emerged in the last three decades constitutes a field of competing visions as to what constitutes authentic Islam and an authentic Muslim self.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, Muslim fashions express how Islam has been recast within the framework of consumerism. As Reina Lewis argues, the rise of Muslim fashions means that Islam is now 'what Islam *looks like*, or what looks Muslim.'<sup>21</sup> While Muslim revivalist dress was largely home-made in the 1970s and 80s, its design, production, promotion, and distribution have been taken over 'by specialist companies that grew in conjunction with the emerging Islamic bourgeoisie'<sup>22</sup> in the 1990s. Since then, the Muslim fashion market, like any growing market, has expanded, specialised, and segmented. Today, Muslim fashions are a well-established phenomenon, supported by a score of online and paper magazines, television shows, how-to blogs, and Internet sites, in addition to a thriving marketing industry. Globalised retail chains such as H&M, Zara, and many others now cater to Muslim styles and have started to launch Muslim-specific Ramadan collections. This trend is particularly visible on the higher-end of fashion, as the big names of haute couture have almost all integrated the Muslim market

in their collections. DKNY, Gucci, Dolce & Gabbana, and Dior, for example, propose hijabs in their collections. Islamic sportswear constitutes another growing trend, among which the infamous burkini, or “integral swimsuit.” Invented by Aheda Zanetti, a Lebanese designer who immigrated to Australia and sought to reconcile the contradictions in her life, first of all that of feeling both Muslim and Western. The “burkini™” has since been copied by multinational companies like Speedo and can increasingly be seen on beaches and pool-sides around the world.<sup>23</sup>

There has been an explosion of increasingly versatile, comfortable, elegant, or refined styles that share the fact that they all claim to embody “Muslim values,” the first one being modesty. Muslim fashions cover a woman’s body in variable degrees, yet typically more so than Western dress. The veil is therefore the necessary part of a wider aesthetic ensemble whose principle is to ‘make covering beautiful,’<sup>24</sup> in rupture with earlier forms of veiling and Islamic modest dress. There are also men’s fashions, namely Muslim streetwear brands, yet the bulk of Muslim fashions, as conventional fashion, aim at women, whose bodies are at the centre of the politics of Islamic revivalism.<sup>25</sup> As such, there is a constitutive ambivalence or paradox at the heart of Muslim fashions, since they combine the expression of Muslim values like modesty with the hedonism and seductive charge of consumer culture aesthetics and its *mise en scène* of the self.<sup>26</sup> Here again, the tight-fitted yet full-body covering burkini boldly illustrates the paradoxical logics that combine in Muslim fashions, since it is made to be worn on the hedonist and exhibitionist locus par excellence: the beach or swimming pool. This tension is a creative one, as ‘women accept this disjuncture and knowingly engage in a constant mediation between the two.’<sup>27</sup> As Reina Lewis writes, ‘dressing modestly (and in particular veiling) is not simply an outward expression of inner piety, but can be understood to be part of the process by which the pious self is created and maintained.’<sup>28</sup> The expansion of fashion styles ‘has meant that Muslim subjectivities can be formed, presented, and understood as modern and religious through Islamic lifestyle consumption.’<sup>29</sup>

Neoliberalism and consumerism emphasise consumer choice as the ultimate expression of agency and the means by which to produce an emancipated and autonomous subjectivity. While scholars like Emma Tarlo have placed the analytical emphasis on individual liberty, others like Marie-Anne Lavoie, Reina Lewis, and Carla Jones have shown how a complex of obligation and liberty is at work in Islamic fashions. As Lewis argues: ‘consumption is not, nor has it ever been, a voluntary expression of pure agency but is dynamically constrained and inspired by the conditions that make it appealing.’<sup>30</sup> Lewis adds that the fashion industry and marketers have not simply tuned into a pre-existing and untapped market segment: they have actively created it, ‘inviting individuals and groups to identify as Muslim and make consumer choices on that basis.’<sup>31</sup> Dressing up, as a consequence, is ‘both a choice and a requirement.’<sup>32</sup> In consumer societies, there is no choice but to choose, and Muslims are increasingly being summoned to *prove they*

are Muslims through consumer choices. This process reshapes Islam on the born-again model, as consumption and fashion choices become the means to express one's religious commitment and identity. In other words, consumerism is part of the systemic and structural conditions that shape agencies and personal religiosities in today's globalised world. These trends are still ascending and strengthening, particularly among the youth: 'these generations of Muslims have grown up with a model of identity through consumption that was not previously available.'<sup>33</sup> The immediate future is one by which 'religious substance [is] transformed into aesthetic style.'<sup>34</sup> Muslim fashions, in sum, redefine Islam in consumerist terms.

From an anthropological and sociological perspective on consumption, my analysis does not imply a devaluation, disintegration, dilution, or distortion of "real Islam" through the supposed shallowness of consumerism.<sup>35</sup> It is obvious that pious consumption is a sincere expression of religiosity for contemporary Muslims. What this means is a new configuration for religion, a new substance and social location, which is no longer confined to a differentiated social sphere and Nation-State regime configurations, and which caters to the cultural politics of identity and demand for meaning and direction—for life ethics.

### The Invention of Halal

Muslim fashions are in turn only a small fragment of a much wider phenomenon, that of an authenticated Muslim consumption—and thus of an Islamic, or "halal," market of goods and services.<sup>36</sup> The story of halal is a fascinating one that illustrates how what had been considered non-religious (or profane) for centuries has turned into what defines Islam for millions of Muslims today in their everyday life. It also shows how a significant feature of Market Islam is that it is inseparable from the creation and ever-expanding *Islamic market*. In just a few years, something that was virtually unknown, even to Muslims, now has a ubiquitous presence in our daily lives.

The halal phenomenon has become so important globally that one can even talk of a process of *halalisation* of Islam.<sup>37</sup> Pew Research survey conducted in the US has found that 48% of Muslims consider that eating halal food is 'essential to what it means to be Muslim.'<sup>38</sup> In the UK, one of Europe's fastest-growing halal market, halal meat sales went up 30% in 2006 alone, attesting to the importance of halal branding for Muslims in this country. Recent research in France similarly shows the importance that the consumption of halal goods, and halal foods in particular, now has for young French Muslims, whether they belong to the secularised/liberal or more literalist/fundamentalist currents. A 2006 report found that 'halal is Islam' for 46% of French Muslims, a number that has grown since.<sup>39</sup> Generally, Muslim attitudes towards halal are very positive, and those who do not yet consume halal foods report the intention to make the transition.<sup>40</sup> In Europe, the market for halal-certified meat is more developed in France (4.7 million Muslims

for 7.5% of the population), the UK (3 million for 5% of the population), and Germany (4.8 million Muslims, mostly of Turkish origin, for 6% of the total population), which have the most important Muslim minorities.<sup>41</sup> In countries like Norway (72,000 concentrated in Oslo), where Muslim immigration is very recent and emanates from Pakistan and Somalia, the market for halal-certified meat was still in its infancy at the turn of the year 2010, but it has been growing constantly and rapidly since. Since the countries of origin of these immigrant communities are diverse, the development of halal-certified meat and food consumption is not related to national origins. What is perhaps even more significant is that the consumption of explicitly halal food has also become a major concern in Muslim-majority countries where it used to go without saying. In countries like Malaysia and India, i.e., in majority or minority contexts, halal consumption (of food but also clothing and other products) is now being mobilised to reaffirm frontiers between communities (e.g., Chinese Malaysians or Hindus), or even affirm such frontiers where they did not exist in the past. What is remarkable in all these cases is how “halal,” which did not exist a couple of decades ago (as we will see), suddenly erupted to become central to Muslims’ self-definition and understanding of Islam.

In the very short lapse of two decades, the global halal or “sharia-compliant” market has literally exploded, integrating an ever-increasing array of products and services—not only meats and other food-sorts, but also body care products, vacation packages, spas, banking, insurance, housing, and even refrigerators. At the turn of the millennium, the global business world realised the enormous potential of the “Muslim market”; that is, as a specific market with its own characteristics whose norms are derived from Islam. A decade later, the UK-based global management consulting firm AT Kearney captured (and fuelled) the hype in a report entitled ‘Addressing the Muslim Market: Can You Afford Not to?’. ‘At a time when many other large consumer segments are reaching a saturation point, it read, Muslims are a new outlet from which to build a base for future growth.’<sup>42</sup> The report insisted on the weight of the world’s Muslim population (over 1.8 billion people) and the fact that it is made up of over 50% of consumption-savvy youth. The global Muslim population is extremely diverse, stretching across all continents in majority and minority settings, and is divided into different traditions, first and foremost between the Sunni and Shia division, which is so important that they are at war in some regions of the world and across cyberspace. Yet, from the perspective of globalised and financialised capitalism, Muslims are heretofore considered as a single, broad, and overarching market, and its divisions are understood in terms of market segments. The total worth of this huge market, the AT Kearney report estimated, was two *trillion* dollars in 2007, with an enormous potential for growth; a potential that has since tended to materialise.<sup>43</sup> Figures as high as these drew considerable attention and contributed to fuel the already booming market for Islam-specific products and services.

*Once Upon a Time, Not Long Ago*

Let us first investigate the history of halal food and its development into one of the fastest growing markets in the world today. The term “halal” commonly summons the idea of a sort of Muslim equivalent to the Jewish Kashrut. Yet, contrary to Kashrut, halal did not evolve from an existing tradition of norms of production that then became modernised within capitalist modes of production and distribution. As anthropologist Florence Bergeaud-Blackler has shown in her in-depth research since the mid-1990s, *halal products were born as merchandise and as a result of the neoliberalisation of transnational commercial norms and economic globalisation*. As such, the presence of multinational corporations within the global halal market is not the consequence of the industrial appropriation of existing production and circulation networks, as was the case for Kashrut. Rather, the ‘halal market is born industrial.’<sup>44</sup> This is why Bergeaud-Blackler argues that halal is a vibrant example of an ‘invented tradition,’<sup>45</sup> a concept coined by Eric Hobsbawm. Invented traditions, the famous British historian wrote, are sets of practices that seek to ‘establish continuity with a suitable historic past.’<sup>46</sup> For most Muslims and non-Muslims today, the care for the production and consumption of “halal” goods seems to go back centuries of practices and uses. Yet halal used as a noun and to denominate the religiously sanctioned character of an array of practices, goods, and products, as it is today, is a novelty.<sup>47</sup>

Traditionally, only Allah can designate something illicit (haram), and Muslim scholars were wary about ‘declaring illicit what God had intended to be licit.’<sup>48</sup> The traditional meaning of *ḥalāl* in Islamic jurisprudence means lawful or permitted. ‘In the Quran, halal [...] refers to things (such as food) and sometimes institutions (such as marriage) that have been allowed by God in contrast to the things he has forbidden (haram).’<sup>49</sup> Muslims have made use of a loose division between halal and haram in reference to this simple opposition. Centuries of Islamic juridical debates sought to clarify these terms and developed additional categories to guard against abusive designations of actions as being haram. Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) came to distinguish and formulate evaluations in relation to five categories of actions (six for the Hanafi school present in Turkey and elsewhere), known as *al-ahkām al-khamsa*: (1) obligatory (*wājib*); (2) recommended (*mandūb*); (3) indifferent (*mubāḥ* or *jā’iz*); (4) reprehensible (*makrūh*); and (5) forbidden (*ḥarām*). *Ḥalāl* covers more than one of these normative/ethical categories; in Islamic jurisprudence, it is a generic term that comprises four categories: the mandatory, which is of course allowed/licit; the recommended (doing such a deed will not be punished in the Hereafter but its avoidance will not be punished); the indifferent; and the reprehensible (avoiding such a deed will be rewarded, but committing it has no detrimental consequences for one’s accounting on the Last Day). It should not be argued that this all-too-broad category of halal is devoid of ethical orientations, but only that these distinguishing categories (in contrast to the single, broad designation of halal) allowed for nuanced judgments and

defused quarrels of interpretation between different schools. They reflected the complexity of juristic opinions (fatwas), provided differentiated ethics, and sought to avoid simple binaries.<sup>50</sup> An important issue at the base of all of this is the question of whether things not addressed in the holy sources should be conceptualised as generally allowed (*al-asl fi al-ashya' al-ibaha*) as long as not proven otherwise through a process of normative evaluation, or whether everything should be pre-emptively declared as forbidden, awaiting its specific licensing. In its historic development, Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) rather followed the former, “libertarian” model in most social fields, including in modernity.<sup>51</sup> In practice, it was made particularly difficult if not impossible to pronounce an irrevocable judgement (*takfir*) like an excommunication (declaring someone an unbeliever or an apostate). It was only in the twentieth century that fundamentalists like Sayyid Qutb (1906–1966), Abul A'la Maududi (1903–1979), and Ayatollah Khomeini (1900–1989) revised this jurisprudence and made excommunication not only much easier (against individuals but also the “corrupt” secular state) but also a focus of Islamism and a ground for the legitimate use of violence.<sup>52</sup>

The Quranic prohibitions list the consumption of dead animals, blood, pork flesh, and any meat that has been sacrificed in the name of a god other than Allah (Quran, Verse 3, Surah V), which stipulates that “The food of the People of the Book are lawful for you as your food is lawful for them.” Until very recently, the opinion of Muslim religious authorities was that the consumption of meat slaughtered by the “People of the Book”, i.e., Christians and Jews, was lawful by principle, and that people who deviated from this well-accepted rule were being overly scrupulous, or even that they were going against the word of the Quran. The unambiguous character of the Quranic prescription stopped this issue from becoming an object of debate and polemic among Islamic scholars for centuries.<sup>53</sup> However, recent developments have turned things upside down. Within a few years, pressure from below started to be increasingly felt. Imams were surprised that they had to increasingly respond to Muslims’ halal and haram questions. By the mid-1990s, in France, the authorities of the Grand Mosques of Paris, Lyon, and Evry, who formerly dismissed concerns over halal food as based on superstition, were asked by the French government to define standards for halal meat. The outcome is that nowadays, the principle has been inverted and everything is taken to be non-halal until proven otherwise. A *no-trust principle* is assumed, and nothing can be accepted until certified as halal by a ‘relevant body.’<sup>54</sup> Neoliberal capitalism’s legalism and bureaucratic tendencies blew this door wide open.

Traditionally, *halal* is a residual or default category: it is *that about which Islam has nothing or little to say about*. *Haram* and *wājib*, on the other hand, define the stricter perimeters of religion: what is mandatory and what is forbidden—i.e., *sacred*. Mecca, for example, is not *halal* but *haram*: you obviously cannot do what you want in this holiest of places. What this implies is that if *haram* is commonly translated as what is forbidden and therefore

sacred, *halal* is traditionally the profane, the non-religious.<sup>55</sup> In addition, a grey area was kept between the lawful and unlawful, the permissible and non-permissible, the religious and non-religious. Things were not clear-cut. Interestingly, the reduction of the classical *fiqh* categorisations to two mutually exclusive and absolute categories, *halal* and *haram*, was corroborated by the way *halal* industrial standards were first defined in the US. The story starts with the publication of Muslim Brotherhood member and Al-Jazeera preacher Yusuf Al-Qaradawi's (1926–2022) bestseller, *al-Halal wal-Haram fil Islam* (The Lawful and the Prohibited in Islam), which was published for the first time in 1959 but was re-edited many times and translated into several languages.<sup>56</sup> Judging merely from the title, Qaradawi seems to have reduced the aforementioned categories of individual actions to the lawful/unlawful binary, with little room for nuances. A closer look at Qaradawi's work, however, shows that he remained within the tradition of modern Quranic exegeses in the wake of scholars like Muhammad Rashid Rida (1865–1935).<sup>57</sup> Yet, it is on this readily accessible source, or rather its catchy title, that two non-theologically trained Pakistani Americans, businessman and founder of the Islamic Food and Nutrition Council of America (IFANCA) Muhammad Munir Chaudry and food industrialist Mian N. Riaz, based themselves to define the norms of *halal* production for the food industry. These norms were published in a 1992 article that became the main reference for industrial *halal* production up to today.<sup>58</sup> As the first attempt 'to align industrial processes with religious law,'<sup>59</sup> its influence has been incalculable. Inspired by the works of Joe Regenstein, who worked on the normalisation of the industrialisation of Kashrut, the definition and certification of *halal* production became attributable to Muslims who were trained in agronomy, veterinarian medicine, and other technical fields rather than Islamic law. Yet, while the industrialisation of Kashrut consisted of the translation of existing norms and modes of production, Chaudry and Riaz literally had to invent a consensual *halal* tradition. To do so, they relied on the most accessible fatwas available: those issued by fundamentalist currents in rupture with the complexities and nuances of traditional Islamic jurisprudence. Fundamentalist scholars adjust their interpretations to their needs and bypass centuries of jurisprudence to concentrate on the sole body of Quranic verses and the sayings of the Prophet Mohammad, his Companions, and their followers (hadiths), which are claimed to go back to the founding decades of Islam. These sources are accessible in the sense that they are both readily available and easily understood. The works of modern Islamic fundamentalists benefit from a double advantage: the intricacies of traditional Islamic jurisprudence are not only difficult to find for the profane (not to mention the fact that they are less often translated into vernacular languages), but their content is also incomprehensible for those who are not trained in one of Islam's recognised schools of thought. Furthermore, backed as he was with resources, Qaradawi's texts and others in the same range were widely distributed in vernacular languages in book form and then massively on the Internet and social media. Finally, the

normative evaluations (fatwas and full-fledged treatises) of Muslim Brotherhood scholars like Qaradawi appeared less radical compared to Saudi Arabian Wahhabism, which also enjoyed pro-active global dissemination. Hence Qaradawi's claim to provide a middle ground (*wasatiyya*),<sup>60</sup> which has a certain level of truth in that he is generally more forthcoming regarding all sorts of goods and practices that are condemnable for Wahhabi movements (like contemporary Salafists). For profanes like Chaudry and Riaz, Qaradawi did not so much appear like a fundamentalist than as a respectable source that provided an apparently universal, uniform, and easy-to-grasp interpretative model that appeared to be grounded in the most authentic Islamic tradition while undercutting the dizzying complexities of the different Islamic schools of thought (Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi, Hanbali...). Scholars like Qaradawi have the convenient tendency to neatly delineate the holy sources in their narratives so that they appear as easy-to-manage building blocks. The birth of a halal market is therefore bound to the emergence of the fundamentalist doctrines of Muslim modernist Islamism and the dismissal or transformation of traditional religious authorities. The integration of Muslim norms into industrial production chains has, to a considerable degree, acted to legitimise, massify, and institutionalise fundamentalist Islamist doctrines.<sup>61</sup>

Prior to the late 1980s and 'the globalization of halal trade, "halal foods" were unknown in Muslim [majority] countries; organizations and food supply structures excluded illicit products [e.g., pork and alcohol mostly] *de facto*.'<sup>62</sup> The latter were instead relegated to alternative supply systems. Minorities were those who had to label their foods, while the Muslim majority felt no need 'to name the obvious.'<sup>63</sup> In Western diasporas, Muslims were content on avoiding pork and alcohol, for the most restrictive. Many bypassed these restrictions in the name of integration, and because of the standard Quranic interpretation regarding the licit nature of the foods of the People of the Book. Muslims in Western countries purchased and personally slaughtered sheep according to their native tradition for special occasions such as the Eid al-Adha feast, the end of Ramadan, marriages, and so on. Neither the Quran nor the Sunnah give precise indications on how animals must be put to death for consumption, and it is widely accepted that the various schools of thought within Islam diverge on the techniques they prescribe.<sup>64</sup>

The twentieth century saw increasing movements of population, however, with Muslims moving to lands where they were in minority. This was the case of a small sample of Muslims who moved to South Africa and referred to Islamic authorities in order to clarify what they should do with respect to food. The answer came from the Great Mufti of Egypt Muhammad 'Abduh, leader of the Reform movement, who published a fatwa in 1903 known as the Transvaal Fatwa, which authorised Muslims to consume the food of Christians in Christian lands (ruled by Europeans, South Africa was deemed to fit this provision), based on the traditional interpretation of Surah V.<sup>65</sup> In 1964, the Mufti of Jordan produced a similar fatwa in which he condemned the small minority of those who, in the United States and Europe, refused to

eat the meat of those lands, calling them unduly scrupulous and theologically unfounded.<sup>66</sup> Until very recently, this juridical opinion was not challenged in any significant sense. However, the whole development of halal meats, and then foods more widely, and then again to an apparently unlimited stock of products and services, hinges precisely on these recent contestations and the dissemination of a strict halal/haram binary.

According to Bergeaud-Blackler, two distinct processes combined to give the impetus for the creation of a halal meat market. The first process has to do with Muslim emigration to non-Muslim countries and the formation of significant minorities. Faced with bans on self-slaughtering which became widespread over the course of the 1980s (namely because of the protests on essentially economic grounds of meat producers over the growing practice of self-slaughtering as Muslims grew in number), Muslims first began to supply themselves with kosher products in Jewish butcher shops. They did so for special occasions at first, and then on a routine basis. Anthropologists Bergeaud-Blackler and Christine Rodier have shown through their respective research how the situation changed in France over the course of the 1980s due to the new family reunification policies.<sup>67</sup> Prior to this, Muslim immigration to Western countries was massively that of single males who filled workforce needs and were expected to eventually return to their countries of origins. The arrival of families—that is: of women and children—changed the situation by ushering a new concern: how to retain something of the home culture, and what to transmit to their children? At this time, Salafi and Muslim Brotherhood preachers were sent to spread their rigorist—and supposedly purer—interpretation of Islam within these migrant communities, stressing the importance of consuming licit meats and avoiding halal products more broadly.<sup>68</sup>

The second trend is a direct consequence of the 1979 Iranian Islamist revolution, which led to the development of industrial circuits of export-oriented Muslim-destined meats. To make a long story short, the new Islamist government in Iran required that imported meats coming from Western countries be submitted to new processes of authentication. Iran therefore sent officials to “attest the lawfulness” of meat production chains. This authentication did not alter the processes in any way, as these officials simply observed the “compliance” of the industrial chains. The only difference was in some cases that the slaughterer should be of Muslim confession (or simply of Muslim origin).<sup>69</sup> As benign as this novelty was, it created a snowball effect. Sunni majority countries such as the Emirates and Egypt did not want to be out-Islamised by the Shia enemy and also requested that religious delegations circulate in slaughterhouses. At this stage, authentications did not entail any kind of halal labelling at home, nor any modification of production practices. Thus authenticated, imported meats were assimilated within the regular supply chains. What was radically new, however, was that rather than limiting the Islamic normative space within its national frontiers, Iran initiated its enlargement to transnational production and distribution chains. In other words, the Islamist Republic of Iran, followed by Sunni countries, exported a

fundamentalist interpretation of Islamic norms to non-Muslim countries and transnational commerce that would eventually enforce changes within their production chains.

These two processes met when Muslim diasporas tapped into this Muslim-certified supply chain to procure themselves with halal-certified meat. This market remained confined to lesser-quality animals and was rather discreet until the mid-1990s. This is when Muslim butcher shops started to open in Western cities, advertising the term “halal” for the first time. The situation quickly changed as halal-certified foods started to appear in an ever-increasing number of shops and even mainstream supermarkets by the mid-2000s. From literally non-existent until the end of the 1980s, a global halal market boomed from then on. Why is this so? One set of reasons certainly has to do with demographic growth and the betterment of the economic situation of Muslims in majority and minority situations. ‘Consequently, it would be safe to assume that consumption patterns in many parts of the Muslim world have shifted toward higher-value goods, technology-intensive products, and superior food choices.’<sup>70</sup> However, such materialistic arguments are not sufficient to explain such a boom and the cultural and social importance it has become.

The reasons for this expansion are related to the other transformations described in this and the previous chapter. As we have seen, it is at the turn of the 1990s that the young second-generation immigrant Muslims, many of them fully acculturated, started to self-identity as Muslims rather than by their ethnic or national origins, in addition to their Western (French, American, British, Danish, etc.) identity. These youth turned the stigma of their origins into a ‘positive pole of identity,’<sup>71</sup> much like African Americans and homosexuals did with terms like “Black,” “Gay,” and “Niggah.” This strategy allowed for the construction of an identity that ‘provides the sentiment of having a grip on a world that exceeds them, by giving themselves rules that re-enchanted daily life.’<sup>72</sup> Rodier describes how second-generation immigrant youth in Strasbourg, France, reject the—particularistic—ethnic and national identity of their parents to embrace Western ones while putting forward their—Muslim and therefore universal—religious identity. These youth massively rejected the overly traditional and ethnically coloured Islam of their parents, which they devalued for being superstitious and contaminated by traditional customs. Acculturated to the ethics of authenticity, they therefore chose to ‘consume Muslim’ in order to construct and express their double identity: Western (and therefore modern) *and*—no longer Moroccan, Arab, Turk, Iranian, or Pakistani but—Muslim.<sup>73</sup> Armanios and Ergene hint at another, more communitarian response: ‘In diaspora, halal consciousness and other symbols of Islamic piety can represent an assertion of a distinctive identity, a way to resist the assimilative aspects of Western modernity. One common characteristic of many younger Muslims living in the West is the desire to anchor themselves in what they consider their “original” religious and cultural roots,’<sup>74</sup> reinventing ‘Islam as a homogenous entity’<sup>75</sup> in the process.

In all cases, ‘eating halal food is symbolic of a much sought-after *authenticity* in the face of globalization.’<sup>76</sup>

According to various scenarios in each country,<sup>77</sup> these identity dynamics were met by private—e.g., industrial and capitalist—initiatives that sought to define the specificity of industrial halal slaughtering and give it a religious legitimation, following Chaudry and Riaz. This phenomenon was born in Western diasporas before being exported to Muslim-majority countries. It was also a bottom-up process that resulted from the encounter between the consumer “needs” of Muslims and market-born initiatives. The conception and promotion of a halal market was neither the initiative of traditional or Nation-State era Muslim authorities nor an exigency of the state.<sup>78</sup> A report by Frans van Waarden and Robin van Dalen confirms that halal certification was born as a result of market pressures, with nation-states intervening *après-coup*.<sup>79</sup> We have seen how the theological reductionism and radicalism of fundamentalist Muslim modernists provided normative support and theological legitimation for the invention of industrial processes for the production of halal meats. Interestingly, however, the emergence of halal was neither intended nor projected by Islamists, who were caught by surprise by these developments. The Muslim Brotherhood, for instance, had targeted the right for Muslim girls to wear the veil at school as their main strategy for challenging Western secular states. This corresponded to Nation-State regime logics since Muslim modernists still saw Islamisation as flowing from state-oriented and top-down strategies. In other words, the plan was to shape the legal conditions that would incite Muslims to defy the privatisation of religion imposed by Western secular states. They were not prepared for the explosion of halal consumption.

Mainstream Islamic authorities were similarly taken by surprise by the rapid, bottom-up emergence of halal consumption.<sup>80</sup> A stunning example is reported by Bergeaud-Blackler about the Algerian authorities at the head of the Great Mosque of Paris. Following the uncontrollable explosion of halal certifications and supply chains that worried the industrial establishment, the French government decided to organise a national halal slaughter certification controlled by the Great Mosque. These authorities, who were known to enjoy a glass of red wine in official banquets, had hitherto considered halal slaughter as ‘a non-compulsory practice [...] in which [they] saw too much tradition and superstition relating to popular beliefs.’<sup>81</sup> Pressured from the base as well as from the French state, which was demanding their guidance, the authorities of the Paris Great Mosque had to abandon drinking wine and develop norms that would provide a frame for halal slaughtering. Similar processes occurred in different countries, with more or less involvement on the part of the state, but always with the sustained involvement of the food industry.

It is only at this point that the specificities of industrial processes of slaughter started to be fixed, such as orientation towards Mecca, severance of the carotid, jugular, and/or oesophagus, as well as the pronunciation, inwardly

or audibly, of a prayer (*Bismillah*: “in the name of Allah”), derogation to stunning, etc. In other words, an industrial ritual was *invented ex post* in order to legitimise the specificity of halal. Since the turn of the millennium, an ongoing battle has erupted between different normative conceptions of halal slaughter as a consequence. In this battle, civil society actors, Islamist movements, as well as some Muslim majority states (Malaysia, Gulf states, Turkey), compete over claims of “false” versus “true” halal. From today’s vantage point, it appears that the more fundamentalist currents, with their more restrictive views, have won the competition over “goodness” and “purity.” For the lambda consumer, the stricter the norm, the better, as long as it does not induce too much of a price hike. The same logics that apply for organic foods therefore apply to halal.

### *The Halalisation of the World*

Western states have been variably invested in halal regulation in the West (unsurprisingly less so in Liberal/multiculturalist countries such as the United Kingdom, more so in Republican countries such as France), but only in response to the halal boom. The government of Malaysia, meanwhile, has played a key role in the birth and development of a global halal market and the elaboration of halal norms. It is also responsible for the expansion of halal beyond the confines of meat products. In the early 1980s, the Malaysian government forwarded policies to certify, standardise, and bureaucratise national halal production, trade, and consumption. This strategy was meant to promote Muslim Malay nationalism against the inherited privileges of the more entrepreneurial Chinese minority. The aim was to catalyse Malay entrepreneurship while also initiating a state-led process of Islamisation of Malaysia as a means to pull the rug from under the Islamists’ feet and prevent radicalisation. Interestingly, these efforts to promote Malay entrepreneurialism did not yield any significant result before the 1990s—that is, before Malaysia’s turn to neoliberal policies and the institutionalisation of the Global-Market regime in Southeast Asia. This turn marked the end of the state direction of the economy that had been implemented by the New Economic Policy (NEP) plan of 1971. By this time, Malaysia was in the midst of the same processes of re-Islamisation as elsewhere (and namely neighbouring Indonesia), driven namely by the new urban middle classes. In this context, the joint call to entrepreneurialism *and* personal piety struck a chord with the Malay public. Along with the transfer of state assets to the private sector and the reform of social welfare, Prime minister Muhathir bin Mohamad (who was in power from 1981 to 2003, and once again from 2018 to 2020) called Muslims to ‘embrace new economic and technological developments, and not merely “emphasize the vision of the hereafter.”’<sup>82</sup> Muhathir championed the vision of a new Golden Age for Islam in which Islamic ethics would be made to serve economic development. Meanwhile, the growing urban middle classes, which indulged in the material virtues of consumerism and its

promises of self-fashioning and self-realisation, started to find new interest in a spiritualised version of Islam.<sup>83</sup> The Malaysian government developed a partnership with the Swiss multinational food giant Nestlé, with the hopes of becoming the ‘World’s Halal Hub.’<sup>84</sup> While this alliance was initiated in the 1980s, it once again only fully developed over the course of the 1990s, in the midst of the transformations I have been describing.<sup>85</sup>

Malaysia was also involved in pushing for economic regulations at the supranational level. These efforts have gone virtually unnoticed, yet they have had enormous consequences. The intensification of economic globalisation required the increasing integration of local and national economies into a single, interdependent global market permitted by deregulation measures (lowering of trade barriers protecting specific national industries and services, openness to foreign investment capital, deregulation of financial markets, the promotion of export-oriented industries, and the transfer of public assets and public services from the state to the market) required the institutionalisation of supranational regulatory organs whose function is to ensure the application of norms of commerce, for instance, the provisions of free trade agreements. An example is the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) involving Canada, the US, and Mexico, which came into effect in 1994 after years of negotiations. In its wake, the world’s leading economic powers held a number of summits that led to the foundation of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), which became effective on January 1, 1995. The WTO thus replaced the former General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) that had course since 1948 and which had ruled over commerce during the Nation-State era. The foundation of the WTO is an important milestone in the institutionalisation of the Global-Market regime, as it transferred significant regulatory power from nation-states to non-democratic supranational ruling procedures and commissions (this is why the anti-globalisation movement was born at this time to protest against the anti-democratic character of these innovations).

Hidden amidst the mass of bureaucratic material that accompanied the shift from GATT to WTO was the adoption of ‘product category 9591’ related to ‘religious services.’<sup>86</sup> As Jean-Claude Usunier explains, this measure, which has flown under the radar of sociologists of religion, ‘paved the way for the commoditisation of virtually every [religious] service’ delivered by Churches and congregations, but also any type of religious institution or movement, as long as it is registered *as a business*. Goods and services included in this category can be anything from baptisms, marriages, funerals, meditation retreats, yoga, Ayurveda products (from foods to shampoo), and anything and everything considered to be “religious” by its provider or its users. As Usunier argues, category 9591 very concretely opened the door to the development of a market for ‘religious products and services,’<sup>87</sup> duly protected by international trade regulations rather than regulated, as religion used to be, by the state.

The most important consequences of these international regulations have been within Islam, with the creation and expansion of the global halal

market. Following a request made by Malaysia, a set of directives concerning halal goods was adopted and inscribed in the *Codex Alimentarius* in 1997.<sup>88</sup> The *Codex Alimentarius* is a compilation of norms, uses, directives, and recommendations established by a subsidiary organisation of the United Nation's (UN) Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the World Health Organisation (WHO). Its aim consists in defining harmonised international norms for the promotion of health *and* international trade. Taking advantage of the opening created with the WTO's category 9591, the Malaysian proposition extended the perimeter of halal to "all food authorised by Islamic law." Surreptitiously, the adoption of this new norm integrated *religious* principles into commercial law for the first time in modern history. In other words, it integrates theological criteria within a secular economic and legal document. Of course, the *Codex Alimentarius* does not define who can act as a juridical authority to determine what is lawful and Islamic and what is not. The immediate and ongoing consequence of this has therefore been the multiplication of halal certification committees at every administrative and political level, including within the European Commission (where Turkey is trying to impose its own set of rules and criteria).<sup>89</sup>

In this new battleground for the definition of Islamic correctness and Islamic conformity—in other words: Islamic morality—the *Codex* dispositions have significant effects. As Muslim Brother Qaradawi helped collapse the nuances of Islamic jurisprudence (the five moral categories of action) onto the halal/haram binary, the legal-rational formulation of the *Codex* completely bypasses the Islamic jurisprudence of centuries-old traditional Islamic juridical schools by recasting halal onto conceptions of purity (a Malaysian singularity inherited from contacts with Hinduism, in which notions of the pure and impure structure the entire social and ideological system) and by sharpening the distinction between what is lawful and unlawful. As a consequence, since everything that is illicit is seen as contaminating, all contacts between halal and non-halal must be avoided, however small the quantity. While halal had traditionally meant that what was consumable was lawful, given the benefit of the doubt, the industrialised invented tradition of halal reverses the logic and considers anything that has not been *proven* halal to be preemptively haram. It follows from this extraordinary theological handstand that the presence of pork (e.g., in industrial gelatine) and alcohol (including in colourings, tinctures, cleaning agents, etc.), even in minuscule amounts, can be considered haram. For instance, a fish that has ingested micro amounts of pork that found their way in the sea because the plastic package flew off a recreational sailboat will be considered haram. Hence the recent worldwide success of portable 'pork DNA detectors,' designed to 'ensure halal food integrity' and 'guarantee peace of mind' for 'worried Muslim consumers' (according to their sales pitch<sup>90</sup>). Before traditional and moderate Islamic authorities could voice their concerns, market forces had plunged headlong into the breach, devising new halal products that consumerised and lifestyled Muslims worldwide were eager to consume in order to *halalise* their life.

An immediate consequence of this adoption of halal-specific guidelines in the *Codex Alimentarius* and WTO regulations was the extension of the meaning of halal to all consumables, well beyond food products. In an extremely short lapse of time, the logics of halal were applied to cosmetics<sup>91</sup> and pharmaceutical drugs (which both make abundant use of pork-originated material and alcohol). From there on, the process of *halalisation* expanded to include a wide variety of products and services. The expansion of the perimeter of halal—the process of *halalisation*—is therefore bound to that of *haramisation*.<sup>92</sup> Following the logic of the *Codex*, and in contradiction with traditional Islamic jurisprudence, if anything can be haram, everything can be halal. Contrary to Kashrut, which has inherent scriptural limits, the potential for *halalisation* is virtually limitless. Only food can be Kosher, and the limitations are scrupulously defined in the Torah as well as in the Jewish religious traditions. As for halal, once it has been reduced to an exclusive binary opposition, subtracted from Islamic jurisprudence, and expanded beyond the edible, the *halalisation* process does not seem to have any intrinsic limit. It is important to stress how such developments have been made possible by a hypertrophy of the Islamic norm onto the rigorist and Manichean acceptations of Islamist fundamentalist and pietistic movements, since absolutist interpretations are more easily incorporated and transferred into industrial processes.<sup>93</sup> This does not mean, however, that the global halal market is a Trojan horse for Islamism and its project of Islamisation of society. The actors in the halal market are mostly from the business world, and even certification committees are not in the hands of conspiring fundamentalists. What rigorist interpretations of Islamic law have arguably won at least in part, however, is the battle for the definition of Islamic normativity, thanks to the logics of the Market.

The last twenty years or so have seen an explosion of halal certifications in addition to the extension of halal beyond the edible. Bergeaud-Blackler distinguishes two types of halal.<sup>94</sup> The first is the Malaysian-inspired ‘inclusive’ type derived from the WTO legislation and which is massively dominated by Western-owned multinational corporations like Nestlé. A second, ‘Ummah’ type has arisen more recently as a joint initiative of certain Muslim states like Turkey in the hope of cutting themselves a hefty share of the global halal market. Ummah halal opposes a “halal *by* Muslims” to the inclusive, Western corporation-dominated “halal *for* Muslims.” Since the mid-2000s, these competing definitions of halal, which coalesce in as many “sharia boards” as there are certifications and companies,<sup>95</sup> have met in an increasing number of Halal Forums all over the world, of which the International Halal Expo of Meknes (Morocco), the Brussels Halal Week, the Halal Expo and Global Islamic Economy Summit of Dubai, the Taiwan World International Halal Expo, the China-Arab States Expo of Nigeria, the Kazakhstan International Halal Expo, the Moscow International Halal Exhibition, the giant World Halal Forum in Kuala Lumpur, and the World Islamic Economic Forum in London.<sup>96</sup> The global halal market, in other words, is resolutely and

constitutively transnational and part of the wider, globalised economy and its partial Islamisation.

The expansion of halal across and without the edible has been catalysed by the fact that Muslims themselves have appropriated the idea of halal and have provided a constantly increasing demand for “Islam certified” goods and services. This is where the consumerised religiosity fashioned by the ethics of authenticity, which turns consumption into tools for constructing expressive identities, meets with the market logics of the neoliberal age: products are devised to fit market segments and find a corresponding demand. In so doing, however, these offers also create the demand, in an economically virtuous circle. Incidentally, products and services aiming Muslims have a good chance of success if they cater to the need for authentic and expressive identity and life ethics. For second-generation immigration-born Muslims, the significance of halal consumption is the same for that of the veil: it is about marking a rupture with the parents’ generation to affirm a Muslim *and* modern—whether Westernised or anti-Western—identity.<sup>97</sup>

Because of this conjunction, halal consumption rapidly spread to all Muslim-majority countries where consumerism and market ideologies were well-implanted. Research is still inchoative on this topic, yet the logics behind halal consumption in Muslim-majority countries appear very similar to those in Western diasporas. The last century or so of modernisation, first in the Nation-State era and now in the Global-Market one, has made religion something no longer implicit and taken for granted. In addition to this, Muslims in Muslim-majority countries are made to choose who they are and construct their own identities, guided by the ethics of authenticity and expressivity intrinsic to consumerism. As the structural conditions that supported the dissemination of secularism erode, Islam is refashioned on the born-again and lifestyle model. Increasingly, Muslims become Muslims through fashion and consumption patterns. They seek to be, exactly like the first chosen-veil-wearing women of the turn of the 1990s, Muslim *and* modern. Hence the first category of halal branded foods are not traditional or ethnic dishes, but Western fast-food like burgers, pizzas, and cola, as a way to Islamise them while modernising Islam.<sup>98</sup> The consumption of Islam-compatible meat and food no longer “goes without saying,” even in majority Muslim countries. Coupled with the need for expressive consumption, being Muslim increasingly becomes a consuming Muslim.

Halal norms define an ever-increasing array of products and services. As halal becomes a part of everyday life, the term penetrates vernacular languages and popular expressions. In just over a decade, halal has come to designate appropriate Muslim *behaviour*. To quote Samir Amghar, halal has become ‘a veritable “Islamic way of life.”’<sup>99</sup> Halal, in other words, has been lifestyled while enacting the lifestylisation of Islam. This has been made possible because Muslims are ‘seeking a norm, normative benchmarks that can guide them on the road to faith’<sup>100</sup> in a rapidly changing world amidst the increasingly uncontrollable flows of cultural and economic globalisation.

Halal offers precisely that: a label that captures a set of norms and the guarantee of religious authenticity. The halal referent has spread to engulf authenticated ways of being Muslim in all spheres of life. This corresponds to what Yakin, Christians, and Dupret call the second stage of the positivisation of Islamic law around halal, following the strictly legal, technical, and managerial stages described above.<sup>101</sup> An example of this overflowing of halal into Muslim societies is its new presence in the sphere of morality. Across the Muslim world, young Muslims increasingly refer to disciplined pre-marital sexuality in terms of halal. Drawing on the works of Michel Foucault and his concept of neoliberal governmentality via the body (bio-politics), Vulca Fidolini reports how halal has been turned into a “technique of the self” that shapes attitudes towards sexual morality.<sup>102</sup> Scholars have insisted on the particularity of the minority condition of diasporic Muslims to explain this evolution of halal to qualify morality and proper behaviour, since the practice of Islamic rituals such as prayer and Ramadan are not the cultural norm. Therefore, being Muslim in the everyday requires something extra which the halal designation provides. Yet this explanation fails to account for the fact the lifestylisation of Islam is widespread even in Muslim-majority countries, and for the fact that the halal referent now plays a major role in this process there as well.<sup>103</sup> Leyla Arslan’s study of Muslims’ rapports to marriage and sexuality in the Maghreb, Turkey, Italy, and France, for instance, shows how moral conformity regarding sexuality is no longer qualified as *nif* (i.e., honour, a matter of culture rather than religion) but rather halal.<sup>104</sup> Here again, the dynamics are transnational and global rather than determined by majority or minority settings. As a consequence, it calls for a global analytic.

Another notable example is the growth of “sharia-compliant holiday resorts,” which are increasingly popular among Muslims from all over the world. These resorts are distinguished by the fact that there is no alcohol on site, food and cosmetics are guaranteed 100% halal, gender segregation rules apply in beaches and pools, panels indicate the direction of the Mosque in rooms and public spaces, prayer mats are available in the rooms, prayer and conference halls are integrated into the architecture, while preaches and workshops are regularly organised to answer practical and theological questions. Everyday living is similarly impacted. Johan Fischer’s ethnography of the new Malay middle class describes in great detail how the halalisation of everyday life is materialised in housing, home decoration, car purchases, etc. In other words, he shows how ‘proper Islamic consumption’ has come to structure everyday life and how it expresses social aspirations and social status.<sup>105</sup> What is arguably at stake here is a global shift in the very nature of Islam, even where it is the dominant cultural norm. Muslims everywhere are shifting towards a born-again, voluntary, personal, and essentially identity and ethics-based religiosity. Similarly, they are moving away from culturally embedded routine religiosity and Nation-State regime forms of political or privatised Islam, even in peripheral locations like the ex-Soviet Central Asian Republics of Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan.<sup>106</sup>

Originally referring to that about which religion had nothing to say, i.e., the non-religious or profane, the signification of halal has been completely overturned.<sup>107</sup> Halal now defines the contours and substance of religion while fitting it in a consumerist frame in such a way that being a “good Muslim” today basically means consuming and behaving halal. Similarly, Islamic morality has been consumerised through its halalisation. The figures given at the beginning of this section, according to which a significant proportion of Muslims believe that halal is one of the five pillars of Islam and that “Islam equals halal,” illustrate how radical and important recent transformations are and how they break with fourteen centuries of Islamic tradition.

### Islamic Marketing, Islamic Management, and Islamic Finance

Consumption follows and guides production, and production in turn requires capital investment, industrial norms, and marketing strategies. The explosion of the global halal market for Islam-certified products and services has involved all of these aspects, such as the emergence of a number of related new fields like Islamic marketing, Islamic management, and Islamic finance. The marketisation of Islam has thereby penetrated the workplace, the university, and the banking and insurance sectors.

While roughly 40% of the world’s Muslims still ‘languishes in abject poverty,’<sup>108</sup> the growing working and middle classes increasingly represent a dynamic market with a very high-potential for growth and diversification. Özlem Sandikci describes how the last decades have seen the construction of the “Muslim consumer.” After decades of exclusion, in which ‘marketing, consumption, and branding were seldom discussed in relation to Islam and Muslims,’ there is now ‘a growing academic and managerial interest in understanding the dynamics of the so-called Islamic or halal economy and devising marketing strategies that will enable companies to effectively respond to the needs of what is claimed to be a highly attractive market segment.’<sup>109</sup> For instance, Ogilvy, a world-leading marketing and consulting company, has opened a branch entirely devoted to the Muslim market, called Ogilvy Noor. Meanwhile, in the academia, a strand of Consumer and Marketing Research devoted to Islamic consumption, branding, and marketing has seen the light of day, complete with its own scientific journal, special issues in important journals like *Marketing Theory*, as well as its handbooks and book collections.<sup>110</sup>

Among this literature, a ten-country international research project devoted to ‘understanding the Islamic consumer’<sup>111</sup> has produced data that is interesting for our discussion. In order to orient marketers seeking to specifically aim Muslim markets, researchers probed participants throughout the Islamic world to assess their values and the themes they consider important. Common answers across the sample include the importance of family, the concern for finding a partner to marry, the importance of education, and the ‘*strong desire for self-expression*.’<sup>112</sup> This data confirms the high-level of

penetration of expressive individualism and ethics of authenticity in Muslim-majority countries, beyond the sole middle and urbanised classes. The study distinguishes five '[market] segments based on the values and attitudes of Muslim consumers.'<sup>113</sup> One thing that is striking is how the same types were found in all the countries investigated, which each segment representing a proportion of between 17% and 24% of the population. While the study found national particularities to be important for marketers to better aim at these groups, the segments themselves are transnational. These types are noteworthy as they correspond to different lifestyles and therefore ways of being Muslim and expressing religiosity through consumption. The first type this team found is the 'Religious Conservative,' which consists mostly of older men who consume religious programs on television and the Internet, and have a regular religious practice (prayer, mosque attendance). The second type is the 'New Age [sic] Muslim,' composed mostly of upper and middle-class women who have individualised and personalised religious beliefs and practices. The third type is the 'Societal Conformist.' Consisting mainly of men from a lower-class background, they are immersed in Western popular culture (such as television shows and movies). While they are not particularly religious in terms of practice, they nevertheless consider that religious norms should structure society. The fourth type is the 'Paradigmatic Striver,' which consists mainly of less affluent men and women stemming from rural backgrounds and who have 'loose' religious practices, and which the researchers characterise as open-minded, non-traditional, and ambitious. Finally, the fifth, 'Liberal' type, is described as being 'broad-minded, independent and assertive' as well as 'not very particular about traditions and religious practices.'<sup>114</sup> Younger and more affluent, this type consists of men and women who are entirely immersed in global culture, global time, and consumerism. They also declare their 'nation and their individuality'<sup>115</sup> to be most important, before religion and ethnic identity. In thoroughly marketised societies such as ours, sociologists should perhaps be more attentive to this type of study, whose methods are comparable to theirs. A conclusion that stands out is how, across the Muslim world, social stratification can be interpreted from the perspective of consumer types, lifestyles, and marketing niches. Furthermore, as this particular research shows, these lifestyle-based stratifications are in turn articulated with individual rapports to Islam. It is important to stress how new this is, and how it should encourage us to look beyond political variables to integrate economics-related ones in the analysis of religion today.

#### *From Neoliberalising Islam to Islamising Neoliberal Management*

Parallel to the rise of Islamic marketing, the ongoing Islamic revival includes the Islamisation of the workplace and management techniques. We have seen how important the influence of management has been on Islamist movements, for whom it constitutes a 'new utopia.'<sup>116</sup> We have also seen how

the circulation of management themes and literature has shaped the interpretations of the Quran, the sunnah, and so on. In the case of Indonesia, Daromir Rudnyckyj has shown how New Age, management, neoliberalism, and Islam combine in courses offered by ESQ (a company founded by media and management guru Ary Ginanjar) to state employees in order to prepare them for the changes in the economy and the workplace as a result of economic globalisation.<sup>117</sup> In neighbouring Malaysia, Patricia Sloane-White has similarly shown how the workplace is undergoing a process of Islamisation. Her careful ethnography reveals how a new business-savvy and pious generation of corporate managers are leading the shift towards a governance type of management (i.e., of a neoliberal type of governmentality) *and* the integration of a conservative brand of Islam within companies, at the same time.<sup>118</sup> Less authoritarian, less vertical, portraying themselves as stewards rather than bosses, these corporate executives do not promote coercive rules as much as encourage employees to apply Muslim ethics in order to be better and more efficient at work. They namely expect women to wear the veil and dress “modestly” yet fashionable, in order to “look professional”. Men and women are expected to pray during the workday (in allotted times and in rooms dedicated to that practice), sermons and lectures are provided during lunchtime, and companies organise Islamic study groups and retreats. Sloane-White describes how these measures encourage segregation between men and women and impose obligations that have a deeper impact on women than men. Nevertheless, she insists that the analysis of the beliefs and practices of this brand of “corporate Islam” cannot be boiled down to a simple domination analytic (i.e., essentially as a means to dominate women and reinforce patriarchal structures and gender inequality), as it distinctively provides female employees ‘with a meaningful, even ennobling, sense of engagement and belonging.’<sup>119</sup>

Unfortunately, studies such as these are not as frequent as they should. The aforementioned examples stem from Southeast Asian Muslim-majority countries like Malaysia and Indonesia rather than the Middle East and Central Asia. Yet, as we have seen consistently over the course of the previous and current chapters, the dynamics and dominant logics of Market Islam are global in scope and tend to spread transnationally, making methodological nationalism (i.e., studying Islam within essentially national containers) somewhat obsolete—or at the very least insufficient. This is not to say that there are no proper local, national, or regional specificities, but rather that these variations occur within a general framework and a spectrum of possibilities that is constitutively global and transnational. There are therefore reasons to believe that similar processes of Islamisation of management and neoliberalisation of Islam in the workplace are developing across the Muslim world. This hypothesis is supported by Patrick Haenni’s work, which we examined in the previous chapter. Yet other voices also confirm these tendencies. Among these, Casablanca-born Moroccan-French economist and anthropologist Philippe d’Iribarne’s research in his country of origin leads to

similar conclusions as those found in the radically different Southeast Asian context. He notes how a ‘cultural rupture’ is at work in Muslim societies because of globalisation, by which capitalist management practices are in the process of being acculturated and appropriated. He describes the important and active role that the corporate world is playing in this process. D’Iribarne traces the dissemination of corporate management techniques known as Total Quality Management (TQM) in Moroccan corporations, and how it has recently been coupled with the promotion of Muslim ethics as the key to economic and professional success. As D’Iribarne argues, TQM is more than a set of techniques: it is ‘a rule of life’ and ‘a model of culture.’<sup>120</sup> Borrowing from Clifford Geertz’s writings on religion and culture, he argues that TQM is both a model *of* and a model *for* culture—in other words, that it plays a religious function at the level of society through the workspace, constructing a shared life-world that integrates both neoliberal management and Islamic revivalism. It is interesting that prior attempts at reforming company management in the 1980s had failed—that is before the shift from the Nation-State to the Global-Market regime was consummated. In the 1980s, TQM was promoted in a secular frame, without references to Islam. The conditions for the success of the TQM revolution came later, partly because it was heralded by a charismatic figure, and partly because utilitarian economic thinking was no longer exotic. Another factor was its Islamisation, in conjunction with the wider processes of re-Islamisation in the form of lifestyles that swept across the Muslim world. The acculturation of TQM techniques was successful because it tapped into “Islamic culture,” felt to be universal, rather than Moroccan culture, which now appears particularistic rather than as the pathway to universality as it was in the Nation-State regime. The values promoted by TQM, such as transparency, compliance, participation, and honesty, are presented as being fundamentally Islamic. We have seen that they are constitutively neoliberal and linked to the ethics of authenticity of expressive individualism. In the words of an employee interviewed by D’Iribarne, everything that TQM promotes is presented as having its source in the Quran, and workers would not need TQM if their behaviour had formerly complied with Quranic injunctions. This is a highly ideological construction of course, since Islam itself was quite different just a couple of decades ago, and its preoccupations were not personal responsibility, entrepreneurship, and utilitarianism, but rather social and political emancipation and progress, as we have seen. Not to mention what the preoccupations might have been at the time of the Prophet.

This example is fascinating as it shows how Islam provides a timeless universalism on which the modernising forces of economic liberalism can be grafted on and thereby translated, acculturated, and implemented. Research in the West has noted how immigration populations have gone from identifying themselves by nationality and ethnicity (Algerian, Moroccan, Turk, or Kurd) to identifying as “Muslims,” that is according to their religion. D’Iribarne’s case study shows how this erosion of the nation as an identity

and access to the universal has been replaced by the global and by religion—Islam. In the Nation-State era, Islam appeared as a vehicle for particularism and superstition, and was held by secularists as an important reason why Muslim countries were retarded in terms of social, political, and economic development. Islam was not promoted in the workplace within nationalised and state-favoured industries and corporations, not to mention public services. Islam was nationalised, subjected to the nation-building project, and summoned to support the state (explicitly or implicitly) or to suffer repression. Economic development and Islam at that time were incompatible. The turnaround of the last two or three decades, depending on the country, is spectacular. Today, integration in the global economy (both in terms of production and consumption) and economic development, which now define what it is to be modern, develop hand in hand with processes of Islamisation and the legitimation of Islam.

If these examples are anywhere close to representative of more generalised trends, what they attest of is more than the blurring of the former boundaries between economics and religion, whether in a more (Morocco) or less (Malaysia) “secularised” context. From the eastern to the western tip of the Muslim-majority world, they show the interpenetration of Islam and economics, and the mutual reshaping of both. They also show how the Market-driven Islamic revival touches all sectors of life. People spend the larger part of their time at work, and it is improbable that the Islamisation of the workplace within a marketised mould would occur without incidence on the rest of their lives.<sup>121</sup> Meanwhile, national identities take a back seat with respect to what is now considered a more universal *and legitimate* foundation: Islam. Global Islam is therefore not only contained in the realities and fantasies of a “global Ummah”: It is part of everyday life in Muslim consumer cultures.

### *Hopes and Limits of Islamic Finance*

A further and final example is the explosive growth—and difficulties—of Islamic Finance and Islamic Insurance.<sup>122</sup> As Charles Tripp argues, Muslim thinkers’ reactions to Western capitalism have been historically either defence and refusal or active engagement.<sup>123</sup> Throughout the Nation-State period, the first attitude tended to dominate, namely under the form of Islamic socialism or a sort of Keynesian-Islamic capitalism. State-owned or state-directed Islamic banks and an Islamic financial system were instituted during the Nation-State period in countries like Pakistan, Iran, and Sudan, yet the assessments are widely negative, and the outcomes have been mitigated at best. Incidentally, the role of Islamic finance as a motor for economic growth and development was side-lined in the context of IMF-dictated reforms in the 1980s and 1990s.<sup>124</sup> According to Tripp,

By the 1990s, this had developed into the justification of an Islamic economy in terms that were unmistakably neo-liberal in their underlying

rationale, as can be seen in the argument that free competition and the prohibition of [state-controlled] monopoly are central to any truly Islamic economy.<sup>125</sup>

This tidal change was heralded first and foremost by the Malaysian government during the 1980s, joined by Turkey, which we have seen has been at the spearhead of the transformations of Islam over the last century. This pathway became a model for other Muslim-majority countries, while Malaysia's capital, Kuala Lumpur, was heralded as the 'Wall Street of the Muslim World.'<sup>126</sup> While prior attempts at creating Islamic finance and Islamic banks were linked to state initiatives, Islamic banking and Islamic finance have mostly evolved in the private sector since its revival in the 1980s and 1990s and its boom in the last two decades.

The two most important features of the Islamic tradition in economic matters that have busied Islamic intellectuals are the obligation of *zakat* (alms),<sup>127</sup> which is one of the five pillars of Islam, and the prohibition of *riba* (interest on loan), which was also at the centre of centuries of debates in the Christian West. Attempts were made at systematising *zakat* within the state's apparatus, yet these initiatives did not justify 'the hopes invested in it' in the end. The issue of *riba*, on the other hand, has been more readily appropriated by the private sector. The ways in which the issue of interest has been dealt with and partially "solved" has 'become [the] token of a distinctive Islamic approach to financial matters.'<sup>128</sup> While theological discussions on *riba* have not produced a consensus, it remains widely held that Islamic banking must do with other means than the interest-based Western financial model. The main alternatives that have been developed as an Islamic alternative to standard interest are the *mudarabah* (the borrower invests some of his own capital in a venture) and *musharakah* (the investment is primarily in terms of labour, expertise and time) schemes, which aim to avoid injustice and disproportionate risks in investments.<sup>129</sup> The latter (i.e., that one party may suffer all of the risks of a failed enterprise) have been described as the main ills against which the Quranic interdiction of *riba* wishes to protect. Both *mudarabah* and *musharakah* therefore seek to avoid the detrimental consequences of indebtedness while promoting 'collective solidarity' through 'collaborative partnerships.'<sup>130</sup>

The opportunities opened by Islamic finance soon attracted Western and multinational financial institutions and corporations, especially considering the exponential growth of the global Muslim market. Many of the most important Western banks have therefore developed 'Islamic financial products,' including insurance and mortgages, both in the West and in Muslim-majority countries. In October 2013, London welcomed the 9th World Islamic Forum, at the opening of which then Prime Minister David Cameron congratulated himself for hosting the first such summit outside of the Muslim world. Estimating the global Islamic investment market to 1.3 trillion pounds, Cameron pledged that London become as important as Kuala Lumpur in this sector. He also seized the opportunity to issue 200 million pounds worth of British

Treasury Islamic bonds (*sukuk*) and announce ‘the development,’ in the UK, ‘of sharia-compliant student loans and seed capital for Muslim entrepreneurs.’<sup>131</sup> Then Prince Charles followed Cameron with a speech of his own, praising the healthy dimensions of Islamic finance principles and its promises of developing an ethical brand of capitalism, something which seemed all the more urgent that the Forum was held in the wake of the 2008 global financial crisis in which the ills of Western finance as it had developed following neoliberal deregulation were exposed.

Even though Islamic finance is estimated to be growing 50% faster than conventional banking, its weight with respect to the total of global flows remains infinitesimal. As for the efficiency of the system, assessments are contradictory. On the one hand, mid and long-term returns are estimated to be comparable to the conventional investment sector.<sup>132</sup> On the other, Islamist capitalists (such as those of the Turkish MÜSIAD) only partly make use of Islamic financing products because they remain ill-adapted for certain types of investments and operations. In addition, agencies like AT Kearney have recently voiced concerns over the prospectives of growth for Islamic banking and its competitiveness compared with conventional interest-based investments.

What is the importance and meaning of Islamic finance from the standpoint of the social scientific study of religion in today’s world? Far from being a *fait divers*, it is consistent with the dynamics sketched in this chapter as it participates in the creation of a global Islamic market, which is one of the corollaries of the marketisation of Islam. For Muslims, these financial products, be they student loans, investment schemes, mortgages, or insurances, participate in the Islamisation of everyday life and the formation of distinct Muslim lifestyles. As Rudnyckyj argues, Islamic finance is performative, as it constructs a social reality in which market economics are naturalised and Islamised.<sup>133</sup> Market Islam is far from being a privatised, boxed up, and differentiated dimension of life.

The development of Islamic finance received an impetus from the 2008 global financial crisis, as the sector felt empowered to develop an alternative. However, Tripp, one of the most important critical thinkers on the subject, argues that ‘it did not take long before the logic of social action in a capitalist global order made itself felt,’ and that an ‘ideal that had been heralded as radical and transformative was itself transformed’ in compliance with the norms of the current globalised, financialised brand of capitalism. In sum, the

logic of finance capital shaped practice and qualified the original ideal. As the Islamic financial sector grew, mobilising substantial sums of capital, many of the original intentions faded from view, or declined in relation to the profit-seeking operations of the banks. The goal of reinforcing the bonds of community, and the therapeutic ambition of restoring unity between people’s material transactions and the spiritual dimensions of their lives, gave way before the need for financial

institutions to survive and to thrive. [...] The “logic” of global finance was soon at work throughout the Islamic banking sector.<sup>134</sup>

For Tripp, Islamic finance has not evolved into an alternative system, but as a niche within the global financial landscape: ‘far from challenging global capitalism, [Islamic finance] has become an integral part of the global financial system.’<sup>135</sup> It also forwards the trends analysed in this chapter, in which we have seen how a new, essentially Market-based definition of what it is to be modern has been coupled with a complex-free assertion of Muslim pride. As Rudnyckyj writes following his research on Islamic finance in Malaysia,

although some involved in Islamic finance argued that this form of finance should advance social values of justice, equality, and mutuality in the face of market isolation, perhaps more interesting was the fact that many Islamic finance experts saw the market as a means of fostering a new social configuration. Indeed, they sought to use Islamic finance to achieve an *ummah* commensurate with the discursive tradition of Islam. In this respect, Islamic finance was a means of enhancing the ability of Muslims to live in a pious manner<sup>136</sup>

while succeeding in a neoliberalised and consumerised world. In the end, I argue that Islamic finance is both indissociably economic and religious, yet it also shows how global capitalism can absorb an Islamic content without its structure being significantly changed in the process.

## Conclusion

What are the conclusions we can draw from the phenomena described in this chapter? The common perspective, rooted in the secularisation paradigm, would withhold the differentiation of social spheres and conclude with either of the two following interpretations. The first would deem that the transformations described here amount to the Islamisation of the market and the economy. In this appreciation, “evil” Islamists have overtaken and debased secular economics. In other words, religion has swallowed up and instrumentalised economics. This is the argument expounded by Gilles Kepel for instance, who worries about the erosion of secularism.<sup>137</sup> The second interpretation, on the opposite, sees these trends as signalling the absorption and manipulation of the purity of Islam by market economics and its immoral profit-seeking utilitarianism. This is basically the argument made by Faegheh Shirazi, who decries the branding and commodification of Islam on the grounds that it denatures the authenticity of “real halal”.<sup>138</sup> However, since the nominative use of *halal* is a recent invention that is intrinsically tied to industrial and marketisation processes, it is hard to imagine what “real halal” (used as a noun) could be. In an optimistic and secularist variant, Olivier Roy is prone to celebrate the marketisation of Islam as inherently secularising

and signalling the condemnation of Islamism.<sup>139</sup> As we have seen, though, the marketisation of Islam might mean the dearth of *political* Islam, but it certainly does not mean the demise of Islamism, which has found numerous and innovative ways to capitalise (in the literal and metaphorical sense) on these transformations. Taken together, these interpretations—that fundamentalism is corroding and instrumentalising secular economics, or on the contrary that the evils of the market are sully the spiritual purity of religion—are specular; they are mirror images of one another and suppose each other. Kepel and Shirazi are two sides of the same coin. They form an *epistemological system* that substitutes its own coherence to conformity with reality. Because they start from a perspective informed by social differentiation, they consider that one sphere either absorbs or assimilates the other, introducing a normative evaluation in the process (the soiled purity of secular economics or that of “real” religion). Both carry an implicit judgment as to what “real religion” (“real Islam”) and “real economics” should be. These interpretations are therefore not heuristic explanations of what is as much as formulations of what ought to be.

Marketisation has profoundly transformed Islamism, producing forms that are far from those imagined by twentieth-century political Islamism. At the same time, fundamentalist and conservative readings of Islam are being promoted, normalised, and massified through marketisation processes and its assimilation of the reductive halal/haram binary. Following scholars like Haenni and Rudnyckyj, I argue in favour of a third avenue.<sup>140</sup> If we escape the secularisation framework and its assumptions, what the above examples illustrate is rather a series of transformations that have led to phenomena that are inextricably religious *and* economic. Rather than evoking the absorption of one sphere by the other, the rise of Market Islam is the result of the evident blurring of the boundaries between religion and economics in our globalising societies, and their morphing into a new brand of marketised religion and spiritualised economics. As Bergeaud-Blackler writes in the case of halal: “Halalisation” [...] is neither purely motivated by religious motives nor is it driven by capitalist dynamics, it proceeds from both simultaneously.<sup>141</sup> As she argues, the ‘halal market is an *indissociably* capitalist and religious phenomenon.’<sup>142</sup> At the same time, economics is not simply a dimension among others. In the Global-Market regime, market economics are more than a market economy. As in other fields today like education and healthcare, economics provides the frame within which other social dimensions develop. It provides the grammar or language in which religious forms evolve on the *meso* (social and societal) and micro (that of the individual) levels. To say things differently, the Market provides the form for the functions and substance of religion. In addition, because economics have replaced politics and the nation-state as the embedding social sphere for the whole of societies (on the macro level), the Market takes on a religious dimension of its own, which it inherits from the State. I will try to clarify this argument in what follows.

Scholars like Peter van der Veer argue that the modernisation of religion, in the sense of its integration into the cultural programme led by the Nation-State, amounted to a change in the very social location and substance of religion: where it sits in society, what it looks like, and what its content is. I argue that a similar process has occurred in the last decades, by which the very location and substance of religion has been shaped anew, yet by another logic, one for which the Market and its corollary, the Global, provide the grammar. I argue that the trends described in the present two chapters signal a major shift by all standards, away from the characteristics of Islam in the Nation-State regime. These changes are illustrated by the complete re-interpretation of halal and its lifestylisation, as well as by the emergence of surprising new prosperity theologies within Islam. Yet, because these transformations depart so radically from the former substance and location of Islam in the Nation-State regime and the characteristics of religion as they became naturalised within the secularisation paradigm, they appear adrift and marginal. Seized from the perspective of marketisation, however, these phenomena form a massive and coherent whole in which the pull of neoliberalism and consumerism are hermeneutical keys. Muslim fashions and halal consumption are therefore ‘integral to global Islam.’<sup>143</sup> They express the core dynamics of the global reconfiguration of religion as they materialise within Islam.

The Nation-State to Global-Market regime perspective provides additional insights into the changes occurring within Islam. As the examples of Islamic management, Islamic finance, and Islamic fashions illustrate, what drives these changes are their economic orientation and their inscription within the folds of global capitalism. In the case of Market Islam, the Global-Market provides the form for which Islam provides the substance. This is how and why Market Islam consists of the lifestylisation of Islam (within an array of competing and sometimes colliding aesthetics and identities) and its reformulation within the ethics of authenticity and its politics of publicity. The examples assembled in this chapter also testify to the global triumph of capitalism and its multifarious effects for human societies, beyond simplified images of homogenisation.

Consumerism requires sources of authenticity. Religion in general and Islam in particular are potential providers of such authenticity, whether in the jihadist or *hijabi* modus. As Carla Jones, a specialist on Islamic fashions, argues,

capitalism is never simply an economic system, but rather only functions as a faith-based economy with values of its own. In this sense, not only exchange values, but more explicitly transcendent values are created and exchanged, allowing religion to not simply endure in spite of commercial transaction, but become utterly fundamental if not harmonious with it.<sup>144</sup>

In light of the present chapter, I argue that the penetration and acculturation of neoliberal market ideologies and practices, but also consumerism and its

ethics of authenticity, *required* their Islamisation under the forms described here in order to spread and become acculturated in Muslim-majority countries. The characteristics of Islam, such as its de-centeredness, the multiplicity of religious authorities, and its low level of institutionalisation, all appear well adjusted to the logics of religion in the Global-Market regime. Against the idea that religion should be differentiated and institutionalised, Islamic scholars have repeatedly emphasised how the will of Allah is at work in every detail of the everyday life of Muslims,<sup>145</sup> including their business transactions.<sup>146</sup> This is perhaps a reason why the transformations within Islam in the last decades have been so spectacular, and why globalisation has favoured such an intense process of re-Islamisation. There is arguably another side to this novel intermingling of Islam and the Market. As Jones argues, 'If pious consumption is to be recognized as a sincere expression of religiosity, then its inverse, the religious nature of consumption, must also be recognized.'<sup>147</sup> I argue that the Nation-State to Global-Market regime model provides a perspective from which to understand how the political and state orientation of Islam in the twentieth century has ceded to new mixtures of consumption and religion in the last few decades.

To conclude this chapter with a more general discussion, the distinction between religion and economics is not the only one made inoperative by marketisation processes. The distinction between religion and secular is impacted as well. Foundational for the Nation-State regime of religion, the consistency of this distinction partly dissolves under Global-Market conditions. As I have shown, the phenomena described in this chapter are inassimilable from within a perspective based on the opposition between religion and "the secular". The lifestylisation of Islam, be it through halal consumption, Muslim fashions, or Islamic mortgages, corresponds to an enchantment of everyday life through the de-differentiation and immanentisation of religion. As Johan Fischer writes with respect to halal consumption in Malaysia and London,

the more the culture of Islamic consumption asserts itself, the more the state's incapacity to define what is legitimate halal, and thus, the unity of Islam is felt [...] halal evokes a range of sensibilities, attitudes, assumptions, and behavior that may support or undermine "the secular" as an epistemic category in everyday life. I argue that modern forms of halal consumption [...] challenge and reconfigure what are often considered separate secular realms of the state and politics, on the one hand, and the intimacy of religious life and expression, on the other.<sup>148</sup>

Calling out the problematic nature of the religious/secular divide and its inability to provide heuristic insights into the transformations of religion today is a major argument that I want to make in this book. It is also perhaps the bottom line regarding the significance of the rise of Market Islam.

## Notes

- 1 For an even wider picture, the reader can refer to the contributions in Krawietz and Gauthier (2024).
- 2 Beauchemin (2004). See the concomitant discussion in Gauthier (2020a).
- 3 Bayat (2013: 15).
- 4 Secularism refers to the ideologies pertaining to the distinction between politics and religion, state and Church, while secularity refers to the actual institutional and cultural arrangements of these relations (Casanova 2011; Kleine and Wohlrab-Sahr 2021). Typically, in the West, traditionally Protestant countries have liberal brands of secularities (instituted “multiculturalism”), while traditionally Catholic and Orthodox countries have more Republican arrangements (e.g., France’s *laïcité*) (Portier 2010).
- 5 This trend was already signalled by Haenni (2005). On Muslim fashions in Western diasporas, see e.g., Tarlo (2009), Lewis (2010, 2013, 2015), Mossière (2011), Tarlo and Moors (2013), Bendixsen (2013), Otterbeck (2013), Lavoie (2014).
- 6 Akou (2007: 403). For a visual overview of Islamic fashion, see van Roojen (2012).
- 7 The example of Canada, with its English (liberal) majority and French (republican) minority is instructive and displays most of the intricacies and complexities of these issues, including how the normative commitments of researchers colour their analyses. Compare for example the contributions in Beaman (2012) and Rousseau (2012).
- 8 The case of the Gulf countries is specific, yet there are very little references to work with to date. For a few remarks, see Gauthier and Guidi (2016).
- 9 Göle (1996), Valensi (2003). This section on the veil is adapted and expanded from Gauthier and Guidi (2016).
- 10 Gaspard and Khosrokhavar (1995), Göle (1996), Amiraux (2004), Roy (2004), Boubakeur (2005).
- 11 Sandikci and Ger (2009), Lewis (2016).
- 12 This publicity is at the centre of decisions to veil or not. For a Scandinavian example, see Otterbeck (2013).
- 13 Kiliçbay and Binark (2002: 499).
- 14 They were in fact often less encumbering, were ornamented, and did not cover as much as they do today. They were, in other words, at least as cultural as they were religious. For visuals, see van Roojen (2012).
- 15 Jones (2016).
- 16 French ethnologist Agnès de Feo has produced a series of documentaries that all give a voice to the women behind the burka, in France and Tunisia in particular (de Feo 2010). All of the testimonies she has collected to date correspond to the chosen, expressive veil. She was one of the invitees at the “Femmes et Islams” conference I co-organized with Diletta Guidi in Fribourg in 2014.
- 17 See e.g., Weibel (2000, 2006), Kiliçbay and Binark (2002), Balalescu (2003), Amiraux (2004), Wong (2007), Akou (2007), Osella and Osella (2007), Ramji (2008a, 2008b), Tarlo (2009), de Feo (2010), Lewis (2010, 2013, 2015, 2016), Sandikci and Ger (2009), Gökariksel and Secor (2010, 2012, 2016), Lindsay (2011), Mossière (2011), Ben Salem and Gauthier (2011), Lachheb (2012), Salzbrunn (2012), Bendixsen (2013), Dessing, Jeldtoft, Nielsen and Woodhead (2013), Lavoie (2014), Tarlo and Moors (2013), Jones (2016), Hecker (2018), and the contributions in Krawietz and Gauthier (2025).
- 18 Göle (1996).
- 19 Haenni (2005). Of course, there are exceptions.
- 20 Hecker (2018).

- 21 Lewis (2010: 58).
- 22 Lewis (2010: 68). On Turkey specifically, see Sandicki and Ger (2009: 25–7), Gökariksel and Secor (2010, 2012), Hecker (2018). On Egypt, see Abaza (2007). On Iran, see Balalescu (2003). On Southern India, see Osella and Osella (2007). On Indonesia, see Jones (2016). On Malaysia, see Wong (2007).
- 23 On the burkini, see Fitzpatrick (2009), Echchaibi (2011), Minganti (2013), Gauthier and Guidi (2016).
- 24 Sandikci and Ger (2009: 27).
- 25 See Mahmood (2004).
- 26 Gökariksel and Secor (2012: 847).
- 27 Gökariksel and Secor (2010: 119).
- 28 Lewis (2010: 68).
- 29 Lewis (2010: 68). See also Tarlo (2009).
- 30 Jones (2016: 106). See also Lavoie (2014), Jones (2016).
- 31 Lewis (2016: 83, 2015).
- 32 Lewis (2016: 84, 2015).
- 33 Lewis (2016: 87, 2015).
- 34 Jones (2016: 111).
- 35 E.g., Shirazi (2016).
- 36 A version of this section was published under Gauthier (2021). See also Gauthier (2019).
- 37 Bergeaud-Blackler (2017a), Gauthier (2019), Krawietz and Gauthier (2024).
- 38 Pew Research Center (2017: 62–3). Unfortunately, Pew’s global survey of Muslims makes no mention of halal whatsoever (see Pew Research Center 2012, 2013). Examining the project’s methodology, it is clear that the usual National-Statist quantitative categories were being used, and therefore issues of lifestyle, such as fashion and halal, did not show up on the radar. They did, on the other hand, in the US survey, as halal emerged as an emic category as pertains to ‘identity, assimilation and community,’ along with issues of recognisable Muslim symbols such as dress.
- 39 El Karaoui (2016). A similar situation has been observed in other west-European countries, although statistics are not available. This argument is supported by a number of personal conversations I have had with researchers from Switzerland, Belgium, the Netherlands, and the UK.
- 40 Bonne, Vermeir, Bergeaud-Blackler and Verbeke (2007). The research was conducted in France and Belgium.
- 41 Estimates of Muslim populations vary from source to source. I have chosen to follow Armanios and Ergene (2018: 113).
- 42 AT Kearney (2007: 1).
- 43 Armanios and Ergene (2018) cite similar figures.
- 44 Bergeaud-Blackler (2017: 14). My translation. I will rely heavily on Bergeaud-Blackler’s work, which has been mainly published in French, in what follows. See Gauthier (2019, 2021).
- 45 Bergeaud-Blackler (2017a, 2017b).
- 46 Hobsbawm (1992: 1).
- 47 Fall, Ly, Boukala and Dimé (2014).
- 48 Bergeaud-Blackler (2012: 65, 2017a: 10), Bergeaud-Blackler, Fischer and Lever (2016: 5), Yakin, Christians and Dupret (2021).
- 49 Bergeaud-Blackler (2017b: 1).
- 50 Armanios and Ergene (2018: 33).
- 51 For general notes on the traditions of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), see the introduction in Krawietz and Gauthier (2025). I am grateful to Birgit Krawietz for helping me with the issues in this section, yet remain sole responsible for any mistakes.

- 52 See e.g., Mervin (2010), Amghar (2020).
- 53 This is all the more remarkable since a very large number of Quranic verses are obscure and have generated multiple and competing interpretations and innumerable polemics. See Reynolds (2019).
- 54 Yakin, Christians and Dupret (2021: 1).
- 55 I use italics for *halal* and *haram* when I refer to their traditional meaning, and none when I refer to the halal market and haram as illicit in its contemporary common use.
- 56 See Qaradawi (1994). From the mid-1990s, Qaradawi had a sustained presence on the internet. Although his influence was immense, however, his website was still far from reaching the popularity ratings of Market Islam TV preacher mega-star Amr Khaled (Gräf 2007), discussed in Chapter 2.
- 57 Like the Salafi Rashid Rida, Qaradawi ‘places himself between [the conservatives of] the Neo-Ahl al-Hadith and Muslim Western-oriented intellectuals’ (Shaham 2018: 84).
- 58 The article in question was published by Chaudry in 1992 and expanded into a book a decade later (Riaz and Chaudry 2004).
- 59 Bergeaud-Blackler (2012: 63–4, 2016a: 92).
- 60 Shaham (2018).
- 61 Some authors like Armanios and Ergene (2018) pudically choose the term “pietistic” rather than fundamentalist. In my opinion, fundamentalist is a better term because it is broader, including both peaceful pietistic movements and potentially violent ones. Since the same theological sources can be summoned by both variants, I see no reason to hide violent expressions of radicalism. Al-Qaradawi has served both expressions.
- 62 Bergeaud-Blackler (2016a: 94, 2017a).
- 63 Bergeaud-Blackler (2016a: 94).
- 64 Bergeaud-Blackler (2017a: 24).
- 65 Bergeaud-Blackler (2015).
- 66 Quoted in Bergeaud-Blackler (2012: 73).
- 67 Bergeaud-Blackler (2017) and Rodier (2014).
- 68 See Gauthier (2019) for a synthesis of these processes in France.
- 69 Bergeaud-Blackler (2017: 56).
- 70 Armanios and Ergene (2018: 113).
- 71 Camilleri (1990), Arslan (2015).
- 72 Arslan (2015: 140). My translation.
- 73 Rodier (2014), Arslan (2015).
- 74 Armanios and Ergene (2018: 112).
- 75 Armanios and Ergene (2018: 113).
- 76 Armanios and Ergene (2018: 113, emphasis added).
- 77 For an overview, see Bergeaud-Blackler (2016b).
- 78 An exception is Malaysia, which sought to promote the halal market in the 1980s.
- 79 Waarden and Dalen (2011).
- 80 Kepel (2012: 90–1).
- 81 Quoted in Bergeaud-Blackler (2016a: 102).
- 82 Quoted in Wong (2007: 462).
- 83 The same happened in Indonesia, see Gauthier (2020a: Chapter 9).
- 84 Othman, Sungkar and Hussin (2009), Fischer (2011), Bergeaud-Blackler (2015, 2016b, 2017a).
- 85 A ‘Halal Fast Facts’ sheet published by Nestlé Malaysia online boasts of ‘halal committees’ in the 1980s, the launch of a halal policy in 1992, halal certification (JAKIM) in 1994 etc. See Nestlé (2016).
- 86 Usunier (2014).
- 87 Usunier (2014: 27–9). See also Gauthier (2020a: 217–8).

- 88 Bergeaud-Blackler (2017a: 86–90).
- 89 For a recent example at the European level, see Bergeaud-Blackler and Kokoszka (2017).
- 90 A quick Internet search will lead the reader to the commercial websites offering these products.
- 91 See Husain, Ghani, Fikri and Mehad (2012).
- 92 Fischer (2009).
- 93 Amghar (2014). See also Bergeaud-Blackler (2017a).
- 94 Bergeaud-Blackler (2017a, 2017b).
- 95 These sharia boards are composed of many non-Islamic theology trained “specialists” of all sorts, from lawyers to businessmen etc., and thus participate in the profound reconfiguration of religious authority away from traditional and institutionalised sources.
- 96 Bergeaud-Blackler (2015, 2016c).
- 97 Rodier (2014), Amghar (2014).
- 98 Fischer’s (2009) survey of Malaysian consumption is an excellent example.
- 99 Amghar (2014: 29).
- 100 Amghar (2014: 31).
- 101 Yakin, Christians and Dupret (2021: 2).
- 102 Fidolini (2015).
- 103 Yakin, Christians and Dupret (2021). See Fischer (2009) for Malaysia.
- 104 Arslan (2015).
- 105 Fischer (2009). See also Fischer (2011).
- 106 See Biard (2017, 2020).
- 107 Yakin, Christians and Dupret (2021: 3).
- 108 Sandikci (2018: 457).
- 109 Sandikci (2018: 456).
- 110 The Bible of Islamic marketing is marketing guru and Oxford Fellow Paul Temporal’s *Islamic Branding and Marketing* (2011). On the academic side, see the *Journal for Islamic Marketing* and the *Handbook of Islamic Marketing* (Sandikci and Rice, 2011). For a critical overview of this sub-discipline, see Sandikci (2011), Sandikci and Ger (2009), Jafari (2012). Contributions of social scientific interest include Sandikci and Jafari (2013).
- 111 Vohra, Bhalla and Chaudury (2009).
- 112 Vohra, Bhalla and Chaudury (2009: 41, emphasis added).
- 113 Vohra, Bhalla and Chaudury (2009: 41). The countries included in the study were all predominantly Muslim countries: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, Malaysia and Indonesia. A figure details the importance of each type for each country. For other studies in the genre, see contributions in Sandikci and Rice (2011) as well as Jafari and Suerdem (2012).
- 114 Vohra, Bhalla and Chaudury (2009: 41–2).
- 115 Vohra, Bhalla and Chaudury (2009: 42).
- 116 Tammam and Haenni (2007).
- 117 Rudnyckyj (2010). See also Njoto-Faillard (2012), Gauthier (2018, 2020a: Chapter 9).
- 118 Sloane-White (2017).
- 119 Sloane-White (2017: 23). The domination analytic is dominant from a Gender Studies perspective, as well as from a post-Marxist one, such as that deployed by Bourdieu. Sloane-White does not deny that all of these practices exercise a form of domination on women and produces gender inequality, she simply says that social reality is more complex and that other dimensions and individual and social effects must also be taken into consideration.
- 120 D’Iribarne (2007: 145).

- 121 Rudnyckyj (2010) has reported the same trends in Indonesia. On the latter, see also Gauthier (2020a).
- 122 See namely Abbasi, Hollman and Murrey (1989), Maurer (2005), Hassan and Lewis (2007), Visser (2009), Causse-Broquet (2009), El Gamal (2010), Ariff and Iqbal (2011), Luxembourg (2016).
- 123 Tripp (2006).
- 124 Tripp (2006: 141).
- 125 Tripp (2006: 115).
- 126 Rudnyckyj (2013, 2014, 2019), Delfolie (2013).
- 127 Benthall (1999).
- 128 Tripp (2006: 126). On *riba* see also Warde (2000: Chapter 3), Visser (2009: 31–44).
- 129 Tripp (2006: 141). For a more complete overview, see Mirakhor and Zaidi (2007) as well as Amghar and Ghlamallah's chapter on Islamic finance in Krawietz and Gauthier (2025).
- 130 Rudnyckyj (2019: 4).
- 131 Bunglawala (2013).
- 132 Brown, Hassan and Skully (2007).
- 133 Rudnyckyj (2019: 11).
- 134 Tripp (2006: 141–2).
- 135 Tripp (2006: 147).
- 136 Rudnyckyj (2019: 11).
- 137 Kepel (2012).
- 138 Shirazi (2016). See Carrette and King (2005) as well as my chapters on marketisation in Gauthier (2020a, 2020b). As we have seen, there is no 'real halal,' only novel and conflicting legal interpretations that have nothing traditional about them.
- 139 Roy (2004).
- 140 Haenni (2005), Rudnyckyj (2019).
- 141 Bergeaud-Blackler (2017a: 17). My translation. Unfortunately, Florence Bergeaud-Blackler (FBB) has aligned with Kepel in her last book (2023), which has been criticised by important scholars as methodologically and analytically flawed and contentious. I have made great use of FBB's work, as almost everyone working on halal, but I have to disassociate myself from this latest inflexion by which she has sided with the islamophobic ultra-right in France and the Rassemblement national party. For more, see the last section of my chapter on halal in Krawietz and Gauthier (2025).
- 142 Bergeaud-Blackler (2017a: 14). My translation. Emphasis in original.
- 143 Bergeaud-Blackler, Fischer and Lever (2016: 10). Again, the contributions assembled in Krawietz and Gauthier (2024) make a very strong case in favour of this argument.
- 144 Jones (2016: 118).
- 145 This is particularly emphasised by the fundamentalist currents that are presently defining the Islamic *doxa*, in the wake of Muslim Brotherhood founder Hassan Al-Banna. See Amghar (2008).
- 146 Abbasi, Hollman and Murray (1989: 16).
- 147 Jones (2016: 118). See also Lewis (2016: 85).
- 148 Fischer (2011: 28).

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## 4 Religion in Orthodox-Majority Eastern Europe

### From Communism to the Global-Market

One of the most determining global events to occur in the last few decades is without a doubt the collapse of the Soviet Union and the communist bloc. This put an end to what had been the only major alternative to capitalism since the nineteenth century in the likes of Marx-inspired communism. It is interesting to note that Marxism developed from a common materialistic foundation with economic liberalism. Karl Marx indeed wrote his master work *Das Kapital* with Adam Smith's *Riches of Nations* on his desk. Material needs, the story went, were determining social order and the key to understanding the course of history.<sup>1</sup> While liberal political philosophy put forward the benefits of the Smithian political economy and relied on the social regulative functions of laissez-faire economics, Marxism emphasised the unstable nature of the free market and its tendency to produce inequalities. These market-induced social ills were to be countered by the coercive mechanisms of the state in the name of the proletariat, radical egalitarianism, and collective property. The effective failure of this model, which turned out to be less collectivist than authoritarian and even totalitarian in its historical avatars, very far from what Marx had envisioned in any case, has plunged modern politics into a crisis from which we have yet to emerge. The triumph of capitalism and Western-style democracy, the staples of modern societies supposed to mark the "End of History," did not really lead the world into the peaceful and stable era that characterised the millenarian visions of many Western thinkers and politicians. From this narrative, only capitalism triumphed. If democracy and the Rule of Law are hotly contested and opposed by "illiberal" and authoritarian voices across the world, including in Western countries, market economics and financialised capitalism are remarkably consensual, and economic growth now embodies what is left of the modern utopianism that used to be invested in the Nation-State.

The end-of-history motif did not have any place reserved for religion. It was a narrative born of a world that we have since left behind, and which I call the Nation-State regime. In that world, modernity meant the separation of religion and politics, Church and state, and religion was meant to remain within the confines of state-regulated, well-differentiated, and institutionalised sphere. From the vantage point of today, it appears that History did

not End; and it is not fortuitous, I would argue, if the destinies of religion have taken another route and shattered its well-differentiated confines. In fact, what we may now start to see with more clarity is how the confinement of religion into well-manageable church forms was dependent on utopian investments in the State and the institutionalisation of variable forms of political religions at the highest level of society. Nowhere perhaps has the shift from State utopianism to Market utopianism been as radical and palpable as in communist (or socialist, if you prefer) countries. This is certainly a good reason to investigate what has been happening to religion in these contexts. In this chapter, we turn our gaze to the eastern half of Europe, beyond what was the Iron Curtain during the decades of the Cold War. As for the other cases presented in this book, the present situation is better understood if it is inscribed within the history of the—here again: major—transformations that have unravelled in modern times, with particular attention being given to the period stretching from the late nineteenth century to today.

I must note that this chapter was written essentially before the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2021. This is why the present chapter does not use this ongoing tragedy as an analytical lever, and why the references to the war are cursory and marginal. In a sense, though, this invasion is a brutal illustration of some of the tensions revealed by my analysis, in particular between conservative reinvestments of the Orthodox tradition coupled with a revived and nostalgic form of nationalism (and, in the case of Russia, imperialism) on the one hand, and cosmopolitan forms of spirituality on the other.

### **Remedying Self-imposed Blindness**

Devoting a chapter to the religious history of Eastern European countries with a Christian Orthodox tradition in a book with global pretensions is a curiosity.<sup>2</sup> As Alexandre Agadjanian and Victor Roudometof, two of the most important authors on this region, write, ‘So far, most scholars have either taken for granted the so-called “conservative” nature of Orthodoxy or simply neglected to include Eastern-Orthodoxy among their cases.’<sup>3</sup> Indeed, while Eastern Orthodoxy is the majority religion in countries that count a population of 200 million, it has been neglected by social sciences in general, and the socio-anthropology of religion in particular. Since the early 1990s, however, Eastern European countries (including Russia) have seen a spectacular rise in declared adhesion to Orthodoxy, after half a century of state-enforced, more or less radical secularism and official state atheism. The bulk of commentators, unsurprisingly, have investigated these trends through the lens of secularisation, as examples of the ‘re-publicisation of religion,’ or ‘de-secularisation.’<sup>4</sup>

At first glance, the modern religious history of Orthodox-majority Eastern European (OMEE) countries seems to contradict the idea of a shift from a Nation-State to a Global-Market regime. This region is often portrayed as being characterised by economic under-development, marginality with

respect to global flows, sharp rise in religiosity, revived nationalism blended with an “illiberal” contestation of Western European values, and a massive authoritarian turn. The revival of Orthodox Christianity in these countries certainly questions the processes of secularisation. Yet, presented in this way, it also appears linked to a deficit of integration within global flows and a strong reaffirmation of that which the marketisation thesis I am defending says belongs to an era that we are supposed to be leaving: a strong state and the reaffirmation of nationalism. This chapter proposes to take a closer look at the situation and argues that this reveals a different picture and another variation of the characteristics and dynamics of religion in the Global-Market regime.

Approaching the question of religious change in Eastern Europe involves a series of challenges, the first being that studies on this region are particularly entrenched in the secularisation paradigm and its normative assumptions. As a result, scholarship emanating from political sciences often adopts a worried tone and tends to cast religion negatively, as something intimately linked to conservatism, nationalism, and authoritarianism. A widely-spread opinion is that the Orthodox tradition is to blame for the fact that these countries seem to be prone to resist modernisation and democracy.<sup>5</sup> Meanwhile, scholarship in the sociology of religion mainly pays attention to the institutional interactions between the Church and state, as well as to the theological justifications summoned both during and after the communist years. In other words, Orthodoxy is first and foremost approached from the angle of official and institutionalised religion rather than from the perspective of Orthodoxy-as-lived.<sup>6</sup> In order to construct my analysis, I have therefore had to approach the subject somewhat at a slant, and I have made abundant use of anthropological and ethnographic sources to get around the biases induced by the secularisation paradigm in a lot of work emanating from sociology, political sciences, as well as history and economics. As we will see, the reliance of sociological scholarship on quantitative data, which reproduces prescribed categories and gives the impression of a timeless, unchanging, and somewhat dusty Orthodox “Tradition,” hides more fundamental *qualitative* changes at work. Fortunately, recent scholarship, in particular from young scholars who originated from Eastern Europe and who are taking some distance from the secularisation paradigm, offers some valuable insights.

One thing that stands out when looking at scholarship on religion in Eastern Europe is how economic changes have been astonishingly ignored in favour of political issues.<sup>7</sup> In a recent edited volume, Greg Simons and David Westerlund typically refer to the background against which to understand religious transformations in post-communist countries as a shift to a ‘democratic era,’<sup>8</sup> and the bulk of the contributions *make no mention* of the passage to capitalist economies, consumerism, and the exigencies of neoliberal reforms. This is not to say that issues such as democracy are not important both descriptively and normatively, but the silence on the economic

dimensions of the 1989-1991 earthquake and its aftermath is highly problematic, to say the least. Focused on political issues, social scientists have forgotten that the collapse of the Soviet Union and the communist bloc was not only due to political upheaval but also—and arguably first and foremost—increasing technological belatedness and hardening economic difficulties, as these countries could no longer provide the basics of consumption to meet the needs of their people, starting with food in the worse cases. As Aurora Trif captures it, “The political and economic changes that have taken place since 1989 in Eastern Europe aimed at replacing the centrally planned economy with a market economy system”<sup>9</sup> before anything else, including democracy. Economic variables here are fundamental. It is high time to include them in the picture.<sup>10</sup>

This political bias, which leads to the complete ignorance of some of these societies, most important developments in terms of their effects on the everyday lives of the population, is a consequence of the entrenchment of social sciences within the assumptions of the secularisation paradigm and the consequent naturalisation of the characteristics of religion in the National-Statist regime. In this chapter, I therefore aim to bring the economic aspects of the collapse of the communist bloc to the fore in my analysis of the mighty transformations of religion in OMEE countries. In order to give some historical depth to the analysis, this chapter starts by describing nation and state-building processes in Eastern Europe and what this meant for religion over the course of modernity and under communist conditions before turning to the description and analysis of post-1991 religious transformations. Because of the sources I have been able to consult, the discussion will mostly summon examples from Russia and Romania, but the big picture, here again, is coherent overall even if it allows for significant national and regional variations, for instance between Belarus and Romania, and between urban and rural settings.

### **The National-Statistisation of Religion in Eastern Europe**

Nation-state-building in Central and Eastern Europe has been intimately tied to the destinies of religion, and even more so in Orthodox countries. While Western European nation-states emerged as legacies of the Westphalian system, Central and Eastern Europe countries were carved out of disintegrating Empires (Ottoman, Austro-Hungarian, and Russian).<sup>11</sup> In what was to become Serbia, Bulgaria, and Romania, the Ottoman empire recognised Orthodox Churches as part of the Sultan’s “protected communities” (*millet*). These evolved into proto-national structures that served the development of modern nationalism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.<sup>12</sup> Eastern Christianity was culturally diverse and fragmented from its inception, and the grounds for the grand Schism of 1054 between Constantinople and Rome had to do with their conflicting conceptions of ecclesial authority: conciliar

and decentralised for the former, monarchic and centralised for the latter. The establishment of the Moscow Patriarchate in 1589 was another step in the expansion and diffraction of Eastern Orthodoxy through processes of ‘vernacularization’ and ‘indigenization,’<sup>13</sup> by which Orthodoxy became bound to specific languages and cultures before being absorbed into ‘ethnic identities’<sup>14</sup> that formed the basis for modern nation-state construction.

The influence of Western European modernity and the Westphalian model (one political rule, territorial sovereignty, and one religion) on Eastern Europe became increasingly important, especially during the eighteenth century. Similarly, the emergence of the idea of nationalism ‘as the world’s main legitimizing force’ over the course of the nineteenth century ‘altered the social bases of societies around the globe’<sup>15</sup> and had a tremendous impact in Eastern Europe. The disaggregation of the Ottoman Empire over the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth century contributed to the formation of new territorially sovereign nation-states, which in turn ‘led to the construction of independent, autocephalous national Churches.’<sup>16</sup> In a word, ecclesiastical and political frontiers were made to overlap, as Orthodoxy became nationalised across Eastern Europe (while remaining imperial in Russia).<sup>17</sup> In the Russian Empire, modernisation mainly meant the increase of the control of the state over a sovereign territory, and was thus enforced “from above.” This had the effect of bringing the Russian Orthodox Church evermore under the direct control of the state, furthering a process that had started in the eighteenth century.<sup>18</sup>

In places such as Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Romania, ‘the religious markers of the earlier centuries were reconfigured to relate to each local nation [...] Out of this geographical reterritorialization and the concomitant relativisation of religious identity came the modern synthesis between church and nation.’<sup>19</sup> The nationalisation process provided the grounds for claims over canonical territory. In other words, autocephaly was not the result of ecclesiastical concerns as much as a means to provide the ‘material and ideological infrastructure for the nationalization of the masses.’<sup>20</sup> As Milovanovic and Radic argue, ‘Over the course of the nineteenth century in most of the newly formed nation-states of Eastern Europe, autocephaly transformed churches into “national” institutions,’<sup>21</sup> following the Western European Westphalian model. A country like Ukraine, which Yelensky describes as ‘a retarded suburb of Russia and Poland,’<sup>22</sup> had to choose between becoming a part of a greater Russian nation, or building a nation-state of its own. In all cases, the choice facing Ukrainians was between a nation-state and a nation-state. The tensions within Ukraine resulted in a fractured religious landscape that mirrored—and continues to mirror—national and political divides: on the one side, the ambitions of the self-proclaimed Kiev Patriarchate, on the other, the submission to that of Moscow.<sup>23,24</sup> (The 2022 invasion of Ukraine by Vladimir Putin’s Russia in the hope of reconstituting the Russian (and Soviet) empire of the past has simply reinforced the Ukrainian Orthodox Church’s will for independence from the Moscow Patriarchate

and the hinging of Ukrainian national identity to a specific, national form of Orthodoxy.<sup>25</sup>) Everywhere,

the Church had to engage with the newfound forces of nationalism and develop a narrative of legitimization or resacralization that would be meaningful in a cultural universe in which people were increasingly thinking of themselves as belonging to a nation.<sup>26</sup>

Nation-state formation in Eastern Europe happened over a much shorter time than in Western Europe, and building a rapport between the nation and the Church proved to be the most efficient and shortest route.<sup>27</sup> In Bulgaria as elsewhere, nationalism and ecclesiastical independence ran together. The only difference is that in Bulgaria, Church autonomy was granted by the Sultan (1878) before it became an independent state (1908), while things happened in the reverse order in other South-Eastern European countries.<sup>28</sup>

The modern transformation of Orthodoxy within the parameters of the Nation-State regime was both cultural (the link between Church and nation) and structural (institutionalisation of autocephalous national churches). Churches and states emerged in parallel, and this contributed to shape the former's religious mission. In other words, modern Orthodox Christianity is to a large extent the product of modern processes of nationalisation and statisation (institutionalisation into hierarchical organisations closely linked to the state).<sup>29</sup> Although by no means linear and uncontested, the redeployment of religious and national identities was 'ultimately extremely successful.'<sup>30</sup> Its novelty was contained by interpreting it as renewing the principle of *symphonia* or 'complementarity' of the political and religious leadership, which characterised the Byzantine era. In the words of Agadjanian and Roudometof,

According to Church tradition, the religious establishment complements the secular leader in his execution of duties, providing spiritual leadership and exercising moral control upon state authority. On the other hand, secular leadership is often allowed and expected to play a role in protecting, expanding, and serving the religious institution.<sup>31</sup>

The principle of *symphonia* has always been at the crux of Orthodoxy's enculturation and adaptation to circumstances, even if its signification has changed.<sup>32</sup> While the antique Justinian era (sixth century CE) provides the paradigm, the arrangements under the Ottoman Empire were similarly interpreted, and the establishment of the Moscow Patriarchate was presented as restoring imperial Byzantine complementarity. While Orthodox authorities like to present their "Tradition" as pristine and immutable, modern history shows a 'critical link with national identities.'<sup>33</sup>

In Western Europe, the modern cultural and political programme was enacted in tension with the Church—less so in Protestant lands, and in outright

conflict in Catholic ones like France.<sup>34</sup> All in all, modernity meant a critical stance with respect to religion, even as the Churches contributed to nation-building. In Eastern Europe, the Orthodox Church was a main actor in the nation-building process, and modernisation did not involve “secularisation,” at least not until communist rule.

### The Communist Experience

It is important to note that nation and state-building processes remained incomplete in most parts of Eastern Europe at the end of World War II. State boundaries had in many cases fluctuated and were contested, hindering claims of territorial sovereignty. Following the Yalta accords of 1945, Eastern Europe was entirely ‘reorganized in a manner that enabled communist control of individual states.’<sup>35</sup> This involved the creation of inner republics that were only autonomous in principle in the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia for example. The constitutive ambivalence of the *symphonia* principle was summoned once again in the context of the Cold War (1945–1991), when Orthodox Churches had to survive in authoritarian/totalitarian atheist political regimes.

The communist experience<sup>36</sup> is often portrayed as having frozen and even “deep-frozen” religious developments. A closer look reveals more complex rapports. The difficulties in simply eliminating religion were brought to light by the intense interwar Soviet persecution of the Russian Orthodox Church and other religions, including indigenous Siberian Shamanism. While only an estimated few hundred parishes had survived the repression at the end of the 1930s, it proved more difficult to un-root popular devotion. As of 1943, Josef Stalin initiated a new strategy by which the Church was made to serve the Soviet state and the ‘political expansion of communism to neighbouring countries,’<sup>37</sup> even beyond the Iron Curtain. The Russian Orthodox Church, in other words, returned once more to its empire-serving functions. Outside the Soviet Union proper, ‘aggressive anti-religious policies’ were unanimously enforced at first, before evolving into different patterns. In Romania, for example, mass purges decimated the Church hierarchy, more than half of the monasteries were closed, two thousand monks were forced to secularise (i.e., return to a status of laity), and lay activists were imprisoned.<sup>38</sup> In Albania, Bulgaria, and Serbia, the Orthodox church faced continued repression, while it was slackened in Armenia and Romania in exchange for support of the regime. In the latter case, the high clergy of the Orthodox Church was made to collaborate with Ceausescu’s ‘nationalist communism,’ which was pursued in relative autonomy from the powers in Moscow.<sup>39</sup> Meanwhile though, ‘lower clergy, monks, as well as laity are known to have been persecuted, imprisoned, or killed.’<sup>40</sup> The situation in each country remained relatively stable throughout the communist era, with Churches remaining carefully distanced from contestation until the very end of the 1980s. Submission and even collaboration (Church hierarchies were tightly controlled by the states) with

the regime enabled the Churches to survive. This led to some attempts to develop a socialist-Orthodox theology and a re-actualisation of the *symphonia* principle, from which the political situation could be seen as flowing from 'the will of God.' Church authorities mainly tried to legitimate the belief that 'collaboration with the state could not alter the Church but only have *hic et nunc* effects'<sup>41</sup> rather than profound and durable ones.

In Eastern Russia, Buddhist monasteries were shut down<sup>42</sup> and Shamanism was severely repressed. Shamans are known to have been simply eliminated, and Shamanic traditions in Siberia were barely kept alive by the way of clandestine networks and private activities.<sup>43</sup> It is interesting to note that a religious revival occurred among a fringe of the intelligentsia and middle classes of urban centres when the repression relaxed somewhat in the 1970s, and conversions to Orthodoxy have been reported for that period. It is in these same circles that the Western counterculture and its fascination for occultism and oriental religiosities penetrated with some success. Carlos Castaneda's books were translated into Russian, and meditation and yoga circles were not uncommon.<sup>44</sup> This orientalising of religion arrived from the west, but also from direct channels with India and other places.

The effects and results of five decades or more of state-enforced atheism is a debated question. Surveys conducted in the immediate aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union reported that 37% of the population in Russia, 39% in Ukraine, and 59% in Bulgaria 'describe themselves as Orthodox Christians.'<sup>45</sup> Qualitative appreciations are difficult, yet characteristics include 'the forceful *separation* of religious life from the larger society,'<sup>46</sup> the formatting of religion into well-discernible and controllable institutions, as well as its privatisation and spiritualisation.<sup>47</sup> Depending on the country, Orthodoxy was either politicised (in favour of the regime, never in opposition as Catholicism in Poland), i.e., made to serve the communist (Soviet Union) or national-communist (Romania) regime, or de-politicised. Orthodoxy was subordinated to the political religion constructed by these regimes. Arguably, the most severe repression was conducted in states that had elaborated a political religion of their own, as in the Soviet Union.

Overall, religion was controlled and formatted by the state (i.e., statised) in order to be controlled, or wiped out. Somewhat paradoxically, one

major Soviet legacy was the nationalization of religion. Structured as a multi-ethnic and multinational empire, the Soviet Union was a crucible of strong ethnic and national identities (in spite of the rhetoric or internationalism that failed to produce a durable meta-ethnic "Soviet nationality").<sup>48</sup>

OMEE countries therefore illustrate a particular modulation of religion in the Nation-State regime. From the nineteenth century to the communist era, there is a lot of continuity when one considers how religion was progressively framed by the state and the nation. The conclusion that follows is that *the*

*communist era acted to reinforce Nation-State regime characteristics* and the submission to the rule of the state, even more so than in other regions of the world. It did not, in other words, signify a rupture as much as a radicalisation of ongoing trends.

The breakup of the Soviet Union at the turn of the 1990s returned communist territories to their pre-Soviet national or proto-national constituencies. In the case of Moldavia, Belarus, Ukraine, and the Central Asian Republics, the administrative cut-out of the Soviet Union provided the grounds for post-Soviet nation-building. Orthodox Churches had been effectively institutionalised within the boundaries of these inner republics, in more or less subservience to the Moscow Patriarchate, which espoused the imperial pretensions of the Soviets as it had those of the Tsars. The Baltic states of Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania, meanwhile, were born after the collapse of Tsarist Russia in 1917, before being swallowed up by the Soviet Union in 1940. The Baltic states resumed their independence in 1991, and the minority Orthodox Churches there have struggled with their dual loyalty to the Moscow Patriarchate and to the local nation.<sup>49</sup> The 2022 invasion has added stress to these tensions and favoured loyalty to the Baltic nations, which are fiercely anti-Russian, or anti-Putin to be precise. Outside the Soviet Union, the communist rule involved the nationalisation of Orthodoxy, although to less of an extent than in Romania. Incidentally, while the *statisation* of religion in Eastern Europe was quite straightforward and explicit, its *nationalisation* was a complex and unfinished process. Overall, the communist experience pursued the formatting into the Nation-State framework launched in the prior century, although within modified parameters.

The collapse of communism had an enormous impact on the whole region and shook the relative status quo with respect to religion. Politically, the consequences were the fragmentation of the three multi-ethnic or multi-national state into a myriad of independent states, either violently (Yugoslavia especially but also in many places within the ex-Soviet Union) or peacefully (Czechoslovakia).<sup>50</sup> Local societies were destabilised to an unimaginable extent and socioeconomic conditions were rattled, putting enormous stress on the social fabric. In this context, the Church emerged as a rare provider of continuity with a sharply disrupted past. Similarly, the Church renewed with its pre-communist function of accompanying nation-state-building processes and delivering well-needed legitimacy for the new independent states. The “Springtime of Nations” as it was called, which introduced a flurry of new nation-states to the world and the United Nations organisation, was accompanied by claims of ecclesiastical autocephaly, which also created its load of disputes.

### **Varieties of Eastern European Neoliberalism**

Once the socialist system in Eastern Europe collapsed, every country, newly formed or not, embarked on a pathway that meant to turn them into full-fledged market societies by transforming their economies from

state-planned to capitalist as rapidly as possible. By the turn of the 1990s, neoliberalism was well installed as the unchallenged hegemonic economic ideology, and neoliberal reform strategies were the only ones available. Eastern European developments were patterned rather than random, yet the overall picture is one of ‘diversity *within* neoliberalism.’<sup>51</sup> Beyond the purely economic and material shock, the data shows that massive social anomie followed the unexpected communist breakdown: all countries showed a significant decrease in life expectancy and fertility as well as dramatic increases in the rates of infant mortality, addiction, crime, inequalities, long-term unemployment, and risk of poverty. All of these indicators have remained high since, without any clear correlation with respect to the type of neoliberal pathway that was implemented.<sup>52</sup>

Neoliberalism, let us recall, ‘claims the superiority of markets and competition over state-governed mechanisms of social and economic organization,’ and is translated into policies like market creation and deregulation, state downsizing, limited welfare provision, the promotion of competition in every field including in the public and para-public sectors, and privatisation. From the immediate aftermath of the collapse, Western advisers and supranational institutions like the International Monetary Fund imposed their preference for ‘rapid and comprehensive marketization over any other transformation strategy.’<sup>53</sup> These pressures were met with little resistance and even enthusiasm by local political actors who often had little or no training in market economics and therefore tended to embrace the works of Milton Friedman and the neoliberal agenda as the obvious antidote to excessive socialist statism.<sup>54</sup> On all sides, the neoliberal agenda was presented as ‘the only way to transition to a capitalist society.’<sup>55</sup> The European Union only became heavily involved in the last half of the 1990s, yet it also promoted neoliberal reforms as part of the road to an eventual inclusion in its free market zone (Schengen economic space) and political union (European Union). According to analysts, the very enlargement of the EU to Eastern European countries was a neoliberal project that aimed to open new markets and cheap labour possibilities for core countries.<sup>56</sup> This program involved the institutionalisation of regulatory norms and processes that took away some of the state’s sovereignty and regulative powers, enacting the anti-political and anti-democratic effects of neoliberalism described by many scholars.<sup>57</sup>

Using an approach inspired by the works of Karl Polanyi, Bohle and Greskovits distinguish between the more radical, ‘disembedded’ neoliberalism of the Baltic countries and the more moderate, ‘embedded’ neoliberalism of the Visegrad countries (Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Poland, and later Croatia).<sup>58</sup> By embedded, they mean that neoliberal reforms were tempered by local culture and institutions and therefore enculturated to some extent. By disembedded, they mean that neoliberal reforms were applied without much temperance; rather, it was the local culture and societal institutions that were acculturated and fit into a model governed by radical market economics. Countries like Romania and Bulgaria, as well as some

post-Soviet republics, embarked belatedly upon the paths of radical reform, yet caught up with the Baltic states on the radical, disembedded neoliberal path by the mid to late-2000s. Bohle and Greskovits do not extend their analysis to Ukraine, Russia, and other Orthodox majority post-Soviet states (Georgia, Armenia, Moldova, Belarus, etc.), but neoliberal reforms have profoundly impacted the whole region.<sup>59</sup> Western European countries, incidentally, all correspond to fully embedded neoliberal pathways, as the most radical elements of neoliberal reforms were tamed in order to be assimilated by national histories and values, as well as by the inherited structures of social provision. Overall, the socio-economic history of post-Soviet Eastern Europe can be divided into two or three phases: a first period of instability of up to a decade, followed by years of pro-active neoliberal reforms, and a contemporary phase of EU-integration, consolidation, or aspiration. Bohle and Greskovits propose a classification based on how much national economies have shifted towards finance and services, and how much they rely on skilled labour as well as entrepreneurial, management, and marketing classes. They thereby classify Visegrad countries within the semi-core of international flows, while countries like Bulgaria and Romania, which are developing these socioeconomic classes but whose economies are still geared on industry and primary resources, rank as semi-peripheral. The ex-Soviet republics, as well as Russia itself (notwithstanding its large urban agglomerations), are relegated to a peripheral status.

This typology must not deter from the basic fact that all Eastern European countries have become integrated into the global economy, albeit to different extents. By 2011, the neoliberal-oriented Fraser institute ranked the bulk of Eastern European countries above the global mean in terms of 'economic freedom,' while private-sector output stood at around 70% of GDP.<sup>60</sup> Meanwhile, national economies increasingly shifted from heavy industry to services, and international trade in the region rose faster than anywhere else in the world between 1990 and 2012. In other words, ex-communist economies reoriented themselves towards 'foreign markets in Europe and elsewhere.'<sup>61</sup> According to Shleifer and Treisman, 'In short, the countries have transformed their militarized, over-industrialized, and state-dominated economies into economies based on private ownership and integrated into global commercial networks,'<sup>62</sup> thereby catching up with countries of similar income levels. The authors note how household consumption has drastically increased (88% on average, versus 56% elsewhere in the world), with overall economic growth levels over this period exceeding the global mean, after an initial contraction in the immediate aftermath of the communist collapse. In the Visegrad countries and Russia, household consumption rose significantly higher than the average global rate. The authors also cite the rise in car ownership, which went from 10% to 25%, with Lithuania, Poland, and Slovenia even exceeding the UK rate. As far as information technologies are concerned, Eastern Europe 'has surged ahead, evolving from a backwater to an overachiever. By 2013, the region's cell-phone subscriptions per person, at 1.24, had overtaken

the rate in the West,<sup>63</sup> while Internet use (54%) only fell behind that of North America and Western Europe. Finally, higher level education attracts on average more youth in these countries than in Switzerland, travel rates have increased, and life expectancy has begun to rise. This picture prompts Shleifer and Treisman to celebrate the fact that ‘postcommunist states have become normal [sic!] countries—and in some ways, better than normal.’<sup>64</sup>

Such a celebratory alignment of statistics from neoliberal thinkers requires a series of supplementary remarks to balance things out. The case of Romania serves as a case in point. While Visegrad countries ‘managed to adopt a faster pace of economic and social transformations and achieved a better insertion in the global market economy by developing complex industries and coherent political strategies that led to macro-economic stability,’<sup>65</sup> Romania made a belated start and mainly achieved to become a ‘dependent capitalist economy that generated specific post-socialist institutional mechanisms in order to allow for a rapid integration into the world market economy.’<sup>66</sup> This transition was accompanied by ‘the forced implementation of asymmetrical policies that eroded the welfare state and social protection mechanisms and created an economic environment that was favourable to foreign investments.’<sup>67</sup> The EU and IMF-imposed deregulation of the labour market (in order to access loans to absorb the 2008 financial crisis) dramatically restricted the power of labour unions and produced flexibility, instability, and insecurity as protective measures shrank. All of this has acted as a ‘structural pressure on workers to adapt to a new precarious and competitive environment.’<sup>68</sup>

Taken together, the preceding remarks indicate three things: First, neoliberalism has been the major if not the only source of inspiration for the reform of these post-communist countries’ infrastructures and economies, and this has involved some degree of coercion. Second, these reforms have deeply impacted the culture and social fabric of these countries, which are now partially if not fully integrated within global flows with more or less developed service industries. Third, the post-communist era has led to a profound penetration of consumerism in virtually all classes of society, whether as a lived reality or a frustrated aspiration. Consumption rates, the penetration of information technologies, in addition to the shift from industry to service economies, mark an important change in the cultural and social ethos of these countries. All of this, in turn, has had decisive impacts on the religious landscape.<sup>69</sup>

### **The Return to Orthodoxy and the Rise of Nationalism**

The most striking feature of the post-communist period has been the sudden and massive rise in declared adhesion to the Church, and even more so in Orthodox Christianity-majority countries. The numbers are striking. According namely to a 2017 Pew Research report,<sup>70</sup> identification with Orthodoxy is as high as 93% in Georgia, 92% in Moldova, 88% in Serbia, 86% in Romania (which also has a share of 5% of Hungarian-speaking Catholics), 78% in Ukraine (which also counts 10% of Catholics), and 75% in Bulgaria (which counts 15% of

Muslims). All of these countries count only negligible numbers of “unaffiliated” cohorts. In a country like Belarus which counts a relatively high number (11%) of unaffiliated, 73% identify as Orthodox against 12% of Catholics. In Russia, 71% identify with Orthodoxy against 15% of unaffiliated and 10% of Muslims. For the value of comparison, Poland records 87% of adherence to Catholicism, Croatia 84%, and Hungary 56% against 21% of unaffiliated and 22% of “other” religions. At the other end of the spectrum, the Czech Republic aligns with Western European standards with 72% of unaffiliated and 21% of declared Catholics. These high numbers are only rivalled by rates of “belief in God,” which score 95% in Moldova and Romania, and between 75% and

### Religious landscape of Central and Eastern Europe

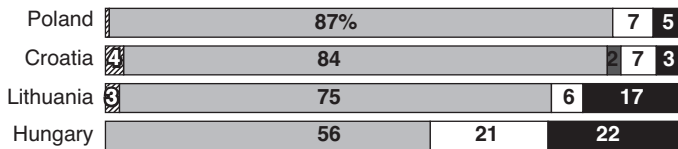
% who identify as ...

Orthodox Catholic Muslim Unaffiliated Other

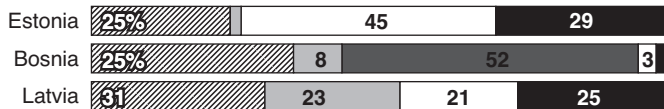
#### Orthodox majority



#### Catholic majority



#### Religiously mixed



#### Majority religiously unaffiliated



Figure 4.1 Religious landscape of Central and Eastern Europe. Courtesy: Pew research, 2017.

87% in Russia, Bulgaria, Belarus, Ukraine, Poland, and Serbia. This rate falls to 59% in Hungary and only 29% in the Czech Republic [cf. Figure 4.1]. Overall, adherence numbers rose exponentially after the fall of communism before stabilising in the years 2000s and dropping slightly since 2010.

This return to Orthodoxy has converged with the rise of nationalism. The Pew report shows ‘strong association between religion and national identity,’<sup>71</sup> as Orthodoxy is widely perceived to be an important part of national identities. Overall, strong nationalism is positively correlated with high religious identification [cf. Figure 4.2]. Importantly, though, adherence does not translate into weekly church attendance: Romania scores the highest in this regard with 21% of declared Orthodox attending service regularly, while

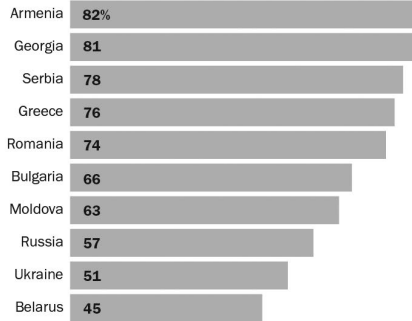
**Strong association, especially in Orthodox-majority countries, between religion and national identity**

*% who say being Orthodox/Catholic is very or somewhat important to truly share their national identity*

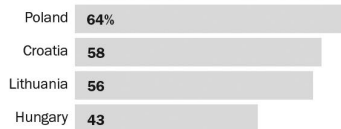
Median results of **surveyed countries**



Among those in **Orthodox-majority countries**, % who say being **Orthodox** is very or somewhat important to truly be a national of their country



Among those in **Catholic-majority countries**, % who say being **Catholic** is very or somewhat important to truly be a national of their country



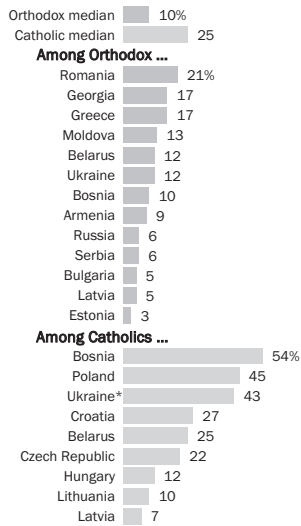
Source: Survey conducted June 2015-July 2016 in 18 countries. See Methodology for details. "Religious Belief and National Belonging in Central and Eastern Europe"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Figure 4.2 Association between Orthodoxy and national identity. Courtesy: Pew research, 2017.

**Relatively low shares of Orthodox across  
Central and Eastern Europe attend  
church weekly**

*% who say they attend church weekly*



\* In Ukraine, most Catholics identify as Byzantine Rite Eastern Catholics, whereas in most other countries, Catholics are Roman Catholics.  
Source: Survey conducted June 2015-July 2016 in 18 countries. See Methodology for details.  
"Religious Belief and National Belonging in Central and Eastern Europe"

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*Figure 4.3* Weekly church practice levels across Eastern European countries. Courtesy: Pew research, 2017.

Moldova trails at 13%, Belarus and Ukraine at 12%, Russia and Serbia at 6%, and Bulgaria at 5%. In comparison, 45% of Catholic Poles attend church weekly, while only 12% of Hungarian Catholics [cf. Figure 4.3] do so. Similarly, daily prayer is relatively low, ranking between 15% and 48%, well below the US rate of 55%. The data therefore supports the argument that the "return to Orthodoxy" is first and foremost linked to the post-communist investment of the nation as an identity, with Orthodoxy (and Catholicism in the case of Poland) acting as a central part of that identity. It is not, on the other hand, correlated with a massive hike in regular church attendance, which has remained strikingly low after an initial rise following 1991.<sup>72</sup>

Overall, when we cross these statistics with the variegated neoliberal pathways of the post-Soviet era, what stands out is a general negative correlation between declared religious affiliation and the degree of integration within global flows and the success of the shift towards a consumer society. With respect to Bohle and Greskovits' typology, peripheral countries tend to have higher affiliation

rates, while semi-core and semi-peripheral countries tend to have lower ones. This is one way of explaining the difference between the very high statistics regarding belief and belonging in Eastern European Orthodox countries compared to Central European Catholic ones. In this respect, the very high level of religiously unaffiliated in the Czech Republic (72%, versus 21% Catholics and 6% “other”) can be understood as being linked to the historically high level of cultural and economic integration of that country with Western Europe.<sup>73</sup> This stands in stark contrast with the very high levels of Orthodox identification in peripheral countries such as Moldova, Armenia, Belarus, and rural Russia. Religion in general and Orthodoxy in particular have certainly acted as refuges in the face of radical changes, yet the picture is not complete without interrogating the specificities of nation and state-building under neoliberal conditions.

For Agadjanian, the ‘emergence of religiously informed nationalisms [...] was a logical effect’<sup>74</sup> of the nationalisation of religion under communism. Considering the history of the region and the unfinished process of nationalisation as well as the capital role of the Orthodox Church in the nation-building process, it is not surprising that people renewed with the Church, which could provide a sense of continuity and community after such a brutal rupture. Through its valuation of “Tradition” and beyond its orientation to the past, Orthodoxy could provide building blocks with which to resume the pre-communist nation-building process that accompanied neoliberal state reforms. In this respect, Agadjanian and Roudometof compare the Eastern European case with that of Third World countries, where religion has been key in ‘maintaining and revitalizing an identity narrative in the face of globality.’<sup>75</sup>

In the post-1989 period, the particular vision of Eastern Orthodoxy as a conservative social force, which inhibited liberal modernization, was revived, setting off a clash between the traditional communitarianism of the Orthodox Church and the neo-liberal developmental strategies that prioritize individual rights, privacy, democratization, and unimpeded transnational processes.<sup>76</sup>

Flora and Szilagyi make a similar case when they argue, in the case of Romania, that after the collapse of the communist dictatorship, religion appeared to many as the only legitimate institutional and spiritual means available to fill the post-1989 ideological vacuum.

After their prolonged period of marginalization, churches and religious organizations had to suddenly adapt to unexpectedly high social demands. Religious institutions had to define or redefine their social meaning to effectively address the changing set of contemporary social expectations.<sup>77</sup>

Across OMEE countries, one of the missions confided to the Church has been to buttress the post-communist nation-state (re)building process. In the midst of shaken political institutions—or even the privation of such institutions, as

in some of the post-Soviet republics—the Orthodox Church was perhaps the ‘sole remaining force for institutional nation-building.’<sup>78</sup> According to Yelensky, ‘The age of globalization reinforces the Church’s role as the historic repository of nationhood, national values, and cultural identities.’<sup>79</sup> Writing about Ukraine, he continues by stating that

the situation in post-Soviet republics over the last decade of the twentieth century was almost identical to the situation in the Balkans over the nineteenth century. After gaining independence, nations were striving to secure autocephalous status for their Orthodox Churches.<sup>80</sup>

Overall though, the Orthodox Church’s role in post-communist nation-(re)building has perhaps been less institutional than symbolic, as a guardian of national identity.

The Eastern European case shows how globalisation does ‘not abolish nations as relevant imagined communities’<sup>81</sup> as much as it changes the *meaning* of the nation (and nationalism), as well as the dynamics in which it partakes. Already in 1992, British historian Eric Hobsbawm diagnosed the trends that are still unravelling as a consequence of the fall of communism. He wrote that the new rise of nationalism in Central and Eastern European countries paradoxically signalled ‘the decline of nationalism,’ at least in the form of the ‘old Wilsonian-Leninist ideology and programme.’<sup>82</sup> His analysis rings true in retrospect, as post-Soviet nation-building does introduce significant ‘*new* elements in the history of nationalism.’<sup>83</sup> Hobsbawm was quick to note that while nationalism has been the beneficiary of the communist collapse, it was not among its causes, except in the case of some Soviet republics like Armenia.<sup>84</sup> Contemporary nationalism is essentially *reactive* in the face of unprecedented transformations. It is no longer ‘the historical force’<sup>85</sup> that drove political modernity. Nationalism today is not a positive, progressist, propositional, and holistic political programme ‘as it may be said to have been in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.’<sup>86</sup> Similarly, the nation-states of a century ago tended to be large, multi-ethnic, multi-national, and linguistically heterogeneous, while today’s nationalism is fragmenting and ethnic (“nation-splitting” rather than “nation-building,” as the Balkans but also a country like Spain illustrate). In his book on the nation, Hobsbawm quotes from a conference given by Miroslav Hroch, for whom post-communist nationalism and ethnicity are ‘a substitute for factors of integration in a disintegrating society. When society fails, the nation appears as the ultimate guarantee.’<sup>87</sup> The same could be said about religion in the form of Church affiliation, and it is no coincidence then that both it and the nation have combined in the ways they have in the aftermath of 1989–1991.

Another salient element in this analysis is how late nineteenth and early twentieth-century nationalism, including later post-colonial nationalism, was *internationalist* (or *inter-nationalist*), in the sense that nations were constituted as putative equals in a world-society of container-nations. The nationalism that emerged in the 1990s, on the contrary, ‘stood for political order and

territorial integrity of sovereign states'<sup>88</sup> against the idea that the global has a consistency of its own, yet a perpetually changing one made of unpredictable ebbs and flows. The revival of nationalism is therefore a protective gesture that expresses the fragility of nation-states in this new global environment as well as a nostalgia for its container function and the days when the nation-state did have a grasp on things (or at least seemed to) and was invested with utopian and soteriological functions. The nation, then, and religion with it, are invested quite differently in today's nationalist movements. While Orthodoxy and nation-building went hand in hand in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, the communist experience cast religion in radically secularist terms, as a remnant of the past and the recluse of superstition. Today, nationalism and religion appear as essentialist elements rooted in a past that is summoned against the dissolving and unearthing tides of globalisation. Significantly, the conservative religious revival concerns the same demographics as the populist base, i.e., social classes that have not particularly benefited from globalisation, such as peasants, low-skilled industry workers, and residents of rural areas. In this respect, *the de-politicising effect of neoliberalisation processes and their erosion of state sovereignty are primary factors in the rise of reactive nationalism*. Hobsbawm already noted how supranational market-enforcing institutions like the IMF and, later, the WTO, as well as a score of other economically minded institutions,<sup>89</sup> eroded state sovereignty and marginalised national self-determination. Indeed, a major function of the earlier nation-state was to constitute 'a territorially-bounded "national economy" which formed a block in the larger "world economy"'.<sup>90</sup> Today, the dynamic is reversed: the impersonal imperatives of the global economy determine to a large extent the health and shape of national economies—and societies.

According to Alexandru Racu, EU integration has been the 'most significant political process of the post-Communist period'<sup>91</sup> for a country like Romania. EU integration, in turn, has been a major vector of neoliberalisation that has contributed to erode national sovereignty. Contemporary nationalism arises therefore in the wake of the *loss of control of the nation-state* over the destinies of its people in economic and non-economic matters, as economic determinants override societal institutions.<sup>92</sup> This perspective goes a long way in explaining some of the causes of the coincidental rise of populism and the preference for power and authority-asserting authoritarianisms over the perceived "impotence" of democracy. Neoliberalism, in other words, has been a major factor in the concomitant rise of nationalism and Orthodox affiliation.

### **Populism and Authoritarianism in the Prism of Illiberalism**

Parallel to the major transformations that have been occurring in the religious field, there has been a rise in authoritarianism and populism in Central and Eastern Europe. This rise is seldom crossed with an analysis of religion, apart from those who relate it to the combination of strong levels of affiliation to Orthodoxy and nationalism. For many political analysts, the coincident rise

of nationalist authoritarianism and “religion” (i.e., timeless Orthodoxy) is the sign of enduring backwardness at the margins of Europe, signalled by the incapacity of OMEE countries to fully embrace secular liberalism and market economics because of their supposed orientation towards the past, ingrained communalism, and entrepreneurialism-hindering communism-instilled wait-and-see dependent attitude. Here again, a reflection on capitalist integration and its effects shines by its absence.

While there may well be some kind of cultural resistance to full-fledged radical liberal individualism in the more Eastern parts of Europe,<sup>93</sup> this interpretation is dodged by the fact that populism and authoritarianism have not only spread in post-communist countries in the last two decades but also elsewhere, including in the West. Whether we take Giorgia Meloni’s “post-fascist” movement in Italy, Donald Trump in the US, UKIP and Brexit, or Geert Wilder’s extreme right-wing party in the Netherlands, the coming to power of such movements in the West should lead us to think outside of an evolutionist framework in which the West is at the avant-garde of History. What if, on the contrary, what happened in Eastern Europe since 1991 can help us better understand the current developments in the West? For it is indeed Eastern European populists like Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban who are leading the onslaught against the EU and providing inspiration (along with Russian leader Vladimir Putin, particularly before 2022) for Western European far-right leaders like Matteo Salvini, Meloni, and Marine Le Pen. As Orban declared recently: ‘Thirty years ago we thought that Europe was our future. Today we believe that we are Europe’s future.’<sup>94</sup>

As Prime Minister of Hungary from 1998 to 2002, Orban participated in the implementation of neoliberal measures and liberal political reforms meant to satisfy the conditions for EU integration. After a passage in the opposition, Orban was elected back in office with an absolute majority in 2010, yet with a profoundly different political program which he promoted as being “illiberal.”<sup>95</sup> Politists Grabbe and Lehne help explain what is meant here by illiberalism:

Radical right populism [like that of Orban] is inherently illiberal because it rejects constraining how a strong leader exercises the will of the people, and it has a monolithic, predetermined conception of the will of the people that leaves no room for pluralism (including rights for minorities) or deliberation.<sup>96</sup>

Illiberalism is also profoundly nationalist ‘because the political leader claims to be defending the nation against external and internal threats to national identity.’<sup>97</sup>

As it is generally understood, the illiberal label is misleading. It is worth recalling that liberalism has three distinct strands: political, cultural, and economic liberalism. *Political* liberalism refers to political pluralism, freedom of opinion and religion, the separation of institutional spheres, namely religion

and politics (secularism), as well as the separation of the executive, legislative, and judicial powers (the “Rule of Law”). *Cultural* liberalism, meanwhile, defines the almost unrestrained freedom of autonomous individuals who can choose which identity and which version of the good life they commit to, including sexual orientation and religious belief. *Economic* liberalism, finally, is the free exercise of individual freedom in economic matters within the framework of the open market. As I have argued elsewhere in the wake of scholars like Pierre Rosanvallon, economic liberalism is the inviolable core of liberalism, as it tends to overrule the precepts of political liberalism when they come at odds.<sup>98</sup> The value of choice that is fundamental for all strands of liberalism is modelled on the unconstrained freedom of the individual on the free market. Similarly, the free market provides the mental frame and model for political and cultural liberalism’s conceptions of freedom of choice and the ways in which the exercise of these individual choices are believed to tend to spontaneously harmonise, taming the potential for violent conflict (between political ideologies for instance). Political liberalism, in other words, devolves social regulation to the supposedly “neutral” mechanisms of the market, whose “natural laws of offer and demand” are believed to “spontaneously” harmonise and create social order without the need for external intervention and coercion, particularly by the state. While the free market is often understood as the mechanism of price fixation through the meeting of supply and demand, it was conceived as an answer to the modern political question of social regulation outside of a theological frame with the underlying idea that social justice and resource redistribution are best assured by its mechanisms. Similarly, the governing idea behind cultural liberalism is that of the market, in which radically free individuals behave as they please while creating social harmony.

With this in mind, illiberalism does not revolt against liberalism per se as against *political and cultural liberalism*. Liberal philosopher Michael Ignatieff captures this when he writes that illiberalism is fundamentally ‘authoritarian in political form, capitalist in economics and nationalist in ideology.’<sup>99</sup> Hence, the reinforcement of the state’s power promoted by illiberal political movements does not intend to impede economic development nor consumerism, as Orban’s economic policies, which include the dismantling of welfare provisions and plans for the radical liberalisation of the labour market, clearly show. In contrast with EU-directed policies, then, illiberal politics are more embedded variations of neoliberalism than they are alternatives to neoliberalism and liberal economics in any meaningful sense. It is furthermore tempting to suggest that political and cultural liberalism might well be targeted precisely because significant portions of the population are not able to participate in the bounties of consumerism and the joys of mobility and cosmopolitanism. When we look at it, the persisting ills of those strands of population have more to do with global capitalism and neoliberalism than with homosexuals holding hands in public or the menace of the influx of Syrian refugees in Budapest, yet the logics of populism are precisely to reduce

complexities to simple slogans and designate scapegoats. In a Market-shaped society of identities, the populist solution can be defined by the slogan ‘more identity (more nation), less democracy (a more powerful state).’<sup>100</sup>

Looking closely at the religious transformations that have occurred in OMEME countries (and in Central and Eastern Europe more widely) shows how they can best be understood against the backdrop of the radical shift from planned to capitalist economies through neoliberal reforms (including enhanced austerity measures following the 2008 financial crisis). The populist agenda, whether one looks at that of the actual Romanian government, Orban, Trump, France’s *Rassemblement National* (formerly *Front National*), or the Brexiters’ call to “gain back control of our country,” is to return to free, sovereign, and relatively homogenous nation-states ‘that can determine their development without external interference.’<sup>101</sup> The populist project, in other words, simply wants the nation-state to regain the power that it has lost to the supranational regulating institutions that have carried the neoliberal project and promoted a transfer of authority away from the body politic constituted by the citizens to technocratic experts trained in neoclassical economics and neoliberal governance. Only, populists fail to understand the true sources of the social problems they seek to answer and dangerously reignite fascist and xenophobic (including Islamophobic) impulses. Incidentally, nationalism (and its rapport with a conservative religious reaction) can be argued to derive from the implementation of neoliberal reforms and the shift from the Nation-State to the Global-Market regime. Likewise, populism can be seen to result from the erosion of the container function of national identities and of state action caused by the immersion within global capital flows and the transfer of sovereignty to market forces and neoliberal supranational regulative institutions. What Eastern European populists (and British Brexiters, among others) critique of the “powers that be” in Brussels is the anonymous character of (technocratic neoliberal) EU governance and its democratic deficit, which leads to a sense of powerlessness and loss of autonomy. In that respect, it seems quite logic that a strong power in office might appear to have more potential for success at fighting for the preservation of national interests than liberal democrats in systems where democracy rings like an empty shell. To summarise, I argue that a perspective that better understands the nuts and bolts of neoliberalism goes much further in explaining the rise and rhizomatic dissemination of populisms than liberal outcries denouncing the “treason of Orban,” ingrained Eastern backwardness, and ‘bad governance practices.’<sup>102</sup>

The free-market foundations of liberalism are often neglected, in particular by those who defend the principles of political liberalism, like Ignatieff. What these liberals fail to appreciate is the measure and nature of the neoliberal revolution and its impact on the very conditions of politics in general and democracy in particular. The neoliberal project aimed at renewing liberalism by giving full rights to free market economics at the expense of liberalism’s political and cultural dimensions.<sup>103</sup> As I have shown in *Religion, Modernity, Globalisation*, neoliberalism explicitly invests the market with functions of social regulation, to the detriment of democratic principles. It is interesting

that Ignatieff identifies Augusto Pinochet's regime in Chile (following the 1973 coup against the socialist government of Salvador Allende) as the pioneer of illiberal, authoritarian capitalism, for it was young Chilean economists trained in neoliberal political economy at the University of Chicago that were sent to command the Chilean economy under Pinochet. Similarly, one of the leaders of the neoliberal school and founder of the Mont Pelerin Society, Friedrich Hayek, considered authoritarian regimes to be more efficient than democratic regimes when it comes to securing the conditions of a free market and individual freedoms. What remains hidden to liberal political analysts, therefore, is the contradiction between the establishment of liberal political institutions and their undermining by (neo)liberal economic policies. Denouncing the erosion of the institutions guaranteeing the Rule of Law in Central and Eastern European countries without prolonging the critique to the ways in which free market economics have been implemented is short-sighted and somewhat hypocritical, and in the end, doomed to fail to provide remedies and alternatives.

If the tenors of illiberalism (including Russian President Putin) openly oppose globalisation and neoliberal technocratic governance, the make-up of illiberalism is profoundly neoliberal since it promotes individual liberty in the private sphere, especially under economic and entrepreneurial forms, and obedience in the public sphere. In other words, illiberals have adopted the neoliberal idea according to which true liberty is neither political nor civic but, in Milton Friedman's terms, essentially the "freedom to choose" in an open market. The true cause of illiberal authoritarianism in Eastern Europe is not so much a congenital enmity for democracy due to some kind of backwardness as it is the result of neoliberalisation processes.<sup>104</sup> This explains why countries with completely different religious landscapes show similar populist tendencies. Populism, neo-nationalism, and authoritarian politics are the *consequence of* and a *reaction to* the de-politicisation and denationalisation operated by neoliberal policies.

Religion plays an important role in the dynamics of illiberalism. As Paul Zawadzki writes, "Religious" nationalism constitutes one of the most significant aspects of the illiberal moment.<sup>105</sup> Authoritarian trends go hand in hand with the renewed visibility of the Church (whether Orthodox or Catholic) and the publicisation (and instrumentalisation) of religion by political leaders, from Russia to Armenia, and from Poland to Hungary.<sup>106</sup> As Paul Gradwohl argues in the case of Hungary, "The Orbani vision is that of a European and Global battle in favour of a besieged brand of sovereignty-ism, that is of national states protecting their citizens united around a leader and traditional Christian values."<sup>107</sup> Illiberal movements in Eastern Europe oppose European political liberalism on the grounds that it 'symbolises the self-effacement of its Christian roots, a spiritual void, technocratic domination, and the violation of their recently renewed sovereignty.'<sup>108</sup> Religion-infused populisms consummate the erosion of the nation at the same time as they pledge to reinstate its former glory by resorting to Huntington-style "clash of civilizations" images.<sup>109</sup>

### Behind the Stats: Changing Orthodoxies

The coupling of religious conservatism and nationalism is far from being the only change to have happened in OMEE countries. Indeed, many changes have occurred under the surface of statistics and the gloss of official discourse. The conservative response of parts of the Orthodox constituency is a form of resistance to the destabilisation produced by globalisation that emphasises a positive evaluation of cultural and/or ethno-national difference. An example is the discourse of the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC), which has tried to adapt to its new social and political legitimacy as well as to the new pluralist situation and ‘structural secularism’<sup>110</sup> of the post-Soviet era. The ROC’s discourse adopts a Manichean worldview that conveniently opposes ‘secular (neo)liberalism’<sup>111</sup> to the solidity of “Tradition.” The Church severely criticises the ‘anthropocentric universe’ which underlies the ‘neoliberal worldview,’ as well as its emphasis on the absolute liberty of the individual as a supreme value, and warns against the perils of a ‘new totalitarianism’ that menaces to dissolve communal bonds and undermine the very notion of “sin”.<sup>112</sup> This conservative response aligns itself with other conservative and even fundamentalist ones in the world. This points in turn to a global process of ‘standardization and unification of religious phenomena (as of other cultural forms).’<sup>113</sup> At the same time, and somewhat paradoxically, Agadjanian and Roudometof argue that

these forms of homogenization are accompanied and counterweighed by an emphasis on specific identities, by the worship, fashion, and even positive evaluation of “difference” for its own sake. The revival of ostensibly traditionalist religious particularisms around the world is part of a broader reaction that involves the reassertion of local, religious, [and/] or ethno-national identities. In spite of their self-proclaimed traditionalism and anti-globalist, protective rhetoric, these movements do—objectively—legitimize themselves through the globalized Western discourse of multiculturalism and the universal acceptance of individual and/or collective rights.<sup>114</sup>

In sum, religious conservatisms ‘position themselves precisely *in opposition*—but by this very fact they inscribe themselves into the new global taxonomy as its legitimate part (or party), as its *counter fort*.’<sup>115</sup> In other words, traditionalists have moulded themselves into a negative mirror-image of full-fledged marketised religious forms more than they have successfully prolonged the characteristics of the Nation-State regime in a globalised world. Hence,

the authoritative and dominant discourse of the Church, in spite of all critique, is a discourse of negotiation rather than a discourse of confrontation with the liberal, secular world. Globalization is directly acknowledged as an “inevitable and natural process” bringing many positive results<sup>116</sup>

—perhaps above all economic. Indeed, the ROC's critique is once again less aimed at liberal economics than liberal secularism.

Since the fall of communism, the state's control on religion has loosened significantly. At the same time, state funding was revived and has tended to grow. In most cases, Churches have enjoyed a positive reputation, only rivalled by that of the army. Yet the post-communist situation is one in which pluralism now shapes things in theory as well as in practice, as states introduced clauses of freedom of religion and recognition of a multiplicity of religious institutions in the new post-communist constitutions. This has been a major challenge for many Orthodox Churches, whose tradition of hegemony and renewed association with the nation-state make it difficult for them to conceive of themselves as "competitors" in a plural landscape of "religious options."

The atheisation process under communist rule can be deemed mostly as a failure, since in most cases religiosity simply receded within the private sphere, only to invade the public after 1991.<sup>117</sup> Meanwhile, the rollback of the absolutist state under neoliberal guidance opened the way for the de-differentiation of religion and its overtaking of 'certain social functions that the state was not ready to fulfil'<sup>118</sup> in the aftermath of the collapse of the communist bloc, namely with respect to the provision of healthcare, education, care for the elderly and so on. In this respect, the situation is reminiscent of the ways in which Faith-Based Initiatives (FBIs) have rolled out in the US as a result of the neoliberal dismantling of the social net that accelerated in the 1990s.<sup>119</sup> In a country like Romania, Catholic, Mainline Protestant, and Orthodox Churches have operated a division of labour in the field of welfare, and these provisions have become intrinsic to their evangelisation ("growth"), positioning, and communication strategies.<sup>120</sup>

The post-communist years have seen a veritable church-building frenzy across Orthodox majority countries. Indeed, an 'average of 110 churches are being erected in Romania annually and somewhere between 100–110 churches are to be built in northern Moscow in the next few years,'<sup>121</sup> namely with the help of important donations from businessmen, who have become the ROC's new patrons.<sup>122</sup> This surge includes three new major cathedrals in Moscow (Christ the Saviour, completed in 2000), Belgrade (Saint Sava, completed in 2004), and Bucharest (Salvation of the Nation). As this last example makes explicit, these state-funded buildings are primarily nationalistic projects. Saint Sava was the founder of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Medieval times, and Christ the Saviour cathedral in Moscow was founded as thanksgiving for protecting the Russian capital from Napoleon in the nineteenth century, before its destruction by the communists in 1930. Upon its consecration, in 2000, the edifice housed the canonisation of the whole Romanov family, i.e., of the tsarist dynasty. As for the Cathedral of the Nation's Salvation, it towers at 120 metres and holds a capacity of 5,000. The building, which was announced jointly by Patriarch Teoctist and President Constantinescu, is a multi-functional space that includes a library, but also a

congress centre and a luxury hotel.<sup>123</sup> The marriage of religion and politics, as the cathedral shows, is not as much a remnant of the past as it is fully embedded in the logics of global capitalism and consumerism.

### Neoliberal Theologies

In his book *The Anti-Social Apostolate: Theology and Neoliberalism in Post-Communist Romania*, Racu analyses the ‘writings of some of the most prominent Orthodox intellectuals and theologians from Romania’ and shows how ‘new religious arguments and narratives depart from previous Orthodox tradition and practice’<sup>124</sup> to align with neoliberal tropes. Writing about Racu’s book, Romanian sociologist Sorin Gog notes how the Orthodox ethic has historically been deemed ‘incompatible with social modernization’<sup>125</sup> and capitalism, namely because of its pronounced other-worldly orientation, social emphasis, and rejection of the private appropriation of wealth. (Readers will note the resemblances with Islam discussed in the two previous chapters.) Eastern Orthodoxy has not produced a modern *aggiornamento* as the Catholic Church has with the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s. This makes the innovations of the last few decades even more stunning, especially coming from such prominent intellectual figures as the ones discussed by the author. Racu exposes for instance ‘Patapievici’s arguments in favour of the sanctity of private property, the redemptive nature of markets and their capacity to transform “private vices into public virtues”, [and] the religious valorisation of individual entrepreneurialism’. The same goes for ‘Baconschi’s attempt to build a Christian Democracy based on a subsidiarity principle in detriment to the social solidarity principle, his religious defence of a minimal state and the “moral” requirement of welfare retrenchment’. Finally, Racu underlines ‘Neamtu’s theological development from Christian socialism to the endorsement of spiritual entrepreneurialism, religious moralization of success and motivational programs that equip the religious believer with the necessary tools to create profitable enterprises.’<sup>126</sup> These and other examples combine to show how market ideologies have penetrated theological discourse, producing contradictions, confusions, and incoherence in the Church’s social doctrine. Contrary to the Greek Orthodox Church, the Romanian Orthodox Church (RoOC) did not condemn or critique the neoliberal reforms in Romania, nor did it distance itself from these public theologians, perhaps because ‘their symbolic capital was used [...] for cleaning its public image in the wake of recurrent criticism for [the RoOC’s] collaboration with the communist regime.’<sup>127</sup> There are questions as to how much these elite discourses resonate with the everyday beliefs and practices of Romanian Orthodox, but there is little doubt about how they have provided ‘religious and cultural legitimations of capitalism’ after the fall of communism, and how they have given ‘extensive credit to the implementation of one of the most radical neo-liberal projects in Central and Eastern Europe.’<sup>128</sup> In any case, it can be said that these new theological discourses now compete with the more

traditionalist-nationalist currents analysed above, obliging them to respond to economic issues.

Such developments are not confined to Romania. Victoria Fomina reports how the highest officials of the ROC have also had to acknowledge the exigencies of the new economically determined global environment.<sup>129</sup> As a consequence, she describes a movement within the Church that denounces the latter's ascetic legacy, valorisation of the virtues of poverty, and traditional contempt for earthly life, and pleads for a this-worldly compatible Orthodoxy. Tensions have arisen within the Church between those who condemn excessive wealth and those who provide legitimation for it. These debates have been heated by the fact that the Church is increasingly involved in commercialising its services and selling religious items and services. In parallel, lay movements have also denounced traditional other-worldliness as a cause for dependency and laziness and have urged the Church to promote entrepreneurialism. Fomina reports on the formation of the Union of Orthodox Entrepreneurs (UOE) in St Petersburg, which has worked on the elaboration of an Orthodox code of conduct that both legitimates entrepreneurialism while providing a specifically Orthodox ethical frame to orient economic success. As one member puts it, the idea is to 'work honestly in the pursuit of one's self-interest'<sup>130</sup> or, in the words of another, to 'earn a million in the glory of God.'<sup>131</sup> In continuation with the previous chapters on global Islam, it is interesting to note that the UOE has attempted to forge an Orthodox brand of finance based precisely on the model of Islamic finance, although rather unsuccessfully for the moment.<sup>132</sup> The ways in which Islam has been able to convert itself more easily into blatantly marketised forms than Orthodox Christianity provides food for thought. However, widening the focus allows us to see how Orthodoxy is also being lifestyled and reshaped within Global-Market parameters, yet in ways that are less spectacular than what we have seen in the case of Islam.

### **Consumerism and the Ethics of Authenticity**

The conservative reaction of Orthodoxy does not mean that people have resisted the pull of consumerism, on the contrary. In OMEE countries, all social classes have adopted consumerism.

New consumer and cultural standards [...] have gathered momentum throughout the post-Soviet period. The elites, for their parts, have been increasingly active in global political and economic power mechanisms. An instinctive resistance, stimulated by the identity quest, did not thwart Russians from gradually adjusting to the global normative *Zeitgeist*.<sup>133</sup>

Yet the adoption of consumerism and the shift of the meaning of progress—as something that used to be part of the state's mission and which is now

devolved to the market—is constitutively ambivalent. Post-socialist and post-Soviet countries now show great openness to global flows and influences, especially when set in contrast with the former socialist or Soviet space. The citizens of these countries are torn between the hopes of rising up to Western standards and the fear of declining to Third World status.<sup>134</sup> This tension is also constitutive of the religious landscape. While fears are echoed in conservative and neo-nationalist responses, more positive and pro-active attitudes to globalisation and capitalism shape another set of religious phenomena to which we now turn.

There have been other reconfigurations of Orthodoxy than the conservative one, and in particular what Agadjanian and Roudometof call the transformation of Orthodoxy into a ‘genre of identity.’ They define this trend as a ‘*genre* of expression, communication and legitimation of collective and individual identities,’<sup>135</sup> by which religion is rediscovered as a ‘cultural resource for identity’<sup>136</sup> in a global world. This trend, which sometimes meshes and mixes with the conservative-nationalist response, refashions Orthodoxy so that it caters not only to collective but also personal identities. Across OMEE countries, research shows that religion has been ‘rediscovered [...] as a new narrative of, or a cultural resource for, identity.’<sup>137</sup> While the conservative response acts on the collective level, Orthodox as a genre of identity unfolds at the individual level, as a new subjectivity. This means that Orthodoxy is increasingly made to cater to the ethics of authenticity and the quest for self-realisation through the exercise of choice in religious and spiritual matters: ‘In line with a global trend that has partly affected the Russian cultural landscape, “religion,” in a significant shift, has now become a highly-individualized expression of non-rigid, flexible quests that do not claim “universal and eternal” validity.’<sup>138</sup> While these trends are less obvious than in the West, they are nevertheless reinforcing with time. A plurality of ‘non-denominational, small-scale, or even individual religion and “new religious movements”’<sup>139</sup> entered the OMEE countries’ religious landscape in the immediate aftermath of the communist collapse. This influx included born-again Evangelical groups like Pentecostals, Mormons, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Baptists, Adventists, and Brethren Assemblies, but also the Hare Krishna.<sup>140</sup> While their success has been limited, and while they have been critiqued by the Orthodox Church and public opinion, they have contributed to introduce experiential types of religiosity. Similarly, the culture of self-expression, self-development, and self-realisation has been rapidly expanding since the 1990s, and Neo-Pagan, Neo-Shamanic, and other New Age-related movements have been growing at the same rate as in ‘rest of Europe and North America.’<sup>141</sup> Ideas such as ‘letting the integral voice of each individual express itself after freeing the self from one’s conditioning’<sup>142</sup> have circulated increasingly within popular and mainstream culture, disseminated by popular New Age, management, and pop psychology literature. Russian Neo-Pagans, for example, illustrate how Neopaganism is a transnationally operating movement founded on a set of shared beliefs, practices, and inspirational authors like Carlos Castaneda

and Michael Harner while taking on local-specific contents. For instance, references to Slavic traditions and/or Siberian and Altaï shamanism and pre-Christian folk traditions are summoned to provide sources of authenticity for the self-realisation and self-expressive projects of these diffuse and non-institutionalised movements.<sup>143</sup>

New Age religiosity has been particularly fashionable in urban centres like Moscow and St Petersburg. The Russian case exemplifies how the personalisation of religiosity and its alignment with the ethics of authenticity and expressivity has affected cities more than rural areas, and the middle classes and elite more than the working and peasant classes. In her study of the religiosity of Russian university students born in the 1990s, Polina Batanova has found that the importance of individual choice in matters of faith and morality is a structural characteristic that is transversal to all types of religiosity, and that not being able to choose is felt to be a major factor of exclusion and frustration.<sup>144</sup> She also notes how a utilitarian logic underscores the responses she collected, as religion is cast as an answer to personal needs for commitment, identity, belonging, and life ethics. This data allows us to refine our thesis that strong affiliation with Orthodox Christianity is negatively correlated to the degree of participation in global flows and consumerism. In general, then, lower classes, rural areas, as well as crisis-stricken industrial areas are more prone to adhere to the conservative religious reaction and show high levels of adherence to a traditionalist type of Orthodoxy. Inversely, religion as a genre of identity (whether of the Orthodox or New Age type) tends to be over-represented in globalised and urban social milieus. There are therefore distinguishable class determinations at work in OMEE countries (as elsewhere) in the ways in which the Global-Market regime becomes institutionalised.

While the penetration of the ethics of authenticity and expressivity among post-communist, educated youth is an established fact, the question remains how deeply the ethics of authenticity have penetrated the lower echelons of society and the more rural areas. Elements of an answer can be found in the work of Demyan Belyaev, based on a 2006 survey composed of a representative section of the overall Russian population and which sought to identify emerging religious trends, including non-institutionalised and “heterodox” forms of religiosity. Belyaev’s careful analysis suggests ‘that in present-day Russia, heterodox or “esoteric” [religiosity] has become the dominant form [...] and involves at least 45% of the population, compared with 40% of “traditional” Orthodox Christians and 10% of atheists.’<sup>145</sup> Based on these findings, Belyaev concludes that ‘Russia follows the general pattern observed in Western countries: many elements of “esoteric” or “heterodox” religious worldviews are widely held in the population’ and ‘possess relevance to practical actions.’<sup>146</sup> Comparing the Russian case with that of Western countries, Belyaev finds similar correlations between generational, gender, and educational variables, namely that youth, women, and educated people are overrepresented in the esoteric ideal-type. Finally, he notes that proclaimed adhesion to traditional Orthodox Christianity and involvement

in “heterodox” religiosities are not exclusive, since ‘most people adhere to both.’<sup>147</sup> This portrait complexifies the quantitative data regarding high rates of Orthodox affiliation in a very significant manner. These conclusions call for more research across OMEM countries, yet they do point to a massively shifting religious landscape in strikingly similar directions as what we have been seeing in the West, but also in other parts of the world and within the transnational currents of Islam.

### **Marketisation and the Rise of Magic**

The shift to the Global-Market era has coincided with the “return” and efflorescence of “magic” practices, esotericism, exorcism, and a wide array of traditional or imported healing techniques. Magic practices with traditional roots managed to survive in the underground during the Soviet and communist period, yet their present revival blends them with more recent techniques disseminated through New Age-related networks. As far back as 2001, anthropologist Galina Lindquist wrote that

Practices of magic and healing in contemporary Russia are widespread, resorted to by all social strata and population groups. They are a firm part of everyday strategies of survival for many people, irrespective of their income bracket or education level.<sup>148</sup>

Only firm-believing Orthodox and atheists condemn these practices as Satanic or fraudulent, and they have proliferated somewhat outside public attention. Meanwhile, practices like house or car blessings by Orthodox priests have become widespread among all types of Orthodox-affiliated. As in other parts of the globe, the marketisation of post-socialist societies has opened the door to the revival of magic practices, in and outside mainstream denominations.

The shift from communism to capitalism has come with a formidable reversal of the meaning of and attitudes towards money. Considered to be “dirty” and the source of immorality in Soviet times, when money-making activities were even criminalised by the state, money has suddenly been thrown at the centre of personal and social lives and promoted to being the key to all aspirations. With ‘the arrival of the market, money has become the primary, if not the only, means of survival, devaluating and attenuating [the] old networks of trust’ that used to be the means by which people secured access to ‘material and social goods.’<sup>149</sup> Similarly, money has become a major concern for all types of religion. We have seen above how entirely novel prosperity theologies and legitimations for property were emerging from the very heart of the Orthodox Church, notwithstanding the latter’s recurrent denunciations of the immorality of “the West.” Money is now one of the principal issues addressed in magic practices, along with matters of love, family, and health issues. As Lindquist describes,

The most frequently advertised services of business magic are: the selling of amulets to ensure success in business; help in obtaining a loan; help in getting lent money back in cause of a default; giving advice in concrete situations on whether or not to strike a deal with certain partners; getting paid for work for which payment is due but not forthcoming; uncovering employees who are stealing from or cheating the owner or who are in cahoots with a competitor<sup>150</sup>

The importance of money partakes in a wider movement by which the forms of transcendence we find in diverse types of religiosity in OMEE countries are going through a process of horizontalisation and immanentisation:

money is seen as a manifestation of the divine force, a variety of magical flow connecting cosmos and the human being. Indeed, in the life of contemporary Russians, money is the sole prerequisite of any kind of acceptable social existence. It indexes not only relations with the divine power, but also the crucial human connections of kinship and friendship.<sup>151</sup>

Lindquist's analysis of money as magical flow and divine force recalls Marcel Mauss' famous writings on the notion of *mana* in archaic societies; a notion that he considered central to religious practices and beliefs. In Russia as in other post-socialist countries, access to health care and education are more or less, if not entirely, hinged on financial resources. 'Lack of money [...] and a pressing need to earn it, is a constant strain of Russian everyday life.'<sup>152</sup> In post-socialist countries, the social net, once universal, free, entirely state-owned and state-directed, has been dismantled, privatised, reformed, and marketised even more radically than in the West. Religious and magic practices made to favour healing and success are therefore a coextensive development linked to the brutal turn from communism to capitalism, as anthropologists have found to be true in other parts of the world.<sup>153</sup>

The dynamics of marketisation are arguably at the root of two other important phenomena that have developed over the course of the last three decades: the expansion of a market for religious products and the important revival of pilgrimages. Melissa Caldwell is part of those who have researched the development of an increasingly substantial market for religious goods and services in the consumerised environment of post-Soviet and post-communist countries.<sup>154</sup> In addition to the religious and spiritual services associated with healing or personal development, the market for religious goods (amulets, candles, rosaries, talismans, crosses, figurines, etc.) has grown substantially both in local fairs and religious sites (monasteries, historic churches, pilgrimages). Anthropologist Yulia Antonyan has likewise shown how pilgrimages are on the rise in Armenia and how these experiential and embodied practices are intrinsic to the development of tourism and consumption in ways that are very similar to what Ian Reader has reported for Japan in this book *Pilgrims*

*in the Marketplace*.<sup>155</sup> Again the similarities with developments in other parts of the world are striking and appear intimately linked to marketisation and globalisation processes.

### Creating Neoliberal Subjectivities: The New Age Explosion

Irena Borowik argued in the early 2000s that the expansion of New Age was one of the major dimensions of the wider religious transformations in Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine.<sup>156</sup> This claim is supported by the results of a recent research project conducted in Romania on “alternative spiritualities and personal development” led by Sorin Gog and Anca Simionca. New Age derived “alternative spiritualities” were virtually absent in Romania barely fifteen years ago. However, they have erupted since, deeply penetrating ‘popular Romanian culture’<sup>157</sup> through books, television, the Internet, newspapers, and magazines. The phenomenon gathered momentum around Romania’s 2007 integration in the European Union, which was followed closely by the 2008 financial and economic crisis. Over a very short period of time, alternative spiritualities moved from the margins to the mainstream as they became incorporated and institutionalised in various professional fields, including psychology, management, governmental agencies, healthcare, and welfare. In the words of Gog,

Alternative and complementary medicine is [no longer] subterranean, esoteric and something that popular healers perform in their private practice, it is something that has been introduced in mainstream medical establishments [like] spiritual healing and meditation techniques [in hospital oncology departments for example].<sup>158</sup>

At the same time, a ‘massive outburst of spirituality has taken place in the field of psychology’<sup>159</sup> as part of a paradigm shift that has seen cognitive-behavioural schemes subjected to an increasing amount of critique in favour of New Age-inspired holistic approaches. As for the world of business, spiritually-infused personal development programs are becoming a must for acquiring career-enhancing “soft skills” (communication, self-presentation, the ability and willingness to learn new things and grow as a person).<sup>160</sup> These trends are now important among professionals as varied as ‘economists, lawyers, teachers, creative workers, service specialists, IT-personnel, engineers, experts, consultants, etc.’<sup>161</sup>

One of the most insightful observers of the religious landscape across Eastern Europe, Gog connects this efflorescence to deeper cultural motifs and social trends. In an analysis of surveys conducted in Romania, he found a marked difference between the answers given by the cohorts born after 1981 and therefore not entirely socialised under the communist regime. He notes for example a substantial decrease in the belief in a personal God (28.3%) and the sharp rise in the belief in a ‘spiritual or life force’ (54.3%)

for those born between 1981 and 1990.<sup>162</sup> Gog also notes ‘a gradual decline of institutionalised religion’ among younger generations, as well as ‘an increased perception that the church does not offer adequate answers to their religious quests,’ and ‘a tendency to separate the church from social and political matters.’<sup>163</sup> Religion for these post-communist cohorts no longer depends on socialisation within the family, while the authority of the priest and the church is eroding. Gog argues that these survey results do not support secularisation theories as much as ‘a growing interest in spirituality.’<sup>164</sup> In other words, the results show a religious landscape in which de-institutionalised and individualised forms of religiosity (spirituality) are becoming dominant. Religion is not declining, it is *changing*. Interestingly, the younger generation is also more prone to have democratic values and to be entrepreneurial and market-oriented. For Gog, the spectacular rise of interest in New Age-related ‘spiritualities’ and healing techniques are not an epiphenomenon; they signal ‘a profound and [...] radical structural change in the religious field.’<sup>165</sup> While communism radicalised Nation-State regime trends, the shift to capitalism has sparked a deep and radical transformation of the whole Romanian religious landscape. Gog’s analysis converges with mine, for he argues that we are facing more than a simple change in substance, or content of religious belief: this is a change in the very *structure* or *form* of religion.

The new spiritual field has mediated a new sense of the subject, a new structure of temporality, new modes of religious socialization, and a new relation to worldliness—all of these constituting radical transformations of how traditional and modern religious fields have been operating in Romania in the last decades.<sup>166</sup>

And this is true even beyond urban areas.<sup>167</sup>

While the contours of the nebula composed of alternative spiritualities and other self-help, self-realisation, and healing practices are ill-defined, they can be conveniently filed under New Age.<sup>168</sup> In the West, New Age was born in the midst of the consumerist revolution of the 1960s and was an integral part of the countercultural movement.<sup>169</sup> As such, its initial politics were clearly anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist, and anti-materialistic. The movement also voiced a critique of work (as alienating and lacking in authenticity) and individualism, even as it shifted concerns from collective transformations of society via political projects and protests to transforming society through changing lives and promoting the self-realisation of individuals. New Age grew well-beyond the confines of the original movement yet continued to show a critical stance towards capitalism until the 1980–1990s. It is then, amidst the neoliberal revolution and the transformation of capitalism into its financialised and globalised avatar, that New Age-related religiosities and healing practices increasingly legitimised a post-materialist version of the health and wealth gospel.<sup>170</sup> By the turn of the millennium, even material

success became legitimate within many strands of New Age, including some of the more critical ones with respect to capitalism, as a possible result of successfully “finding one’s path.”

It was also in this period that techniques such as meditation and yoga started to become integrated into corporate management, and that self-realisation and self-perfecting through work became mainstreamed.<sup>171</sup> In a seminal article, Emma Bell and Scott Taylor, both professors in highbrow business schools in the UK, identified this trend and noted how spirituality and management had fused.

Within business schools a number of academics have incorporated elements of spiritual teachings in their curriculum; they claim to be driven by their own spiritual journey or transformation to deliver highly experiential learning that involves students in meditation, confession, storytelling, dance, music and prayer.<sup>172</sup>

This quickly expanding body of literature and its relays in management training, workshops, and programs, promoted the view that the existential needs of the employees had to be supported if an organisation was to succeed.<sup>173</sup> The answer was to relate the meaning of work to a higher purpose: not only the financial success of the organisation, but also the self-realisation of the employees. Therefore, by ‘reinforcing the idea of work as providing a path to enlightenment through the notion of self-actualization [...] it portrays personal growth [and spirituality] as the primary means whereby the “iron cage” of alienating work environment can be made enlightening.’<sup>174</sup> In other words, personal and spiritual development emerged as answers to the countercultural critique of the 1960s and 1970s by promoting a new ideal of a just society and a new form of personal authenticity realised through work and the workplace, thereby providing a strong legitimation for what Boltanski and Chiappelo call the “new spirit” of global capitalism.<sup>175</sup>

It is remarkable how quickly both anti and pro-capitalist (or neoliberal) brands of New Age were embraced in Eastern Europe, which had been largely (but not totally) isolated from this history until the collapse of communism. While New Age spiritualities that retain a critical edge towards capitalism and consumerism have flourished in the *margins* of Eastern European societies,<sup>176</sup> a capitalist-friendly brand of New Age has blossomed in professional domains that have ensured it a much higher level of impact within the *mainstream*. The difference between these two brands of New Age lies in the emphasis placed by the latter on the sole individual at the expense of communal bonds and wider social issues. Here again, Gog’s analysis is worth a quote. In neoliberal New Age,

Relying on one’s own self is the single resource needed in order to experience spiritual fulfilment, and this deems the religious community obsolete. Depending on others means a lack of autonomy and a lack of

spiritual maturity: the whole idea of spiritual development is to become a pro-active person capable of finding the inner resilience to overcome the obstacles of life and if this does not happen, to become invulnerable to them and experience in yourself the needed Presence and Peace.<sup>177</sup>

The ideal of neoliberal New Age is the entrepreneurial, balanced, self-reliant, self-confident, tide surfing, autonomous, successful, and realised individual. This contrasts with what I call countercultural New Age, which emphasises how healing oneself requires vulnerability in the presence of others, and comes from also helping others to heal. While countercultural New Age has lost some of its critical edge, it more readily fosters and values communal experiences and emphasises the importance of interpersonal relations as a key to self-realisation. These are only ideal-types, however, with respect to an often muddier social reality.

The annexation of New Age religion by the workplace leads to a paradox since it binds personal realisation and emancipation to productivity and professional loyalty. In the words of Bell and Taylor, this ‘ensures that the search for meaning is harnessed to specific organizational purposes,’ and translates existential questions into technical issues of ‘self and organizational management.’<sup>178</sup> By making individuals responsible for their well-being and happiness, workplace spirituality also shelters the organisation and the wider socio-economic context from critique. New Age emerges as both the religious response to and one of the main means of legitimation of neoliberalism and its promotion of an entrepreneurial self that shares in the virtues of ‘individual creativity, flexibility, self-reliance and self-development.’<sup>179</sup> As a result, the ‘strong emphasis on spiritual entrepreneurialism makes the field of alternative spiritualities one of the most radical vectors [for] generating popular cultural legitimation [of] the contemporary neo-liberal transformations that have been prevalent in [Central and Eastern European] countries.’<sup>180</sup> In other words, New Age—neoliberal New Age but not only—produces and socialises a type of subjectivity that is aligned with the requirements of the new globally enmeshed socio-economic environment brought on by neoliberal reforms and the spread of consumerism.<sup>181</sup> It also promotes a type of spirituality in which well-being and prosperity become fused in the hero-ised figure of the entrepreneur who sees change, difficulties, and mobility as opportunities for career, personal, and spiritual development.<sup>182</sup>

This analysis summons comparisons with Weber’s famous descriptions of the capitalism-elective Protestant ethic. Yet while there exist similarities with Weber’s Protestant ethic, there are also differences.

Whereas the Protestant ethic embodied a transcendent philosophy and portrayed economic work as [being] in the service of God, the current [neoliberal New Age] discourse embodies an immanent philosophy wherein work is seen as an activity through which personal growth can be achieved.<sup>183</sup>

The penetration of New Age in certain professional domains and Romanian society as a whole is a good example of how the utilitarian individualism of neoliberalism conflates with the Romantic-expressive individualism carried by consumerism and the culture of personal development—both of which have penetrated post-socialist societies.

The social and economic context within which New Age spiritualities emerged in Romania is clearly one of profound transformation following the radical implementation of neoliberal reforms composed of austerity measures and labour market liberalisation. These policies have dramatically decreased the number of collective agreements, introduced short-term contractual employment, made dismissals easier, and ushered in a new highly competitive and precarious working environment.<sup>184</sup> In this context, New Age-derived spiritualities have

produced new cultural cosmologies that creatively engaged with the dynamic transformations of everyday life and generated new religious practices of the self and innovative religious technologies of self-development that became especially attractive for segments of the urban educated strata that was losing interest in traditional forms of institutionalised religions.<sup>185</sup>

The coincident rise of alternative spiritualities and deep marketisation, in other words, is not coincidental but a structural characteristic of the shift from state-led socialism to global capitalism.

### **Creating Neoliberal Subjectivities: Pentecostalism and Orthodox Christianity**

New Age is not the only producer of neoliberal subjectivities. On the other end of the spectrum, charismatic movements such as neo-Protestants and Pentecostalism, which are the other pole of Self-oriented religiosities, have flourished in less favoured and marginalised social milieus as a way to come to grasp with capitalist globalisation in a positive, self and life-affirming way. The Roma are an interesting case in point. In OMEE countries, the small Roma minority has traditionally affiliated with the majority religion, Christian Orthodoxy, as ‘an efficient strategy of social integration.’<sup>186</sup> Among the Roma, though, a growing proportion has been turning to born-again religion, Pentecostalism especially, since 1991.<sup>187</sup> Sociologists have tended to explain conversions as reactions to segregation, yet they are also effective means for empowering the Roma community through the empowerment of individuals within new types of social networks that break with traditional kinship structures and habitus.<sup>188</sup> Research in Romania and Bulgaria reports the formation of specific Roma Pentecostal Churches, with Roma pastors that preach a pro-modernisation and prosperity gospel. Some of these churches include musical performances that allow for the revalorisation of an important

aspect of Roma culture.<sup>189</sup> The conversion to Pentecostalism and its strong emphasis on emotions and religious experience leads ‘to a new conceptualisation of the self and the grounding of a new type of social practice’ that differs widely from Orthodox religiosity. It is de-differentiated, more holistic, and promotes ‘strong ethical rationalisation’<sup>190</sup> that provides a clear frame for the conduct of individual lives. It is furthermore an answer to globalisation that is compatible with the latter’s economic orientation. Charismatic Christianity caters to the ethical and identity/belonging needs of individuals while embedding them within a fervent voluntary community, thereby creating a new brand of entrepreneurial and forward-looking selves. While conversion to Pentecostalism is not yet a norm nor an obligation in Roma communities, Pentecostals have managed to ‘create a sense of a new transfigured community’ marked by ‘an ethic of brotherhood that manages to overcome the strong kin fragmentation that exists among the Roma community and to diminish the effects of discrimination and exclusion by emphasizing the strong spiritual bonds grounded in the love of God.’<sup>191</sup>

The Roma are not the only ones to have been attracted to Pentecostalism. Conversions have been significant in frontier regions among traditionally peasant communities active in low-skilled industries (tanning, shoemaking, tailoring, construction, transport, retail trade, and agriculture) before yet especially after 1991. With its ‘entrepreneurial drive,’ Pentecostalism enables the ‘cultural shift towards material prosperity’ required by the new capitalist environment, and fosters the formation of ‘self-organised translocal communit[ies]’<sup>192</sup> that have played a major role in structuring and enabling labour migration flows, particularly after Romania’s integration in the EU. Since then, a significant number of Romanians have emigrated to other EU countries to find work and better their life perspectives. Among them, Romanian Pentecostals have found an edge. Driven by economic reasons and a desire to ‘make it,’ Pentecostals charge the migration process ‘with *prophetic meaning*,’ linking it to ‘the will of God and the Holy Spirit, “who showed us the way,”’ as well as *missionary* meaning, ‘linked to the moralizing role that the members of the church [feel] they [have] in [Western Europe], a context represented as corrupt[ed] by ultra-worldly values.’<sup>193</sup> Pentecostalism not only allows for the production of entrepreneurial subjectivities, it inscribes them within strong communal bonds and a firm frame of life ethics (including tempering materialism). This allows for Romanian expatriates to reverse the stigma of occupying low-end, poorly paid jobs (e.g., construction, small business, handicraft, transport) in Western European countries through the incarnation of ideals of purity. Pentecostals have not only been pioneers in economically motivated mobility within and outside Romania, but they also show a propensity for social mobility, since certain members have managed to become successful transnational businessmen. Pentecostals were a discrete presence in Romania before 1991, yet they have grown significantly since and have adopted the prosperity gospel, which helped Romanians negotiate the post-communist transition and adapt to a competitive environment.

As a competitor in the business of soul-saving that promotes the idea that God wants believers to be rich and wealthy, Pentecostalism is perfectly adapted to Global-Market conditions, yet it also acts as a buffer against some of the ills of global capitalism through its promotion of communal bonds and a strict moral code (like refraining from alcohol and the promotion of hard work).

### Conclusion

Rather than portraying a region lagging behind with respect to global trends, Eastern European countries in general, and those of Orthodox tradition in particular, embody the shift from the Nation-State to the Global-Market regime. They also provide insights that can potentially shed light on other developments, elsewhere in the world. Acknowledging the importance of the socio-economic shift from communist/socialist regimes to a capitalist one in which one must continually adapt to global market conditions, it is possible to account for the varieties of religious responses that shape the Eastern European religious landscape, whether we look at the conservative or genre of identity reconfigurations of Orthodoxy, the rise of counter-cultural or neoliberal New Age, or that of Pentecostalism. The OMEE countries also show the importance of class determination for all of these varieties, in relation to the degree and type of embedment in global economic flows and consumerism. It furthermore shows how neoliberalisation and consumerisation combine to encompass processes of marketisation in a region that shares some of Western Europe's culture and long history, yet was isolated from market economics until neoliberal hegemony was at its peak. In this region, nationalisation was an unfinished business, while statism had been developed to an extreme because of communism.

In his book *Globalization and Orthodox Christianity*, Victor Roudometof suggests a chronology of the waves of globalisation and a typology of the ways in which these dynamics materialised in the local institutional dynamics of the Orthodox Church. With respect to the period examined in the present book, Roudometof distinguishes between a Modern era of globalisation that stretches from the nineteenth century to end of the World War II, in 1945, when the frontiers of the Cold War were drawn, and the present Global Age. What is striking is how this chronology operates a double disappearing act: that of the specificities of the communist era, and those of post-communist capitalism. By having the present period start in 1945, Roudometof conflates a period in which the state had a maximal grip on society with the post-communist years of radical market integration and state rollback. In my opinion, this analysis is too heavily entrenched within the secularisation paradigm. It rests on an essentially political and institutional analysis that fails to recognise the obvious. First of all, the specificity of the communist experience, which cannot be boiled down to globalisation, and second, the profound change in the very foundations of Eastern European societies as of 1989–1991, as they became integrated within the global economy and opened to

the lures of consumerism. The otherwise important neoliberal reforms, as well as the cultural changes brought forth by consumerism (which are both central to globalisation), are virtually absent from Roudometof's discussion.

This reflection highlights some of the ambiguities and shortcomings of the concept of globalisation as it has been mobilised by sociologists of religion. The works of Peter Beyer and José Casanova show how the concept of globalisation alone does not have sufficient hermeneutical potential to overcome the assumptions and shortcomings of the secularisation paradigm. For these authors, 'real' religion, that worth talking about, remains localised within explicitly and traditionally institutionalised forms, while novel and non-institutionalised forms, however important they may be today, are neglected or simply tossed aside. Both these authors, interestingly, rely on Roland Robertson's work on globalisation. Yet it is important to recall that Robertson, a sociologist of religion who did not believe in secularisation theories and remained rather free of the assumptions of the secularisation paradigm, wrote his 1992 classic *Globalization* mainly in response to Immanuel Wallerstein's World System Theory. Wallerstein wrote in a Marx-inspired materialistic perspective on the economic constitution of globalisation from early modern times. In my view, Robertson's own emphasis on cultural dimensions was not meant to overrule the economic ones of world-system formation as much as to complement them, while contesting the idea that culture (and religion) is second to material determinants and merely serves super-structural legitimation of class domination. Unfortunately, references to Wallerstein have been relegated and with them considerations about the potential importance of economics, whether planned, Keynesian, or full-fledged capitalist. As I have argued, the secularisation paradigm simply dismisses economics, which it keeps out of sight and delegates to mainstream economists (or Marxian materialism).

The Nation-State to Global-Market thesis suggests a quite different, and I argue much more empirically grounded, complete, nuanced, and comprehensive timeline. As we have seen in the present chapter, the communist experience did not cause a major rupture in the processes of nationalisation and statisation of religion that started in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Communist rule broke with the otherwise quasi-symbiotic rapport (although contested by more secularist currents) between modernisation and Christian Orthodoxy. Yet the communist experience also pursued the process of differentiation and political regulation of religion. It halted nationalisation processes at the same time as it provided the grounds for its revival. Overall, the communist experience performed one of the most radical varieties of statisation of religion (and society as a whole) imaginable (another case is China), including the severe repression of Churches and the invention of full-fledged political religions. Contrary to Roudometof's chronology, I argue that the 1945–1991 communist era definitely has its own consistency in terms of politics, culture, economics, and religion. This era was brutally and unexpectedly put to an end between 1989 and 1991, and a completely new world was

ushered in, without any real transition. This date undoubtedly represents a caesura. This is when the Nation-State regime brutally kipped towards its Global-Market successor. In retrospect, the communist period shares more characteristics with the period that preceded it than with the actual, post-communist one. The real break occurred with the fall of communism, and with it the end of the state's control over society and the submission of EEO countries to policies governed by the imperatives of market economics.

The collapse of communism constitutes a major event in modern world history, and this must be integrated and accounted for in interpretative models. After 1989–1991, the major change for most people was not so much democracy but a radically different socio-economic environment and living conditions. While one may vote every few years, one goes to work or supports oneself on a daily basis. As one retired East-German woman—who had grown up, worked, and had children under communism, then had to re-train and re-orient herself completely under capitalism in addition to dealing with her husband's depression due to the collapse of their known world—explained to me: 'Before you could criticise your boss but not the Party, now you can criticise the government but not your boss.' This jewel of popular wisdom captures something extremely important: a major change in the politics and authority structures of ex-communist societies, from the State to the Market.

In such an environment, some of the consequences and effects of post-1991 marketisation stand out in sharper focus than in the West. The importance of the shift in the authority structures of modern societies is one of them. While the transition from the Nation-State to the Global-Market regime was gradual and uneven in Western countries, it happened basically overnight in Central and Eastern Europe. Gog is one of the few to have taken the full measure of both the amplitude and the nature of this shift. He insists on how the integration into global capitalism, which he recognises to be the most salient and determining dimension of the post-communist era, has effected a radical transformation in the very structure of the religious landscape in Romania, as in other Eastern European countries, including Russia. Well beyond the penetration of New Age, the institutionalisation of the Global-Market regime has introduced 'a spirituality of interiority which becomes the locus of religious experience [...] but also a distinctive type of productive subjectivity that spiritualizes a circular looping of the self in order to enhance its well-being, immanent authenticity, and validation.'<sup>194</sup> The decline of a personal representation of God and the rise of energetic and cosmological representations in the population in general and even among declared Orthodox signals an important process of immanentisation and an overall personalisation, cosmologisation, and embodiment of religion: 'the spiritual gaze is not towards an alterity, but towards the newly discovered self that is an integral component of a wider Presence, Force, Energy, or Divinity.'<sup>195</sup>

In this new configuration, the 'Self' as 'both the agent and the source of spiritual development represents a radical new idea within the Romanian religious space.'<sup>196</sup> In traditional Christian Orthodoxy, work on the self

(its moralisation for instance) is accomplished in relation to an external Other or alterity who is both the source and the object of piety. Today, Orthodoxy is being modulated with respect to this new rapport to the self. As we have seen, the reaction can be ideal-typically twofold. It can either be conservative and in opposition to globalisation while inadvertently espousing and reproducing the latter's main structures. This option paradoxically contributes to dissolve the nation into the global at the same time that it champions its besieged sovereignty, a process that I call "negative structuration." Or it can take the shape of a genre-of-identity, reconfiguring Orthodoxy according to the demands for lifestyle, personal identity, social bond, and self-realisation (what I call "positive structuration"). These two complementary reconfigurations are actualised in two broad social groups whose experiences of globalisation differ. The conservative reaction is proportionally higher among the left-behind of globalisation, while the personalisation and spiritualisation of religion are overrepresented in urban and cosmopolitan circles. The overall portrait is nevertheless far from being clear-cut, and we have seen that these reconfigurations can overlap in practice within the same individuals. Similarly, Roma Pentecostals are left-behind and have embraced a charismatic yet conservative form of religion by which to redress their marginal status. Countercultural New Agers, meanwhile, are cosmopolitan actors who can be very critical of capitalism and engage in elaborate and radically de-commoditised practices.

The concern for the Self brings with it a process of immanentisation that tends to erode the verticality of transcendent references typical of Orthodox Christianity. In the long run, this process can challenge the traditional Orthodox worldview in which the vertical determines and irrigates the immanence of the world.<sup>197</sup> This is already the case in New Age-inspired Orthodox circles, but it may also impact more conservative variants. Overall, though, the marketisation of religion in OMEE countries is not as advanced as it appears to be in the Muslim world. In many respects, the present chapter can be read as a yardstick by which to evaluate ongoing trends. There is an obvious consistency to the Orthodox tradition, well beyond its institutional manifestations, that resists the forces of change. The difficulties in imagining and implementing a brand of Orthodox finance that could rival with spectacular developments in Islam finance illustrate how every religious tradition is both shaped and shapes the Global-Market context.

The movement from a Nation-State model of religion to a Global-Market one is amplified and catalysed by new transnational transactions between OMEE countries and their diasporas in Western countries. As such, religious scholars emanating from North American or Western European Orthodox communities enjoy new powers and new legitimacy through mobility, publications, and the Internet. Ideas now circulate in many directions, and diasporas have become particularly influential in their countries of origins as a consequence.<sup>198</sup> This is perhaps one of the reasons why Orthodox types of meditation practices, sometimes unearthed from obscure sources and the

depths of history, have become particularly popular and democratised. Hence medieval monastic techniques have become available and recommended for use in everyday situations by everyone, with new vocabularies. Orthodox meditation is therefore presented as ‘becoming present to oneself through breathing,’ which denotes the unmistakable influence of Hinduism and Buddhism in their New Age variants.<sup>199</sup>

The Nation-State to Global-Market model can help us understand the shift in what Gog called the “religious structure” in OMEE countries. For well over a millennium, religion was structured vertically. This structure was perpetuated in the Nation-State regime, as the State corresponds to a top-down type of regulation and imaginary. The Market, on the other hand, corresponds to a horizontal mode of regulation. The automatic and spontaneous operation of the Market heralded by neoclassical theory promotes a radically immanent imaginary. As we have seen throughout this book, the Global-Market regime produces a radical shift in the metaphysical foundations of human societies and thereby favours cosmological rather than transcendent-vertical religiosities. This clearly favours immanent-transcendent types of religion and pressures vertical-transcendent types to immanentise. This shift also affects politics and the foundations of the nation-state. This shaking up of the former social order catalyses nostalgic reaffirmations of both the omnipotent state and the safe haven of the nation.

The example of OMEE countries shows how religion plays a surprising yet essential function in the acculturation of capitalist and neoliberal principles in non-capitalist societies. It is therefore not only neoliberalism and consumerism that shape religion: religion in turn becomes a preferred vehicle through which consumerism and neoliberalism are acculturated and legitimised in formerly communist and state-heavy countries. From the perspective of OMEE countries, we are made to appreciate how the evolution and mainstreaming of New Age and charismatic religiosities perform the same functions as in the West. Spiritual entrepreneurialism infuses economic processes and works with a spiritual essence that enchants capitalism and produces a new immanent-transcendent “sacred canopy” that has successfully replaced that of political religions. The appropriation of personal and spiritual development by the field of management and the promotion of meditation and yoga techniques by businesses and corporations makes sense otherwise than as a malevolent co-optation or take-over aiming to conceal ‘the mechanisms of surplus-extraction.’<sup>200</sup> The logics lie deeper; they point to the fusion of religion and capitalism in late modern societies, or rather to the embedment of all social dimensions within the grammar of the Market. As Gog argues, ‘these transformations are rather produced and re-produced by actors [...] as coping mechanisms and as imperatives of self-transformation in order to fit into the ever-expanding economic narratives of capitalism and its constitutive spirit.’<sup>201</sup>

What I have not been able to do in this chapter is pay sufficient attention to popular expressions of religiosity and how they express, reproduce, contest,

reinterpret, and remodel prior and instituted forms of religion. Yet as elsewhere, such popular expressions have gained new legitimacy, visibility, and vitality; even more so considering the radical privatisation that was enforced during the communist era. Popular pilgrimages, for example, are experiencing a massive revival that takes blatantly consumerised forms, as they are promoted by the Church through travel companies, blurring the distinction between religion and tourism. As elsewhere, the Orthodox Church is making organisational changes by which “modern” (i.e., neoliberal) management, accounting, marketing, communication, and branding practices are being implemented, blurring the boundaries between religion and these supposedly secular spheres. Like the Catholic Church, the Orthodox Churches have changed their attitudes towards new communication and information technologies and have developed extensive multimedia networks, blurring the boundaries between religion and the secular, the private and the public, religion and entertainment.<sup>202</sup> As elsewhere, core practices are changing, like funerals. In Romania, over the course of the last few years, funerals have changed from the traditional many-day home ritual to all-inclusive, packaged, and shorter “modern” funerals catered by a booming new funeral industry. These have become veritable social obligations and an outward sign of modernity.<sup>203</sup> The importance of these changes with respect to the religious landscape as a whole is debatable, as is the degree to which they participate in either substantive or structural trends. I argue to their importance, and that they signal a profound recomposition in the sense argued by Gog; one that is structural rather than superficial.

## Notes

- 1 See Gauthier (2020: Chapter 4).
- 2 A prior, shorter version of this chapter has been published under Gauthier (2022).
- 3 Agadjanian and Roudometof (2006: 13).
- 4 Agadjanian (2001) and Karpov (2010), respectively.
- 5 See a critique of this in Makrides (2006, 2019) and Köllner (2012).
- 6 See Filatov and Lunkin (2006) as well as Pop’s (2011) critiques.
- 7 An exception is the special issue of *Archives des Sciences sociales des religions* edited by Makrides and Seraïdari (2019) on Orthodoxy and economy, yet the approach is very traditional and looks at the economic activities of Orthodox churches for instance, and no mention is made of any relation between the post-communist religious revival and the shift to capitalism.
- 8 Simons and Westerlund (2015: 1). The title of this book, *Religion, Politics and Nation Building in Post-Communist Countries*, is illustrative of the curious absence of capitalism as a salient analytical feature.
- 9 Trif (2008: 665).
- 10 The *only* scholar of religion to have insisted on the change in economic regime is Köllner (2012, 2019), who has since gone back to issues of morality and politics.
- 11 Krastev (2016).
- 12 Dérens and Geslin (2016: 12).
- 13 Roudometof (2014: 162). Autocephaly at that time was already separated between five historical jurisdictions: the Patriarchates of Constantinople,

- Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem. For a deeper historical account, see Runciman (1968).
- 14 Roudometof (2014: 162).
  - 15 Roudometof (2014: 164). See Hobsbawm (1992) as well as Gauthier (2020: Chapter 2).
  - 16 Agadjanian and Roudometof (2006: 11).
  - 17 Roudometof (2014: 164–5).
  - 18 Tsar Peter the Great abolished the Moscow Patriarchate in 1721. See Runciman (1968), Köllner (2012), Roudometof (2019).
  - 19 Roudometof (2014: 165).
  - 20 Roudometof (2014: 87).
  - 21 Milovanovic and Radic (2017: 11).
  - 22 Yelensky (2006: 151).
  - 23 I am referring to the foundation of new church ‘for all Ukraine’ in 2018, and the officialisation of its autocephaly in 2019, against the will of the Moscow Patriarchate (and the Kremlin). The current Ukrainian Orthodox church is a Metropolis, and not a Patriarchate.
  - 24 Roudometof (2014: 83).
  - 25 At the time of rereading this chapter (January 2024), the Kiev Patriarchate has changed the date of the Orthodox Christmas to December 25 rather than January 7, symbolically aligning with Western Christianity.
  - 26 Roudometof (2014: 86).
  - 27 Agadjanian and Roudometof (2006: 11).
  - 28 On the complex rapports between nationalism and the formation of autocephalous Churches, see Racu (2006).
  - 29 See Roudometof (2019).
  - 30 Agadjanian and Roudometof (2006: 11).
  - 31 Agadjanian and Roudometof (2006: 11).
  - 32 See Jianu (2019).
  - 33 Roudometof (2014: 89).
  - 34 Portier (2016).
  - 35 Leustean (2009a: 1).
  - 36 I am intentionally avoiding the debate on the secularising effects of communism and the “varieties of secularism” among Eastern European and Soviet countries, which I leave to others. For an excellent discussion on the rapports of Marxism with religion, a definition of the Soviet model of secularism and an overview of the varieties of secularism in Soviet republics and communist countries, see Buchenau (2015).
  - 37 Leustean (2009a: 3).
  - 38 Hämmerli (2018: 38).
  - 39 Roudometof (2014: 89). On Romania, see Ellis (1996), Leustean (2009a). On Armenia, see Burchardt and Hovhannisyan (2016), Genté (2018).
  - 40 Racu (personal communication, May 2019). On Romania, see Leustean (2009b), Flora and Szilagyi (2006). Many examples of persecution are documented in a report adopted by the Romanian government in 2007. See Jung (2012).
  - 41 Leustean (2009a: 3). On Russia during the Cold War, see also Lupinin (2009). A new period of repression against religion in general and the Church in particular occurred under Khrushchev from 1959 to 1964.
  - 42 Hamayon (1990).
  - 43 Zhukovskaia (2012).
  - 44 Rosenthal (2012). The picture the author paints for Russia is also valid for other EEO countries. The occultist wave of the late nineteenth century was well implanted across the region.

- 45 Pew Research Center (2017). See also the table in Agadjanian and Roudometof (2006: 14).
- 46 Agadjanian and Roudometof (2006: 12). Emphasis in text.
- 47 See Köllner (2019).
- 48 Agadjanian (2015: 246). See also Merdjanova (2000).
- 49 Rimestad (2012, 2021).
- 50 Rimestad (2012).
- 51 Bohle and Greskovits (2012: 4–5). Emphasis in text.
- 52 Bohle and Greskovits (2012: 50).
- 53 Bohle and Greskovits (2012: 57).
- 54 Bohle and Greskovits (2012), Trif (2008, 2014), Ban (2016). Ringvee describes how Estonia was put on the path of radical neoliberalisation because its Prime Minister in the immediate aftermath of the communist collapse had read a single book on economics, Milton Friedman's *Free to Choose*, and that the ideas 'presented there looked to be very practical' (quoted in Ringvee 2013: 143).
- 55 Bohle and Greskovits (2012: 61). This is of course reminiscent of Margaret Thatcher's 'there is no alternative' (TINA).
- 56 Bohle and Greskovits (2012), Trif (2008, 2014), Ban (2016).
- 57 See namely Saad-Filho and Johnston (2005), Harvey (2005) and Gauthier (2020).
- 58 See also Ban (2016), who compares the embedded neoliberalism of Spain with the disembedded radical neoliberalism experiment in Romania.
- 59 Here I have to rely on journalistic sources read over the years. See for example the collection of international press articles on Eastern Europe in *Courrier International* (25 Feb.–Mar.2, 2012).
- 60 Shleifer and Treisman (2014: 95).
- 61 Shleifer and Treisman (2014: 96).
- 62 Shleifer and Treisman (2014: 96).
- 63 Shleifer and Treisman (2014: 96–7).
- 64 Shleifer and Treisman (2014: 97).
- 65 Gog (2020).
- 66 Gog (2020). For a complete analysis, see Ban (2016). See also Trif (2008, 2014), Hunya (2017).
- 67 Gog (2020). See Ban (2016).
- 68 Gog (2020). See Ban (2016).
- 69 Köllner (2012).
- 70 All numbers are from Pew Research Center (2017: 5), except for Georgia: Gurchiani (2017). Pew surveys were conducted between 2015 and 2016. On the South Caucasus, see Jödicke (2017).
- 71 Pew Research Center (2017).
- 72 Pew Research (2017) reports that a median of 10% of Orthodox Christians attend church on a weekly basis. One does have to stress though how personal Orthodox religiosity also involves individual prayer, the presence of icons in the home, holy water, commemorating the dead, baptising children and other life rituals, for which I have not found data. (Hämmerli, personal communication, May 2019).
- 73 Pew Research (2017). In that respect, the Czech case is very similar to neighbouring ex-East Germany (GDR), which holds the record as concerns the persistence of the atheist (or non-affiliated) heritage of the communist era. An intermediate case is Hungary, with 56% of attachment to Catholicism, while Poland's rate here is massive (87%), and can be understood as flowing from the Church's role as a counter-power during the end of the communist rule. On Hungary, see Gradwohl (2018). On Poland, see Zawadzki (2018).

- 74 Agadjanian (2015: 246).
- 75 Agadjanian and Roudometof (2006: 13).
- 76 Agadjanian and Roudometof (2006: 12).
- 77 Flora and Szilagyi (2006: 109).
- 78 Yelensky (2006: 149).
- 79 Yelensky (2006: 161).
- 80 Yelensky (2006: 162). On Ukraine, see also Siohan (2018).
- 81 Yelensky (2006: 165).
- 82 Hobsbawm (1992: 163, 187). This is also the opinion of Michel (1999) and Zawadzki (2018).
- 83 Hobsbawm (1992: 163). Emphasis added.
- 84 See Genté (2018), Rimestad (2012, 2021).
- 85 Hobsbawm (1992: 169).
- 86 Hobsbawm (1992: 191). This is obviously not to say that some manifestations of nationalism, particularly in its fascist forms, were not catastrophic. Yet fascism was positive in the sense that it proposed a program for moving forward into modernity, not resisting it.
- 87 Quoted in Hobsbawm (1992: 173).
- 88 Jödicke (2020). The author analyses post-communist nationalism in the Caucasus, yet his argument also applies to Eastern Europe. On religion and politics in the South Caucasus, see Agadjanian, Jödicke and van der Zweerde (2015).
- 89 The exponential increase in non-governmental organisations has had some of the same consequences as far as contributing to the erosion of the container function of the nation-state.
- 90 Hobsbawm (1992: 181).
- 91 Racu (personal communication, May 2019).
- 92 Sassen (1995).
- 93 On the legacy of Orthodox Christianity, see Makrides (2006).
- 94 Quoted in Grabbe and Lehne (2018: 2). On Eastern Europe's role in the rise of authoritarianism, see Srodecki (2019).
- 95 For a good introduction to illiberalism in Eastern Europe, see Dzihic and Hayoz (2016). On Orban's Hungary, see Kiszelly (2016). On Moldova, see Timus (2016). On Ukraine, see Haran (2016). On Poland, see Solska (2016).
- 96 Grabbe and Lehne (2018: 1).
- 97 Grabbe and Lehne (2018: 1).
- 98 Rosanvallon (1979), Gauthier (2020), Gauthier and Spickard (2022).
- 99 Ignatieff (2014: 3). The term was originally coined by Fareed Zakaria.
- 100 Ignatieff (2014: 3).
- 101 Quote from AfD (Alternativ für Deutschland party, extreme right-wing) politician Heiner Merz, quoted by Grabbe and Lehne (2018: 3).
- 102 The reader will excuse me for intentionally omitting to reference these arguments. My aim is not to attack people namely but to oppose arguments to an unfortunately widespread opinion.
- 103 See the more elaborate discussion in Gauthier (2020).
- 104 This was basically Karl Polanyi's (2001) analysis of the causes of early twentieth century totalitarianism.
- 105 Zawadzki (2018: 361). My translation.
- 106 On the political exploitation of Orthodoxy in Russia, see Kazarian (2018).
- 107 Gradvohl (2018: 384). My translation.
- 108 Zawadzki (2018: 376). My translation.
- 109 Huntington (1996).
- 110 Agadjanian and Rousselet (2016: 30). See also Agadjanian (2010).
- 111 Agadjanian and Roudometof (2006: 6). See also Köllner (2019).

- 112 Agadjanian and Roudometof (2006: 6).
- 113 Agadjanian and Roudometof (2006: 6).
- 114 Agadjanian and Roudometof (2006: 6). See also Agadjanian (2010).
- 115 Agadjanian and Roudometof (2006: 6). See also Agadjanian (2010).
- 116 Agadjanian and Rousselet (2016: 48). The quote is from the Proceedings of the Jubilee Bishops Council of the Russian Orthodox Church in 2000.
- 117 Gog (2011: 93). See also Gog (2006).
- 118 Flora and Szilagyí (2006: 136).
- 119 On Faith-based initiatives and Faith-based organizations as a consequence of neoliberalism, see contributions in Martikainen and Gauthier (2013).
- 120 On the same process in Greece with the Orthodox Church's response to neoliberal austerity in the last decade, see Molokotos-Liederman (2019).
- 121 Hämmerli (2018: 49).
- 122 Köllner (2013, 2019).
- 123 Flora and Szilagyí (2006: 120).
- 124 Gog (2017: 121). See Racu (2017).
- 125 Gog (2017: 122). Gog quotes the work of Culianu, among others who prolonged Weber's thesis on the odds of the Orthodox ethic and the spirit of capitalism.
- 126 Gog (2017: 125). See Racu (2017).
- 127 Gog (2017: 126). See Racu (2017).
- 128 Gog (2017: 121). See Racu (2017).
- 129 Fomina (2020).
- 130 Quoted in Fomina (2020). I am quoting from the paper the author presented at the EASR Conference, Bern, Switzerland, June 17–21, 2018. At the time of publication, I do not have access to the 2020 article version to provide a specific page number.
- 131 Quoted in Fomina (2020). See endnote 125.
- 132 Fomina (2020). The Islamic tradition does provide more possibilities for bypassing the interdict of interest than does Christian Orthodoxy.
- 133 Agadjanian and Rousselet (2016: 48).
- 134 Stryker and Patico (2001), Patico (2001).
- 135 Agadjanian and Roudometof (2006: 7). They borrow the concept from Robertson (1992), which they quote.
- 136 Agadjanian and Roudometof (2006: 7).
- 137 Agadjanian and Roudometof (2006: 7). The authors do not make the link between these developments and the rise of consumerism, as Caldwell (2005) does.
- 138 Agadjanian and Rousselet (2016: 30).
- 139 Agadjanian and Rousselet (2016: 31).
- 140 See also Gog (2006, 2011). For a study of the Seventh Day Adventists in Romania, see Ionete (2015).
- 141 Ferlat (2003: 45).
- 142 Ferlat (2003: 40).
- 143 Ferlat (2003). On shamanism in Russia, see Sundström (2015).
- 144 Batanova (2018). This PhD project is part of the 'Young Adults and Religion in a Global Perspective' comparative research project at the Abo Academy University of Turku, Finland, which examines youth religiosity in 13 countries using mix-methods. The Russian study conducted in a Muscovite university gathered 446 surveys and 45 semi-directed interviews. The overall project identifies five *cross-cultural* ideal-types: emphatic and religiously open-minded, environmentally concerned non-affiliated, anxious believers, critical and disengaged religious conformists, and progressive secular. Individual choice is transversal to *all* types in *every* country.

- 145 Belyaev (2011: 369). The ‘esoteric’ category in the survey includes New Age-related beliefs like reincarnation, but also beliefs and practices that can also be linked to what is perhaps better called popular or folk religion, whether astrology, talismans, the power of non-medical healing techniques, angels, and ghosts, etc.
- 146 Belyaev (2011: 369).
- 147 Belyaev (2011: 369).
- 148 Lindquist (2001: 98). See also Lindquist (2000), Caldwell (2005).
- 149 Lindquist (2001: 99).
- 150 Lindquist (2000: 324).
- 151 Lindquist (2000: 325).
- 152 Lindquist (2000: 326).
- 153 Comaroff and Comaroff (2001).
- 154 Caldwell (2005: 19–20).
- 155 Antonyan (2020), Reader (2014).
- 156 Borowik (2002).
- 157 Gog (2016: 98). See also Simionca (2016), Tobias (2016), Trifan (2016), Palaga (2016), and Gog (2017).
- 158 Gog (2016: 122).
- 159 Gog (2016: 122). Rusu (2017) argues that this trend is now extending to rural areas of Romania as well.
- 160 Simionca (2016), Szabo (2016), Trifan (2016), Tobias (2016).
- 161 Gog (2017).
- 162 The surveys in question are the European Value Survey of 2008 and the 2011 Romanian national Religion and Religious Behaviour survey. The Pew report (2017) quoted above had not been published at the time of Gog’s writing, but the same analysis and the same critiques apply. Unsurprisingly, none of these surveys were designed ‘to reveal the growing interest in a variety of forms of alternative spirituality’ (Gog 2016: 104).
- 163 Gog (2016: 108).
- 164 Gog (2016: 114). The same generational gap has been found to exist between those socialised after or during communism. See also Hunya (2017: 12).
- 165 Gog (2016: 120).
- 166 Gog (2016: 99).
- 167 See also Rusu (2017).
- 168 In an article focusing on New Age as seen from Latin America (Gauthier 2021), I have proposed the umbrella term “Neo-Nebula” to include related movements like Neo-Paganism, Neo-Shamanism, and Neo-Indianism. I argue that all these “neos” signal a change in religious regime, as I have been arguing in the present book.
- 169 Hanegraaff (1996).
- 170 See Ahlins’ (2013) account on this process in Sweden during the 1980s.
- 171 See Hornborg’s (2013) particularly interesting analysis of coaching.
- 172 Bell and Taylor (2003: 333). I met these scholars and their excellent work in the symposium on spirituality and neoliberalism organised by Sorin Gog and Anca Simionca in Cluj-Napoca, Romania, in 2017.
- 173 See also Ashar and Lane-Maher (2004).
- 174 Bell and Taylor (2003: 336).
- 175 Boltanski and Chiapello (1999).
- 176 See for instance Palaga (2016) on Romanian Neopaganism.
- 177 Gog (2016: 118).
- 178 Bell and Taylor (2003: 332).
- 179 Gog (2020: 106).

- 180 Gog (2020: 106–7).  
181 On New Age’s ‘elective affinity’ with neoliberalism, see also Funes (2016).  
182 See Szabo (2016) for an example on how this figure of the entrepreneur is hero-ised in Hungarian start-ups.  
183 Bell and Taylor (2003: 344).  
184 See Trif (2008, 2014), Ban (2016).  
185 Gog (2020: 110). See also Gog (2016).  
186 Negura and Peev (2011: 66).  
187 In Romania, for instance, Pentecostalism (+6%) has converted a fair share of former Orthodox (–3.5%). Pentecostals are around 300,000 today in Romania, a strong majority of which are Roma (Foszto 2017). Numbers are similar in other countries. On Roma religiosity in Romania, see Gog (2006, 2011), Foszto (2006, 2011, 2017), Pop (2009). In Bulgaria, see Benovska-Sabkova (2011). In Serbia, see Todorovic (2002). In Moldova, see Negura and Peev (2011).  
188 See Foszto (2011) on this social network reconfiguration.  
189 See namely Benovska-Sabkova and Altanov (2011) on Bulgaria.  
190 Gog (2011: 104).  
191 Gog (2011: 106).  
192 Rubiolo (2016: 71).  
193 Rubiolo (2016: 78). Emphasis in text. The case study reports on migration to Turin, in Italy.  
194 Gog (2016: 114).  
195 Gog (2016: 114).  
196 Gog (2016: 115).  
197 And transform what Hämmerli (2018) calls the Orthodox ‘ethics of Theandricity.’  
198 On the transnationalisation of Orthodox Christianity, see Roudometof (2014). On Orthodox minorities in Western Europe and their importance in the re-shaping of Eastern Orthodoxy, see Hämmerli and Mayer (2014), Hämmerli (2018).  
199 On how New Age is influencing Orthodoxy, see also Pop (2017).  
200 Gog (2017).  
201 Gog (2017).  
202 I thank Simion Pop for signalling the above examples.  
203 I thank Maria Hämmerli for signalling this example.

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## 5 Chinese Revolutions I

### The Making of Religion in the Nation-State Regime

*Changes of dynasty were drastic events. Each claimed continuity from its predecessors or from a golden age of sage rulers, but in fact there were dramatic changes in the extent and nature of their rule. The most dramatic change of all has occurred in the twentieth century, a century of revolutions in China.<sup>1</sup>*

*Drawing on the Western experience of modernization, the 20th century Chinese state and educated elite committed themselves to a secularization process that aimed to separate religion from Chinese social, economic, and political life and to replace religion with nationalism. Religion was redefined as personal beliefs and philosophical pursuits, whereas Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism were uprooted from local life and reinvented into national religious institutions based on a “Christian-secular normative model”. Intrinsic elements of Chinese religious practices and rituals, such as incense burning, paper offerings, communal worship, ghost pacification, demon exorcism, fortune-telling and spirit possession, were all denounced as “superstition” and hence a hindrance to modernity.<sup>2</sup>*

The history of China since the late nineteenth century probably represents the most radical and widescale human experiment in the history of mankind.<sup>3</sup> China, which represents one-sixth of the world’s current population (1.4 billion Chinese for 7.8 billion humans), is rooted in a civilisation whose successive dynasties can be traced back to the Xia, somewhere between 2200 and 1750 BCE.<sup>4</sup> Today’s China represents one of the world’s largest countries, whose wildly varied geographies include northern steppes, eastern deserts, the hot and humid hills of the south, and borders the world’s highest mountain range, the Himalayas. It is a profoundly multi-ethnic and multilingual country whose majority Han population (92%) cohabits with 235 different ethnical groups (the government recognises 55), the vast majority of which speak non-Chinese languages.<sup>5</sup>

Comparing China and India, Peter van der Veer captured their different modernising pathways with the expression ‘Smash temples, burn books.’<sup>6</sup> The comparison between these two demographic behemoths is indeed extremely instructive with respect to the spectrum of pathways of modernisation that have developed in relation to experiences of Western imperialism. What is striking is how direct colonisation (by the British) in the case of

India led to a much more tempered transformation of religion than in China. In contrast, China did not experience Western rule apart from the humiliating experiences of the nineteenth century Opium Wars and twentieth-century Japanese invasion and occupation (1931–1945).

Anti-religion campaigns in India did not go beyond the odd burning of books, and religion remained an acceptable part of a modern and democratic nation-state; that is, once the wild diversity of traditions, practices, and doctrines had been almost neatly fitted into the category of “religion” and reframed to be compatible with both Western rationality and the universality of science. Meanwhile, ‘modern China experienced perhaps the world’s most radical and systematic secularization process and the decimation of traditional religious and ritual cultures.’<sup>7</sup> In fact, modernisation in China meant attacking religion to an extent unseen anywhere else in the world.

As we will see, reforms started with the 1898 law aiming to destroy the approximately 1 million temples in activity (and superstition with them) and deepened in the Republican Era and Kuomintang (KMT) rule (1912–1949). When Mao’s Chinese Communist Party (CCP) finally defeated the KMT, it maintained the same general secularist orientations regarding religion. Politics and policies regarding religion were strengthened and radicalised, to the extent that Westerners travelling across China in the late 1960s and 1970s were astonished to find ‘a nation-state, with one fourth of the earth’s population [...] with hardly a trace of religion as man has known it.’<sup>8</sup>

Yet this was far from being the end of the story.

A second revolution, as important and radical as the first one, was in the making. Mao’s death in 1976 and the opening of the “Reform Era” in 1978 marked the beginning of a new destiny for religion in China, a veritable change in “paradigm”.<sup>9</sup> Suddenly, new and rebuilt temples multiplied across the countryside, ‘forming what some scholars have called a second level of government in rural Mainland China.’<sup>10</sup> Similarly, qigong practitioners invaded urban parks, divination and geomantic (*fengshui*) practices re-emerged, Pentecostalism went through a sixty-fold increase, pilgrimage sites re-opened and became a booming industry, ancestor worship made a come-back, and Confucianism was re-legitimised as a source of China’s eternal “national essence”.

These are just a few examples of a rapidly expanding landscape, ‘in which all forms of religion, be they traditional or modern, indigenous or foreign, ancient or recently invented, seem to be rapidly expanding and transforming themselves.’<sup>11</sup> In the face of this remarkable change of fate, Mainland China’s ruling Communist Party has relaxed its dismissal of religion as the soon-to-be-extinct opium of the people and resigned itself to a more pragmatic policy of “mutual accommodation” that oscillates between repression and active promotion, depending on how it deters or supports the government’s social engineering projects. In the Reform Era (that is: post-Mao), religion has exploded in *bottom-up* fashion *outside* the neatly differentiated category of recognised “religions” (*zongjiao*) and has been repackaged as “culture” and “popular customs” rather than “superstition” (*mixin*), as it was.

The story of the different pathways of “secularity” exposed by van der Veer therefore needs to be extended to include the radical shift of the last decades. There have clearly been two periods for religion in modern China: First, a radical brand of differentiation, purification, and secularisation that accompanied the construction of a modern nation-state from the tail-end of the Qing dynasty throughout the Republican and Maoist period; and a second period of tremendous religious boom, especially of “popular” forms of religion, that has accompanied the Reform Era turn to capitalism and the development of a full-blown consumer culture and market society.

Many are the scholars who have been awed by the formidable transformations caused by China’s embrace of a market economy and the concomitant religious explosion, yet these phenomena are seldom taken together and correlated as I believe they should:

The rise of China is not only in the economic sphere but also in the religious realm. While the former has been fully probed by students and reported by the mass media, the latter has been neglected to a large degree.<sup>12</sup>

How can we understand both the radicality of China’s secularisation and the recent explosion of religion? The Chinese case is a hallmark of the ways in which economic and cultural globalisation have gone hand in hand with religious revival, across Asia and beyond. The following two chapters aim to describe and analyse the formidable transformations of religion in mainland China from the late nineteenth century to the present, showing how the Nation-State to Global-Market framework sheds significant light on the two revolutions that have affected religion and completely remodelled Chinese society. In fact, it is impossible to understand the fate of religion in modern China without sharply dividing it between two phases: One that stretches from the end of the nineteenth century to the death of Mao, and a second in which we are still today. This chapter focuses on the first of these moments, from the end of the nineteenth century to the death of Mao Zedong in 1976, which corresponds to the construction of the modern nation-state and the radical formatting of religion according to its mode of governmentality and the characteristics of the Nation-State regime.

### **Traditional Religion in China**

The Opium Wars and the humiliating treaties that ensued starting in 1839 marked the rude awakening of Imperial China to Western modernity. Until then, China had known about two millennia of succeeding and expanding dynasties, and a few centuries of wilful autarchy. Religion was an integral part of this history, yet not as a differentiated social sphere nor in a form resembling anything like what we are accustomed to calling religion from a Western perspective.<sup>13</sup> It is important to sketch the outlines of what Chinese religion was like in the nineteenth century if we are to understand the nature and amplitude of changes it suffered in the twentieth century.

Traditional Chinese religion is a vast, interconnected, and complex “ecology”<sup>14</sup> of practices and beliefs largely devoid of institutional structures, hierarchies, dogma, centralised authorities, or even orthopraxy. What we are used to thinking of as Chinese religion, that is Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism (known as the “Three Teachings”), represents only a fraction of a much wider landscape in which local temples played a fundamental role.<sup>15</sup> Chinese religion is infamous for how it has challenged Western religious theories.<sup>16</sup> Some scholars today still dwell on questions like ‘does traditional China even have a religion’, or whether Confucianism and some atheistic currents of Buddhism are religious. Such debates are grounded in an anachronistic and ethnocentric approach to religion that this chapter will contribute to shed light on. For the time being, it is better to adopt the perspective of leading scholars like Vincent Goossaert and David Palmer who stress how Chinese religion cannot be ‘fully isolated as a distinct institution’ and is best examined as a ‘total social phenomenon.’<sup>17</sup> This means that religion should not be defined strictly, and certainly not in opposition to ‘the secular.’<sup>18</sup>

For Goossaert and Palmer, Chinese religion can be summed up as a system of

integrated traditions of individual salvation, such as self-cultivation through meditation and body techniques, moral living, and spirit-possession techniques, including spirit-writing; kinship-based rites, such as life-cycle rituals and ancestor worship; and communal religion, such as cults to local saints and deities—all of which were only partly framed within the three institutionalized teachings of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism.<sup>19</sup>

Its core is less theological than cosmological and dates back to the third century BCE, if not earlier, when the imperial form took hold and contributed to marginalise a more archaic shamanic cultural system (*wu*).<sup>20</sup> In essence, Chinese religion is a monist system in which there is no separation between the material and spiritual, and in which the universe is understood as an interconnected organic system in which “spiritual power” (*ling*) circulates. Beings can purify themselves through self-cultivation, and the dead become ancestor spirits, ghosts, or gods, which in turn become the object of cults and can be summoned for healing and divination rites.<sup>21</sup>

The Three Teachings were functionally differentiated, amidst much overlap and mutual influence: Confucianism was for statecraft, the elite, and kin-based worship; Daoism was a de-centralised network of temple-based communal religion and festivals; and Buddhism, which entered China and disseminated as of the first century CE and developed into a more institutionalised and hierarchical network of temples and monasteries, was summoned by the common folk mostly for funerary purposes.<sup>22</sup> Next to this, most of what constituted Chinese religion expanded in what is commonly assembled by specialists under the heading “popular

religion,”<sup>23</sup> and which retained something of the former shamanic system through the mediation with various types of spirits. The whole ensemble was regulated by the imperial state, which came to recognise the Three Teachings as “acceptable” and therefore legitimate, and attempted, with mitigated and changing success, to keep some form of control over popular religion. The centre of popular religion, the local temple, belonged to the lay or clerical community that built and ran it, and remained fundamentally autonomous from central powers while playing crucial religious, political, economic, and cultural functions. Religion in China doesn’t start with Confucianism, Taoism, or Buddhism, but with spirit mediums and local temples. In addition, each household honoured their forebears and ancestors, sometimes allying to build and maintain tombs and ancestor halls.<sup>24</sup>

### From Qing to Modernity

The long history of China is one in which the rise of the imperial form was won against the dissemination of shamanism, that is, the gradual marginalisation of the male and female shamans who mediated between the human world and the spirits and deities during the Shang (eighteenth to eleventh centuries BCE) and Zhou (eleventh to the third centuries BCE) dynasties in early and late Antiquity.<sup>25</sup> As elsewhere in the world, the imperial form took hold through a joint process of territorial expansion coupled with the centralisation and verticalisation of power. This political verticalisation involved a religious one, away from ancestor and animal spirits and increasingly involving gods as well as the universal, abstract, and impersonal cosmological principle of *qi* (energy).<sup>26</sup>

Scholars consider the imperialising process to have been completed during the Han dynasty, which ruled from the third century BCE to the third century CE. It is at this time that Confucianism was instituted as the official religion of the imperial state, unifying self-cultivation, political legitimation, and cosmological rhythms into one coherent system. From then on, and for almost two millennia thereafter, the Chinese imperial state exerted a form of regulation on the religious forms of the land. Taking the Song dynasty (960–1279 CE) as an example, Patricia Ebrey writes:

The Song state claimed the authority to approve, regulate, codify, and control all religious activity in the realm, including the institutionalized religions of Buddhism and Daoism. It limited the numbers of ordained Buddhist monks and Daoist priests through a system of ordination certificates that could be bought and sold. It approved the abbots for the public Buddhist monasteries. It issued name plaques for registered Buddhist and Daoist temples. It kept a register of shrines and granted titles to their principal deities, which included mountains, streams, dragons, and local gods that had once been human men or women. Policy

makers wanted to ensure that the government had final say on who became religious professionals and what sorts of worship activities they engaged in.<sup>27</sup>

For John Lagerwey, the imperial Chinese state functioned as a Church, on the Vatican model, that is as an overarching religious regulator with a religious dimension of its own.<sup>28</sup> The imperial state asserted itself through the procedures for recognising local gods and by approving, regulating, codifying, and controlling ‘all religious activity in the realm, including the institutionalized religions of Buddhism and Daoism.’<sup>29</sup> In essence, then, the imperial state can be said to have ‘governed through cults’ and to have ‘civilised’ and maintained order in the realm ‘through the gods.’<sup>30</sup> Religion, then, was central to the regulation of the imperial state. Not as something external to it, but as something that traversed it and into society. The imperial state was, through and through, a religious state.<sup>31</sup>

Indeed, the everyday working of the state and the role of the emperor were at least as much religious as it was political. With Confucianism acting as the official state religion, state administration was all about the practice of innumerable and incessant rituals and sacrifices made to ensure concordance of the ruling powers with the Will of Heaven: ‘From the perspective of the state (or more accurately the ruler and those officials who identified with the state), the primary goal of most religious activity was to obtain blessings for the dynasty and its subjects.’<sup>32</sup>

Furthermore,

The state was more of a unified entity than religion [...] From the perspective of a religion (or more accurately, people who identified with a religion), the state was formidable—it could fund the construction of huge temple complexes, it could endow favored temples with extensive land holdings, it could arrange for the printing of entire canons, and it could outlaw and suppress sects or teachings judged heterodox.<sup>33</sup>

The imperial state also launched periodical inquisition-style campaigns aiming to suppress ‘illicit cults,’<sup>34</sup> with variable and temporary measures of success. The religious landscape in China in imperial times up to the nineteenth century was therefore all but harmonious: It was ridden with tensions, conflicts, anti-clericalism, and traversed by waves of rebellious movements that were rooted in religion (like the well-known Boxer rebellion of 1900).<sup>35</sup> While the state may have wished to extend its control down to the village level, it lacked the resources and institutions to do so, and local temples as well as popular religion ‘retained considerable autonomy.’<sup>36</sup> Chinese religion grew out of local roots, based on the temples and thriving on the latter’s festivals.<sup>37</sup> Religion in China was therefore never as centralised as it had been in Western Christianity, and it was inherently and constitutively plural. The power of the state with respect to the regulation of religious activity remained very partial in comparison with what would unfold over the first three-quarters

of the twentieth century. Religion gravitated around the imperial state, but it was also incredibly diverse.<sup>38</sup>

### Indigenising the Call for Reform

The nineteenth-century humiliations suffered by the Chinese at the hands of Western powers, Russia, and Japan weighed down heavily on the elites. In the last decades of the nineteenth century, the latter were increasingly being educated in Western fashion, in China as well as abroad, and put in contact with High-Modern Western ideals. The Western Christian missions had a determining role to play in this process. Increasingly, Chinese elites, including those within the circles of imperial power, came to feel the pressing need to embark their country on a path of radical reform.

As in Indonesia and other Muslim countries,<sup>39</sup> and without the effects of a direct experience of colonisation, Chinese elites appropriated themselves, translated, and indigenised the Western “Modern cultural programme” (Eisenstadt). A divide appeared in Chinese society between modernists and traditionalists,<sup>40</sup> but also increasingly between urbans and rurals. China needed to modernise, and this meant constructing a nation-state and doing away with tradition and “old customs” above all. Yet, doing away with tradition meant getting rid of most of what constituted Chinese religion. It is the whole of Chinese society that needed to be transformed from the roots up, and religion was at the centre of the debates.

At the turn of the twentieth century,

the Qing empire was a crumbling state, bankrupt, militarily humiliated by dangerous predators—Japan in 1895 and the Western powers in 1900—and in an ideological crisis. Leading voices had been calling for radical measures, in particular regarding religion. The founding moment occurred in the spring of 1898: ‘A young and influential reformer’, Zhang Taiyan (1869–1936), wrote that “now is not the time for performing rituals and following the gods anymore”.<sup>41</sup>

In July, reformist leader Kang Youwei (1858–1927) projected to ‘destroy the temple cults and build something entirely new on their ruins.’<sup>42</sup> The Guangxu emperor adopted the proposal in an edict that launched the Hundred Days Reform Movement and was a ‘turning point in the modern Chinese state’s management of religion.’<sup>43</sup> Although the edict was meant to reinforce the decaying empire, the movement it set forth outlived the Qing dynasty, which finally collapsed in 1911, and shaped the following period marked by republicanism and warlordism. It materialised what Lagerwey calls a “paradigm shift” in Chinese religion, or what I call a change in *regime*; that is the ‘radical makeover’ of the value system that provides structure for ‘a given society at a given time.’<sup>44</sup>

The policies, which sought among other things to nationalise the roughly 1 million temples (with their real estate, land, and resources), were not

immediately followed with effects, but they signalled a shift from thought to action, and the beginning of a much wider movement aiming to modernise Chinese society through the creation of a Western-inspired education system as well as military and economic institutions. The policies were reconducted in 1901 and reinforced in 1904, turning evermore temples into the new institutions of the Chinese nation-state, mostly schools at first. From 1908 onwards, temples were also turned into police stations, barracks, post offices, and other administrative or government buildings. Some communities reacted by defending their temples, but overall, the seizing and transformation of temples were ‘the most visible sign of the irruption of the expanding state in village life.’<sup>45</sup> Temple destruction was not a side effect of modernisation and nation-state construction: it was its very means. It was at the centre of a radical program of reformation of the Chinese society from top to bottom. It was the means by which the state spread its tentacles into the remotest countryside, binding the community of the nation as it loosened communal bonds. Temple policies enacted a change in the rapports between society and the state, and within society itself. The state, and its corollary the nation, worked themselves into being the centre of gravity of Chinese society, with an unparalleled leverage.

### The Invention of Religion<sup>46</sup>

As almost everywhere else in the world outside the West, China did not have a term denoting religion, nor did it have anything like post-Reformation Christianity, with its own nationalised, institutional structure, an emphasis on Truth, belief, and exclusive belonging. It therefore had to invent it. In the face of Japanese military, economic, and political superiority, Chinese elites took to following its model. From the 1850s onwards, Japanese elites had identified the basics of what made Western powers so superior. Foremost among these was religion:

For decades [...], Japan struggled with the category of religion, something that was to be identified with European Christianity. A term for “religion” had to be constructed, and it was done by combining two ideographs [...] *shû* (lit. lineage) and *kyô* (lit. teaching).<sup>47</sup>

*Shûkyô* aimed to capture the double meaning of religious action, or religiosity, as well as the inner state of piety.<sup>48</sup> Note how the focus is on the individual rather than the collective.

The Chinese imported the ideograph, which is pronounced *zongjiao*. It appeared for the first time in print in 1901 and became common in the press along with another term, *mixin*, which means “superstition”. Many such neologisms made their way into public debate, such as “science” and “philosophy”. Yet the way they were created shows how the concept of *zongjiao* was not the adaptation of a concept to account for Chinese realities as much as it was the importation of entirely foreign Western Christian theological

categories.<sup>49</sup> The latter had disseminated among Chinese elites through the educational work of Christian missions (mainly protestant) and Western-type education, in China or abroad.

The opposition between religion (*zongjiao*) and superstition (*mixin*) was triangulated against a third term, *shisu*, which is commonly translated as “non-religion” or “secular”.<sup>50</sup> Interestingly, *shisu* literally means “this-worldly” or “living among ordinary people” (that is, not among monks in a monastery), and therefore corresponds to the original meaning of secular in the West (laity) rather than an ontological plane or a differentiated social sphere.<sup>51</sup> “Religion” was therefore ‘understood in the Western postreformation sense of a system of doctrine organized as a church separate from society’, and considered as a ‘strong, moralizing, and unifying force behind the Western nation-states.’<sup>52</sup> It was a model whose emulation was imperative.

The distinction between *zongjiao* and *mixin* is significantly different from the ‘traditional orthodox (*zheng*)/ heterodox (*xie*) divide.’<sup>53</sup> For one, it was performative in a brand-new way. *Zongjiao* designated what was ‘strictly limited to the spiritual and moral self-perfection delineated by the theological scriptures of a “world religion” (Confucianism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism).’<sup>54</sup> *Zongjiao* was considered acceptable, while what fell under *mixin* was to be plainly eliminated. Thus, ‘many local cults and textual traditions’ that were ‘once regarded as orthodox [...] were now branded as superstitious.’<sup>55</sup> Also, the *zongjiao/mixin* categories implied the introduction of a new rational principle that differed from the traditional *zheng/xie*. These terms ‘operated within a closed system of mutual opposition and, therefore, mutual need.’ Hence, “since there is *yang*, there must also be *yin*. Since there is orthodoxy, there must be heterodoxy.”<sup>56</sup> With *zongjiao/mixin*, the system was not closed but buttressed on a third category, “the secular”, and the overarching principle of rationality and science. *Mixin* was not there as *yin* was for *yang*, but as something to be eradicated in order to usher in a new society and a nation-state.

By aiming local temples and cults, it was the very backbone of Chinese religion—and the local organisation of Chinese society—that was put under attack. In the end, it is most of what traditionally constituted religion that was to be destroyed. In the end, what was a ‘discursive change’ ended up turning ‘the relationship between state and religion on its head.’<sup>57</sup> *Zongjiao* was far from being a neutral term: It was a category through which Chinese religion needed to be entirely sifted and reconfigured. ‘To have *zongjiao*—or reforming whatever went on in the country’s temples, monasteries, and shrines to *look* more like *zongjiao*—meant to become modern.’<sup>58</sup>

What ensued in the following decades was a formidable process of transformation that changed practically everything about Chinese religion. The new Western categories ushered in a three-directional process by which traditional Chinese religion was funnelled, through the action of the state, into three differentiated and exclusive compartments: superstition, religion, and a series of other categories labelled “secular”. In a nutshell, most of what

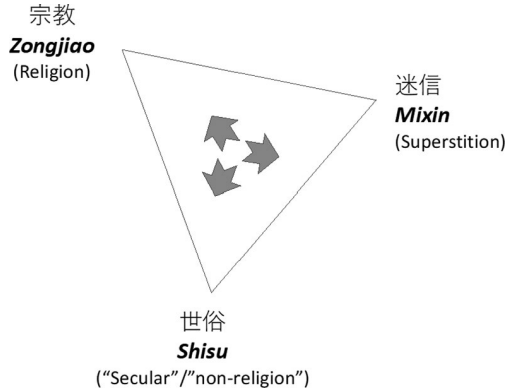


Figure 5.1 The three-directional dissection of traditional Chinese religion in the Nation-State regime.

constituted traditional religion was outlawed and repressed, “hot and noisy” temple fairs were banned, Confucianism was discarded, Buddhism and Taoism were transformed on the Christian model, and whole landmasses of practices and cosmology-based techniques were sanitised and fit into secular boxes. The success of these enterprises was gradual and came in waves. During the warlord period (1916–1927), the intensity varied according to the region. From 1927 to 1949, unification under the Republican government of the Kuomintang went hand in hand with a more sustained, systematic, and consequential transformational effort (Figure 5.1).<sup>59</sup> As Ian Johnson captures it: “Real religion was like Christianity and allowed to survive; the rest was superstition.”<sup>60</sup>

### Doing Away with Superstition

The first leg of this three-directional set of complex processes, and arguably its most consequential and destructive with respect to the former religious ecology, was the labelling and repression of *mixin*. The mandate and power to do so were initially given to the ministry of education, and the standard was how religion was judged to comply with “science”, and how it served or hindered “social progress”; whether it maintained “old” and therefore reprehensible “custom”, or how it favoured the new modern ways China desperately needed to adopt.

These reforms were nothing shy of a revolution.

They meant to civilise the Chinese, to modernise the “Sick Man of Asia”, and to ‘improve China’s *spiritual* condition.’<sup>61</sup> What was needed was a religious revolution to do away with Chinese religion and “reform the customs” (*fengsu gai*)<sup>62</sup> of a whole continent.

Attacks were devised (in a flurry of pamphlets, literature, propaganda, “scientific” accounts, the press, and government papers)<sup>63</sup> and enacted against

geomancy (or *fengshui*: ‘choosing locations and arrangement of houses and graves in order to tap beneficial energies and avoid harmful ones’<sup>64</sup>), divination, and spirit writing, which were still practiced by the people and the gentry well into the 1900s. These practices were now outlawed on principle, as was praying to icons or statues, burning incense and paper money, practicing funeral rites, attending temple festivals, along with many other traditional practices. Healers, diviners, and spirit mediums were the object of fierce anti-superstition campaigns supported by legislation.

These campaigns were ‘a frontal attack on local cults but, just as important, [also] on the late imperial Confucian religion in all its devotional and liturgical aspects: its belief in ancestors, traditional cosmology, and the moral retributions of actions.’<sup>65</sup> Debates raged throughout the 1900s as to whether Confucianism should be renovated and made into China’s national religion, similar to how the Japanese had crafted Shintoism decades earlier. Shinto had indeed provided ‘a galvanizing social force that formed the basis for a powerful nationalism that was to carry Japan through World War II.’<sup>66</sup> However, such dreams died in China along with the fall of the Qing dynasty, in 1911. ‘Confucianism consequently lost the status of official ideology,’<sup>67</sup> and China brutally put an end to a tradition that had lasted for roughly *two thousand years*. Confucianism was found to be inextricably linked to the imperial form and therefore to what needed to be done away with. Contrary to other Asian nationalism, ‘the public face of Chinese nationalism was [to develop] largely devoid of native, traditional religious elements.’<sup>68</sup>

State sacrifices and rituals were ‘totally abolished.’<sup>69</sup> With Confucianism, it was the entire matrix of ideas and practices of the Chinese imperial state that was being swept away.<sup>70</sup> Yet this de-sacralisation of the imperial state could only occur at the cost of the elaboration of a new modern symbolic system, and a transfer of sacrality. Significantly, the new Republican state immediately adopted new Western-style public ceremonies, a national flag, and a national anthem. Another extraordinarily effective and meaningful measure was also adopted.

One of the first acts of the new Republic was the inauguration of the Gregorian calendar beginning on January 1, 1912, simultaneously abolishing the traditional lunar-solar calendar. The rationale for this was not simply to imitate modern states of the West but also and primarily to eliminate the numerous festivals and deity birthday rituals punctuating the traditional calendar with countless local and regional variations and cycles—all of which were occasions for “hot and noisy” crowds and unbridled “superstition”—and replace them with a new set of civic rituals.<sup>71</sup>

By shedding the traditional lunar-solar calendar, China changed cosmos. Changing the calendar had been a tradition in imperial China, namely to mark the beginning of a new dynasty. The intention was therefore to mark

an important change of political order, as was the tradition in China. Yet in this case, the Chinese did away with the inscription of everyday life within traditional cosmology in favour of a blank slate upon which the new Chinese nation-state and modern society could be actively constructed. Temple destruction and conversions into schools and other government buildings had aimed to unroot what was essentially a ‘religion of place.’<sup>72</sup> Abolishing the traditional calendar and replacing it with the foreign, Christian, Gregorian one was a way to cut communal society from its cosmology. I might be exaggerating the importance of this event, but I see this as the act of unhinging millennia of civilisation from the stars.

All of this happened at the very outset, in the first breathing moments of the nascent republic, in 1912.

### **Making Chinese Religion on the Christian Mould**

The new guiding principle for political and social reform was “Science”. Capitals are warranted here, since it was not science per se as much as the *idea* and *moral ideal* of science—the *ideology* of science, and the telos of rationality. The new hook to hang modern Chinese society on in the vestibule of nations. The brand-new “Lights” (*Lumières*) to rival the fading glow of the old stars.

Religion, in a modern society, was acceptable, but only under certain forms. Hence the new constitution of 1912 instituted the “freedom of religious belief”. The meaning of the inscription of this *individual* right in the fundamental law of the republic is deceptive when viewed from a Western standpoint. For it was not the securing of a right for practices that existed. Rather, it was a prescription to profoundly remodel what was and what was to be, and the equivalent of a bulldozer for what had been. Chinese religion was essentially communal, a group total social phenomenon that bound families across generations and communities across geographies, in a system that culminated in the imperial centre. It was not particularly about belief, and it wasn’t individual, whether one looked in the monasteries of Buddhism and Taoism or in the local temple fairs. Importing notions from the West, the Chinese elites that raised the freedom of belief to a constitutional principle also made it into the staple of religion.

The state was to be separated from religion, and religion would be interiorised. Religion was acceptable as long as it looked like post-Reformation Western Christianity in general, and Protestantism in particular: doctrinal, spiritual, and ethical, and rid of all of its “superstition”, including most of its rituals. Quickly, the state recognised four religions: Protestantism, Catholicism, Islam, and Buddhism. The constitution thus sealed the death of Confucianism, leaving scholars to ponder if it ever had been a “religion” (*zongjiao*), or simply an outdated “philosophical system”. Taoism was initially excluded from the list and was only added years later after it went through a very serious renovation, from top to bottom. Temple cults, temple festivals, public

rituals, devotional and other religious activities were excluded from protection.<sup>73</sup> Freedom of belief was not freedom of religion in any Chinese sense.

Since 1842, the presence of Christianity in China had been tolerated and uneasily recognised, due to the insistence of Western powers following the Opium Wars. Gradually, though, namely through the educative mission of the Western churches, the Christian understanding of what constitutes a “religion” disseminated amongst the Chinese elites. Some of the latter, particularly among the revolutionary and radical reformers, had converted to Christianity. Chang Kai Check, the KMT leader, for instance, was a baptised Methodist.<sup>74</sup> By 1912, and within an extraordinarily quick period of time, Western Christianity had become *the* model for “religion”, informing the Republican state’s policies. Indeed, ‘throughout the [entire] twentieth century, Chinese political and intellectual leaders [were] extremely sensitive to Western (almost Christian-inspired) judgments and analyses regarding Chinese religion.’<sup>75</sup> For Goossaert and Palmer, ‘the desire to conform to western expectations regarding Chinese religious practices ran deep among both lay and religious leaders.’<sup>76</sup>

The translation of these principles in practice meant that the part of Chinese religion that was salvageable needed to engage in a process of radical reform by which ‘Christian models of clerical training, community organization, confessional identification, and social engagement’<sup>77</sup> were instituted and implemented. It is only from the 1920s onwards, with the growing influence of communist ideals, that these principles translated into anti-religious—and not only anti-superstition—sentiments.<sup>78</sup> In the meantime, the keyword was reform; and these reforms affected individuals, and laypeople in particular, in how they considered their own “religious” commitments and how it affected their everyday behaviour. Lived religion had to become exclusive and belief-based; it needed to foster certain identifiable types of morality and modes of conduct. Religion was interiorised and individualised to a new extent. The effects were also massive on the organisational level, since Buddhism, Taoism, and Islam had to start representing themselves as ‘distinct religious institutions, independent and disconnected from the local cults of village society.’<sup>79</sup> For the first time in history, they had to organise into national associations, centralised and bureaucratised, in order to represent themselves to the state. This was certainly quite a feat since these religions had heretofore operated as

independent clerics in the service of local cults, temples, and mosques, to which they provided salvation techniques, rituals, and religious specialists trained to take over all sorts of clerical work (temple management, fundraising, writing history and other kinds of texts, and so on). And with the exception of Islam and some salvationist groups, they did not have a membership of declared adherents.<sup>80</sup>

The processes that ensued produced a fair amount of chaos, as national religious associations mushroomed across the land and competed among

themselves to be recognised by both their constituents and the state. In the end though, the ‘association as an institutional form thus found a place in the religious landscape.’<sup>81</sup> If Western Christianity provided the normative model for what should constitute “religion”, the modern bureaucratic state provided the model for the new organisational constitution of religious associations and institutions. The latter turned to the fields of education and charity on the Christian mission model. Following the same model, they ended up looking alike, and all saw a ‘staggering expansion’ of the number of clerics to run them—just like the reorganisation of the state in the first decade of the twentieth century had involved the explosion of the number of state agents. Central to all of these religious organisations was their relationship to the state. Each proclaimed the new dogma of the “separation of church and state”, yet wanted to develop a special relationship with the latter. Together, they inaugurated the ‘bureaucratic control of religion’: The ‘assimilation of political ideology into the religious discourse, anti-ritual rhetoric, and attempts at a national unification of each religion.’<sup>82</sup> In the end, they contributed ‘to the unification of China itself’<sup>83</sup> and the construction and production of the modern Chinese nation-state, presenting themselves as its ‘natural ally’ and ‘moral arm.’<sup>84</sup>

Buddhism, itself an imported tradition in China (it spread in the second century CE), became the most involved with the Christian model and the most successful in converting itself into a presentable, dignified, and modern *zongjiao*. Its organisational structure was far from being centralised, but it did have a bureaucratic base to work with which could coordinate its various strands. Buddhism nevertheless went through a profound reform movement that began in the last years of the Qing dynasty. One of the main changes implied moving away from being specialised in funerary rites and putting forward a textual legacy. Influential reformers wanted Buddhism to become essentially speculative and philosophical, doctrinal, spiritual, and text-based rather than continuing as the ‘temple-based Buddhism of clerics providing ritual services.’<sup>85</sup> Voices successfully pleaded for a socially engaged, ethical, and humanist Buddhism, and a general alignment with the Protestant model. Yet the Christian reshaping of Buddhism also occurred through the action of more conservative-minded monastic leaders, and the shift to texts and doctrines actually developed transnationally, across the whole of Asia. Radical reform was indeed “in the air.”

Things were more difficult for Taoism, which was even more diffuse, decentralised, and bound to localism. Two clerical orders emerged as rivals for national representation, and arguments were put forth to insist on Taoism being the most ancient and “natural” religion of China, and therefore a potential “national religion” (*guojiao*). Reformers implemented or planned to implement all of the characteristics of a Christian-modelled *zongjiao*: highly hierarchical national organisation, hierarchical local congregations, heavy de-ritualisation, legitimation as the moral and spiritual arm of the state, reconfiguration as a form of individual quest for transcendence and

self-cultivation, plans to introduce a sober Sunday “prayer service”, open doors to laity and “believers”, elaboration of a non-superstitious and science-compatible brand of religiosity, codification within a national curriculum of core doctrinal precepts, setting up of charity and social service programs, and so on. The aim was evidently to prove that Taoism deserved to be admitted in the select club of “world religions”. Overall, though, many of these projects (like Sunday service) did not materialise, or only partly. Taoist reformers were second to Buddhists in terms of zeal, but the very nature and make-up of Taoism made for more resistance.<sup>86</sup> This would have notable effects on the capacity of Taoist orders to impose themselves in the decades to come and counter accusations of superstition.

Taoists did meet Buddhists with respect to one important characteristic: The intimate relationship between nationalisation and universalisation. Indeed, to be modernity-compatible and therefore rational and scientific meant to be universal, a process that was also central to religious developments in India. Incidentally, the emergence of *national* associations went hand in hand with their *international* enmeshing and the development of proselytising (“evangelising”) missions and confessional representations abroad.

Having lost its status as ‘the official doctrine of the defunct imperial regime,’<sup>87</sup> the task of reforming Confucianism was even ‘more difficult than reinventing Buddhism and Taoism.’<sup>88</sup> Nevertheless, many Confucians wanted to seize the present as an opportunity. They organised national associations, launched confessional publications, suppressed rituals and celebrations devoted to other saints than Confucius, and shifted the focus from liturgy to text. By modelling Confucianism on the Christian model, Confucian elites and some political leaders strove as best they could to ‘prove that Confucianism is a religion: like Christianity, it had ceremonial vestments, a canon, rules, a liturgy, a theology featuring a single god and the immortality of the soul, a doctrine on retribution, schools, temples, and holy sites.’<sup>89</sup> In the end, though, Confucianism succeeded in being recognised (for a time) in Indonesia but not China, mainly due to ‘the political context rather than to inherent defects.’<sup>90</sup> Confucianism survived in the longer run by infusing Redemptive Societies (*cf. infra*) as well as political and intellectual currents—but as a “philosophy” and an “ethical system” rather than a “religion”. Even Max Weber was fooled.<sup>91</sup>

Finally, Islam went through similar processes. Officially recognised as an acceptable religion in imperial times and present essentially as the majority of non-Han minorities in peripheral regions, Islam had to grow the organisational control it lacked until then. Here, modernising influences came from the Middle East and the Muslim Brotherhood especially (see Chapter 2), whose avatar in China was the Muslim Association for Progress. Canonical texts were translated into Chinese, publications were founded, Islam was intellectualised and rationalised, and ‘frugality, hygiene, and nationalism’<sup>92</sup> were promoted as core values. As Goossaert and Palmer explain: ‘The most influential reformer of the Republican period, Ma Wanfu (1853–1934),

studied in Arabia between 1888 and 1892, and on his return decided to introduce a text-based brand of reformed Islam in China that was opposed to particularistic and localist Sufi affiliations.<sup>93</sup>

Islamic revivalism in the early Republican period fastened together territory, ethnicity, and religion as the bulwarks of collective identity. Sun Yat-sen imagined China as being constituted of five major ethnic groups, represented as different coloured horizontal stripes on the 1912 Republican flag: the majority Han (red), the Manchus (yellow), the Mongols (blue), the Hui (white), and the Tibetans (Black). In this scheme (notice how the Chinese nation was multi-ethnic and inclusive), a defining feature of the Hui (today's Uyghurs) was that they were Muslim, just as the Tibetans were Buddhist. In non-Han regions, religion became a pillar of social regulation for the central state. Muslim modernists seized the opportunity, adopted the idea, and turned Islam into an essential piece in the construction of the regional and central state: the Muslim citizen. The fact that the same general trends for reform as for Buddhism and Taoism came in this case from the Middle East (and therefore indirect Christian influence) shows the power of Western colonial secular ideals and their capacity to penetrate and be indigenised in the most remote areas, transforming religion within Nation-State regime parameters as a constitutive part of nation-state building and modernisation.

### Inventing Secularity

As important as the changes listed above may have been, they only tell a fraction of the story. The Christian model did more than purify “proper religion” from superstition. It closed “religion” (*zongjiao*) upon itself, in a well-differentiated, institutionalised, and highly regulated “social sphere”. This implied another process of purification that aimed to separate what now belonged to the sphere of religion from what was not—or no longer—religion:

the Christian and the secular are two sides of the same coin: it is “Christian” because it is based on the notion of a church separate from and independent of other social institutions, and at the same time “secular” because it involves the state and other social institutions asserting their independence vis-à-vis the church—a line of contention and accommodation is traced between religion and nonreligion, then, that was inconceivable in the imperial Chinese system.<sup>94</sup>

Anti-superstition campaigns were insufficient for sifting all of the elements of Chinese tradition with the *zongjiao/mixin* divide alone. Whole landmasses of practices needed to be sorted and reformed that did not fit this simple divide, including Chinese medicine, meditation, and martial arts, in order for them to be integrated in the nation-building project.

Chinese medicine “provides an excellent case of a new split in Chinese traditional culture, between elements that could be recast as “cultural treasures”

compatible with science, and “superstitions” that were to be cleared away.<sup>95</sup> In the Qing dynasty, Chinese medicine was neither a unified system nor was it regulated by the state, which left health issues to the local gentry. Chinese medicine was, unsurprisingly, an extraordinarily diverse array of service providers which included ‘temple cults, Buddhist and Taoist diviners, spirit mediums, exorcists, charismatic healers, salvationist groups, and herbalists’, as well as a small class of classical texts-based ‘literati doctors.’<sup>96</sup> It was based on Chinese cosmology and the dual forces of *yin* and *yang*, ‘whose continuous interaction lies behind all natural phenomena, including the constitution and functioning of the human body’, along with other ‘naturalistic ideas about the composition and working of the universe.’<sup>97</sup>

In the middle of the nineteenth century, leading voices among the Chinese elite ‘considered Western science irrelevant and dangerous to that quintessence of civilization embodied in the traditional culture of the Middle Kingdom.’<sup>98</sup> There were therefore no reasons to abandon or even reform areas such as education and public health along Western, modern lines. Half a century later, however, this position had gone from hegemonic to minority, as the new leaders recognized the necessity for a Western-inspired cultural revolution’, including in medicine.

Chinese elites looked at Japan here again, especially after the defeat of China in the 1895 Sino-Japanese war. ‘One notable feature of Japan’s rapid modernization had been the state’s endorsement of Western medicine and restriction of traditional Japanese medicine’, which was based on Chinese medicine, ‘through licensing laws enacted in 1875.’<sup>99</sup> Chinese elites took notice, and traditional medicine became a subject of debate and polemic. The military defeats and backwardness with respect to “progress” were thought to be caused in part by the ‘weak bodies and poor health’ of the Chinese.<sup>100</sup> Meanwhile, the development of Western-style medical institutions was a crucial issue for many reformers ‘in their visions of a new state.’<sup>101</sup> By the foundation of the republic in 1912, many voices called for the rejection of traditional medicine altogether, and it was ‘excluded from the new education system established’<sup>102</sup> that year. Chinese medicine became identified with ‘everything that was backward, despicable, and superstitious’<sup>103</sup> in Chinese culture, particularly for those who had been educated by the Christian missions and the Western-style educational system.

In 1929, ‘the KMT government’s Ministries of Education and Health moved to formally outlaw traditional medicine.’<sup>104</sup> This was the last straw that sparked practitioners to organise themselves within nationwide associations and establish scientific protocols, academic journals, and standard training in schools and modern-style clinics. A national federation managed to thwart the forbidding law by calling on the public to save the “national medicine”, with some success. Traditional medicine found itself at the centre of anxieties about the retention of a measure of ‘national cultural continuity’ amidst calls for radical cultural change. It was also identified by those arguing the need to construct a civilisational alternative that would be both

modern and distinctively Chinese.<sup>105</sup> Traditional medicine was to be made acceptable through its re-inscription within the new cardinal values of science, progress, and nationalism.

In the end, then, nationalism (and a clear dose of sheer pragmatism) saved Chinese traditional medicine, which ‘was reformulated as part of China’s “national essence”, a priceless gem which, along with calligraphy and art, should be proudly preserved by any self-respecting countryman.’<sup>106</sup> Traditional medicine was henceforth presented as being complementary to Western medicine, but not without substantial changes:

“National medicine” was thus to be “scientized” (*kexuehua*), with the goal of eliminating mystical and superstitious accretions, reformulating or reinterpreting classical medical theory in a manner compatible with science, and conducting laboratory research on the Chinese materia medica.<sup>107</sup>

“Traditional medicine” came out of this secularising process not-so-traditional anymore. It was standardised, regulated by national organisations and the state and submitted to scientific protocols, publications, conferences, and experiments. Its practitioners were professionalised and secularised. Chinese medicine became sharply differentiated and distanced from any “religious” connotation. Its cosmological foundations were maintained—the rapport between the cosmos and the body, the energetic principle of *qi*, the unity of mind and body, as well as its underlying monism—but draped in the new robes and the new language of rationality and science. Indeed, the imperative to conform to “science” and accept what is “scientific” was profoundly ideological—the pull of scientism—from the May Fourth movement onwards, and this was a major force that was summoned to distinguish between superstition, religion, and ‘worthy and therefore secular’ traditions.<sup>108</sup> By “scientism”, I mean ‘the use of science and scientific authority in the “culture wars” of modernity.’<sup>109</sup> As Lagerwey writes: ‘The aim of this ideological use of science is to push traditional religions out of the public sphere of “objective truth” into the private sphere of “subjectivity” and “mere opinion”.’<sup>110</sup>

‘Another form of traditional culture to be nationalized in the Republican period was the martial arts.’<sup>111</sup> The term “martial arts” itself is a product of this—once again profound—transformation. Innumerable traditions of fighting skills were practiced in China, especially in the countryside, namely as forms of militia to protect against all sorts of dangers, from bandits to soldiers. Local martial arts associations were located in the temples, and the same was true for mosques in Muslim regions. The youth were recruited and trained by the temples as forms of self-cultivation. These techniques, especially the more refined ones, ‘were often steeped in religious mythology and cosmology, such as the Buddhist Shaolin tradition or the Yang-style *taijiquan* [...], and *baguazhang*, that came to be associated with Taoist saints and holy sites.’<sup>112</sup> Some martial arts traditions did not emphasise connections

to Buddhism or Taoism, others did, and others still ‘involved the use of spirit possession, talismans, and invulnerability rites.’<sup>113</sup> Yet the whole was immensely popular, ‘as testified for instance by the vogue of martial arts novels that have not abated ever since the early nineteenth century.’<sup>114</sup>

Martial arts were intimately bound to various waves of religion-fuelled and millenarian rebellions and upheavals that shook China in the last centuries. They were also part of the traditional imperial examination system, which was abolished in 1901. China turned to training in Western sports and physical education, yet martial arts, like traditional medicine, was revived by successfully associating them with the “national essence”. Again, the revival depended on a profound remodelling, starting with national organisations. Martial arts were repackaged as modern and scientific. They were standardised into teachable series of postures, simplified so as to be teachable to the masses, and secrecy was sold out to didactic manuals. In addition, “superstitious” elements and references to the supernatural were evinced. Techniques such as “spirit fists” and “divine swords” were ‘expurgated from the repertoire.’<sup>115</sup> Magic, occultism, and mysticism were ‘replaced by science—a science that would restore the original purity of the national essence.’<sup>116</sup>

The KMT favoured the development of modern-style martial arts, and encouraged the Pure Martial Association to present itself as both nationalistic and the purveyor of a ‘new universalistic value system [...] which [...] combined Confucian self-control, Buddhist equality, and Christian brotherhood, bringing health, wisdom, and morality to its practitioners.’<sup>117</sup> The association developed as a sort of YMCA, with branches across China and Southeast Asia. The religious dimensions were downplayed of course, made into a “philosophical” background, and martial arts competitions were organised on a national level, alongside other “sports”, such as ping pong, roller skating, and basketball. In order to be salvaged, martial arts needed to be purified from superstition and ‘fused into a single body, a unified system for a unified nation.’<sup>118</sup> Hence, the wild array of traditional religion-infused practices was transformed into sports under the new label “martial arts”.

There is nothing less “religious”, from a Christian and Western perspective, than combat techniques. Yet this is of course an ethnocentric appreciation, and “sports”-like practices have been essential to many religious systems across the world. Think only of the Olympic games of Ancient Greek or the Meso-American ritual ball games. In China, the religious dimension of martial arts was in many cases foundational, and therefore it is impossible to argue that the secularisation of martial arts into sports amounts to some kind of “natural” purification or evolution of essentially purely physical and non-religious practices. Such an argument rests on an unacceptable naturalisation of Western Christianity as the standard for religion.<sup>119</sup>

Self-cultivation and meditative practices constitute another example of repackaging and reformatting. These techniques were ‘central to spiritual disciplines of Taoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism,’<sup>120</sup> and were disseminated by redemptive societies (see below). As with the other examples discussed

here, important voices called for the secularisation and institutionalisation of these practices ‘along modern lines.’<sup>121</sup> This occurred through the action of practitioners like Jiang Weiqiao (1873–1958) and Chen Yingning (1880–1969), who criticised the tradition of secret transmission and discipleship, the esoteric language of the treatises, and the emphasis on mysticism rather than practical efficacy. Such actors worked to standardise, disseminate, make accessible, vernacularise, popularise, and purify self-cultivation techniques and the practice of “quiet sitting” (meditation), while reformulating them in science-compatible terms. Institutes were founded, organisations set-up, and publications were disseminated throughout China. These practices too were legitimated as being both part of the Chinese essence *and* compatible with science, rationality, and modernity. Developments were partial during the Republican period, but the direction was clear.

### Redemptive Societies: The Lives and Times of “In-Between”

Periods of tremendous social change like the first half of the twentieth century in China can produce a manifold of reactions, and one of these goes by the name of “redemptive societies”. While they constitute a very important phenomenon amidst the many transformations of religion that happened over this period, interest in their study is very recent. The name “redemptive societies” itself was coined only twenty years ago, in 2001, by Prasenjit Duara,<sup>122</sup> who brought attention to these groups and their religious dimension and signification. Referred to by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) as ‘reactionary sects and secret societies’ (*fandong huidaomen*), they were cast as ‘enemies of the state who use pseudo-religion to camouflage their political intentions’, and ‘con artists who manipulate the ignorant masses with feudal nonsense about healing powers and salvation in paradise.’<sup>123</sup> This view of redemptive societies as “heterodox cults” remains dominant in China and even in Taiwan, where the most famous of these, the Yiguandao (the Way of Pervasive Unity), claims over a million members.

David Ownby defines a redemptive society as a ‘charismatic spirit writing cult, rebellious heterodox sect, philanthropic organisation, middle-brow syncretist new religion, vehicle for populist Confucian renewal, and force for the preservation of traditional Chinese culture in the diaspora.’<sup>124</sup> He links the eruption of redemptive societies to the specific context of the early twentieth century but also interprets them as a ‘particular iteration of the new religious movements that have punctuated Chinese history from at least the end of the Han dynasty’,<sup>125</sup>

In the confused political atmosphere of the early Republic, a wave of religious groups and spirit-writing societies which, under the Qing, would have been banned as [...] “heterodox” sects emerged from obscurity or formed themselves anew, openly expanding and even dominating the religious landscape in some cities and regions.<sup>126</sup>

As of 1912, many of these groups ‘founded national modern-style associations that registered with the state as religious, philanthropic, or public interest associations.’<sup>127</sup> They adopted state-style organisational modes: nationalised and bureaucratic, with regional branches. Membership was voluntary and leadership was charismatic, ‘based on personal magnetism [and] healing skills (*qigong* or other similar body technologies).’<sup>128</sup> Redemptive societies shared the diagnosis of the need for China to reform, especially with respect to morality. Yet they set themselves against the progressist May Fourth movement born out of the 1919 student protests and its radical rejection of traditional Chinese culture in general, and its religious culture in particular, including Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism. Redemptive societies therefore defended a form of cultural conservatism, blended with a modernisation of the Three Teachings, which they sought to unite in “philosophical” doctrines and liturgies that also included the two other recognised teachings, Christianity and Islam, in a bewildering variety of mixes. They also kneaded together different strands of Chinese religion that had been mostly separated until then, including spirit-writing (acting as mediums for spirits and gods), Confucianism, and the practices of lay salvationist groups that combine ‘meditation and inner alchemy, sutra recitation, vegetarianism, and millenarian proselytism.’<sup>129</sup> These groups emerged, disseminated, and dismantled in successive waves and at remarkable speed, answering desires for modern and universal forms of religion that were nonetheless grounded in Chinese tradition.

A list of some of the main redemptive societies to have sprouted during the 1912–1949 period is instructive of the social imaginary shared by these movements: the Zailijiao (Teaching of the Abiding Principle), Daode xueshe (Moral Studies Society), the Tongshanshe (Fellowship of Goodness), the Wushanshe (Society of Awakening to Goodness), later renamed the Jiushi xinjiaohui (New Religion to Save the World), the Wanguo daodehui (World Ethical Society), the Daoyuan (School of the Tao), the Xiantian dao (Way of Anterior Heaven) that became the Zhongguo sanjiao (General Association of the Sagely Way of the Three Teachings), the Jingshi puji fojiaohui (Buddhist Association for Universal Salvation), the Tiande shengjiao (Sagely Teachings of Heavenly Virtue), later registered as the Society for the Study of Religious Philosophy), the Yixin tandao longhua shengjiaohui (Holy Dragon Flower Assembly of the Heavenly Way of the One Heart), and the Zhengkong Cishanhui (True Emptiness Charity Society).<sup>130</sup>

While “proper religion” was being “churched” on the *zongjiao* model, redemptive societies represent an interesting case. Only a portion of them played up their religious dimension and attempted to be recognised as such by the state (a good number among these successfully), yet they all shared similar characteristics, starting with their modes of organisation. Whether presenting themselves as “religions” or not, they instituted themselves as churches on the Western model: hierarchical governmentality, ‘Sunday prayers and choirs, missions, journals, and even baptism in some cases,’<sup>131</sup> mixed with

incense burning, images of Taoist, Buddhist, and/or Confucian saints, as well as spirit writing sessions. To this, they added philanthropic activities on the Christian mission model in matters of education, charity, healthcare, and even the treatment of alcohol and opium dependency.

Spirit writing (*fúji*) was popular among the Qing literati and consisted of seeking practical and moral advice from the gods and spirits through what is called a planchette, which guides a stick that writes Chinese characters in sand or incense ashes contained in a rectangular box. It is therefore very similar to Western practices of spiritualism and the spiritist uses of the famous Ouija boards that are still sold as board games. This form of divination was used to prompt answers to questions of morality, and it ‘became the main source for the genre of morality books’<sup>132</sup> that was popular in China in the late nineteenth century. Within the context of redemptive societies, it was common to seek advice from the founders of the five recognised religions (Laozi, Confucius, Buddha, Jesus, and Mohammad), but also other famous figures such as Tolstoy or George Washington.<sup>133</sup>

Redemptive societies emerged in a context in which radical new borders were being drawn between the spheres of politics, science, religion, superstition, and the secular in general; they both exaggerated and contested some of these state-led reconfigurations. As Ownby writes,

In the broadest terms, redemptive societies filled many of the gaps created by the assault on traditional religions (both institutional and popular) and traditional culture. Chameleon-like, redemptive societies preached neo-traditional moral and spiritual values and offered the healing power of qigong and other body technologies, even as they presented themselves as ecumenical and modern, embracing major world religions and science. They marketed themselves variously as religions, charitable organizations, and/or social organizations, following the course of least resistance depending on the attitudes of the national or local political authorities where the societies found themselves. They sculpted their message to particular ecologies, and managed to appeal both to the urban, educated elite, and to the peasantry.<sup>134</sup>

Redemptive societies were relatively favoured during the 1912–1927 period known as the Beiyang regime. Things changed under the KMT after that, and some of the largest associations were quickly banned as “superstitious organisations” (*mixin jiguan*). The official reasons were mainly political, since many redemptive societies had been close to the warlord regimes, and they were accused of hiding political agendas behind religious and philanthropic screens. The effects of these bans were mitigated though, as some of the elites involved in them managed to have the central government backpedal. The repression of redemptive societies, in any case, never made it to becoming a priority. New associations continued to emerge throughout this period, and this is when Yiguandao emerged as the most important redemptive society in the country. The Japanese invasion of 1937 (Manchuria was conquered in

1931), meanwhile, put a halt to any effort to suppress redemptive societies. In fact, many redemptive societies found themselves at the centre of political conflict, as they were infiltrated by the KMT, the CCP, and the Japanese in their attempt to control territories or build up resistance. After the war, in 1945, redemptive societies like Yiguandao continued to expand in spite of KMT policies. The tide turned with the victory of the CCP over the KMT in 1949, as one of the first measures to be adopted by the new government was a mass campaign to stamp out “reactionary sects and secret societies.”<sup>135</sup> This campaign proceeded from police reports that counted 13 million followers, or 2% of the population (other estimates count over 18 million), which makes redemptive societies ‘the largest group of organized religious congregations in Republican China’, by far.<sup>136</sup>

Still, the importance of redemptive societies with respect to religion in China in the first half of the twentieth century exceeds their weight in numbers. ‘As recent research has made increasingly evident, the story of redemptive societies is crucial to understanding the modern development of each of China’s major religious traditions.’<sup>137</sup> They indeed appear as one of the major, or even *the* major vehicle by which Chinese traditional religion was propagated and reformatted during that period. This is true for the self-cultivation practices of Taoism, such as spirit-writing and “inner alchemy”, and also for Taoist texts. These societies similarly gave new life to Taoist cosmology, which was reformulated ‘using scientific terms.’<sup>138</sup> Redemptive societies thus played a larger role than the clerics of Quanzhen, ‘which only had a handful of disciples [...] in disseminating Daoist self-cultivation methods in Republican China.’<sup>139</sup>

The argument is even stronger as concerns Confucianism, whose literati had been expelled from their former employment and status. A consequence of the collapse of the former imperial structures was that up to 5 million traditionally educated literati were left without formal attachments. Many redemptive societies therefore retained a

strong Confucian identity, to which they added, however, a universalist tendency, honouring the founders of all major religions and advocating the realization, on a global scale, of the “Great Commonwealth” (*datong*) dreamt of in the Book of Rites, and elaborated on in the utopian mode by Kang Youwei and others.<sup>140</sup>

Hence, even as religion was being formatted on the *zongjiao* model and purified from “superstition”, some of the most important developments with respect to religion were occurring on the edges and outside of this model. Freed from some of the blinders of the churchd religion model, scholars of religion in China have made tremendous advances in the last two decades, among them reassessing the importance of redemptive societies. As Rebecca Nedostup argues, ‘Indeed, a strong argument can be made for redemptive societies as a major site of Chinese modernity—and a rare one that linked urban and rural developments.’<sup>141</sup>

### China under Communist Rule

For all of these processes and changes, for all of these laws and campaigns, reforms concerning religion in the Republican remained partial. In addition, there was a great discrepancy between urban and rural areas. While the former had seen intense crackdowns on many religious forms, anti-superstition discourses hardly penetrated the latter. Indeed, modern ideas and ideals had not yet reached some rural areas, and the repression of religion depended a lot on the zeal of local elites and regional administrations.<sup>142</sup>

The victory of the communists over the Republican government of the KMT did not modify the trajectory with respect to the regulation and transformation of religion as much as it intensified and radicalised it. This is not so surprising when one considers that both the KMT and the CCP were the offspring of the radical May Fourth Movement, which projected a *tabula rasa* of anything “old” and “traditional”. It also follows communism’s constitutive dismissal of religion as the “opium of the people”. The coming to power of the CCP mostly shifted the gears of repression from ‘disruptive’ to ‘wholesale destruction’.<sup>143</sup> At the time of the foundation of the People’s Republic of China, the main task at hand was still to construct a modern nation-state. The KMT had gone a long way along this road, but the state was still far from branching out to every rural and remote area. While the CCP was born as an urban, elite movement, Mao had managed to transform it into ‘a rural grassroots movement’<sup>144</sup> after the 1927 collapse of its objective alliance with the KMT. The genius of Mao had been to lead the transformation of the CCP from being an antenna of the Soviet party in Russia to being a homegrown political and cultural movement. On the theoretical level, Mao’s main achievement had been to replace the Marxist proletariat and working class with the Chinese peasant in the official ideology. Indeed, China was still a massively peasant country, with only inchoative urbanisation and industrialisation—and hence no proletariat.

As we have seen, one of the principal means by which the modern state could construct itself was the crackdown and reform of religion. This had the effect of identifying religion, especially folk or popular religion, as a means of resistance to modernisation and the coextensive ‘dramatic extension of the nation-state into rural areas that were heretofore largely self-governed.’<sup>145</sup> The state seized temples, which were at the centre not only of religion but also of village society and local government. It built roads, telephone lines, railroads, schools, post offices, and administrative buildings. Destroying temples was the most radical means of crushing and replacing the locus of local power. As a consequence, and all through the Republican era, revolts erupted, involving the local militias that were tied to these temples, as well as to some Buddhist and Taoist ones. Religion in China was anything but individual choice and belief: It was the means by which local identities and memories were perpetuated, something which the outreach of the homogenising state willingly put into peril.

The success of Mao's CCP depended on its capacity to put an end to this cultural and social 'civil war' by embarking China 'on one of the largest experiments in human history to bring forth a total transformation to Chinese politics, economy, and society.'<sup>146</sup> Calling onto peasant nationalism against "corrupt" KMT "urban elites", the 'CCP quickly established a highly centralized political system by placing much emphasis on organizational and ideological control.'<sup>147</sup> By making the peasantry the new "Subject of History", Mao enabled modern emancipatory ideals to penetrate deep into rural society. While the Republican government of the KMT did not reach down lower than the county level, the 'CCP on the other hand was able to penetrate every corner of society and dominate social forces through various mechanisms.'<sup>148</sup> One of these was the *xitong* division of social spheres as 'a product and a means of the establishment of the state.'<sup>149</sup> This system allowed for Party control of the government and enabled the division of society into 'different functional spheres supervised and controlled by the corresponding functional Party organs and cadres,'<sup>150</sup> including the Religious Affairs Bureau (RAB). Another mechanism was the household registration (*hukou*) system, which was 'used to control population movement and bind people to their place of birth and work. Without a household registration booklet, one could not obtain food, clothing, housing, employment, schooling for children, marry, or enlist in the army.'<sup>151</sup> Linked to the *hukou* was the work unit (*danwei*) system, which functioned as a direct relay between the Party and individual citizens. The *danwei* system provided employment, economic and social security, housing, medical care, pensions, and a 'wide range of subsidies for everything from transportation to nutrition.'<sup>152</sup> It also symmetrically acted as a means of ideological education and disciplining. Once in place, this mode of governmentality had enormous potential for mobilisation, disciplining, and state action. 'For the first time in Chinese history, the party-state was able to exert political control vertically from the center all the way down to the village, the family, and the individual.'<sup>153</sup>

These features provide a key for understanding the efficacy of the CCP's regulation of religion. It started as early as 1949 with the ruthless campaign against redemptive societies, designated as "feudal secret societies" (*fengjian huidao*), which were accused of leading counterrevolutionary activities. Another target were the temple cults, which found themselves at the centre of the land reforms and collectivisation policies which were launched by the CCP immediately after taking power. Land was transferred to the landless peasants from the former landlords, which were often the local elite and lineage leaders. The CCP attacked these "class enemies" more than the temples themselves, successfully cutting down on public ritual activities. The main festivals were secularised in the aftermath, turned into spectacles and political processions, images of saints and gods in kitchens were forbidden, replaced by revolutionary slogans, and the companies that produced incense and paper money were converted into the production of other essentials of

a modern, non-superstitious life, like toilet paper.<sup>154</sup> Ancestor worship and other rituals, meanwhile, were transferred to the domestic and private sphere, on a much-reduced scale.

For the CCP, redemptive societies and temple cults, which ‘together structured the religious life of the vast majority of Chinese,’<sup>155</sup> did not count as religion. Yet, the practical experience of the CCP in the decades prior to taking power had smoothed out the edges of its doctrinal opposition to religion. The Party recognised that it could not do away with religion entirely, and that it could be used to legitimate the regime, especially in minority regions. It officially restated the 1912 principle of freedom of religious belief, and granted recognition to the corporatist institutions of Buddhism, Islam, Protestantism, Roman Catholicism, and Taoism (through the Quanzhen monastic clergy). In need of alliances, the CCP’s ‘strategy was to reinforce friendly elements within each religious community’, which would then enable the purge of ‘uncooperative religious leaders and networks.’<sup>156</sup> Mao’s right arm and prime minister of the PRC, Zhou Enlai, was particularly active in integrating “‘patriotic” religious associations loyal to the CCP.<sup>157</sup> He put an end to the plethora of Republican-era associations by channelling them into single, loyal, national associations, one for each recognised religion. ‘These associations, though nominally independent of the government, were in fact under the authority of the Religious Affairs Bureau (RAB) of the State Council, established in 1954.’<sup>158</sup> Guided by a mission officially aiming to protect individual freedom of religion, the RAB’s activities also functioned ‘to conduct frequent political indoctrination sessions for religious leaders and communities through lectures and study groups.’<sup>159</sup> In 1951, the majority of Buddhist and Taoist temples were taken over by the state, and all liturgic and monastic activities were condensed into one temple per city.

The Great Leap Forward of 1958–1961 radicalised the state’s policies with respect to religion and religious groups. Anti-rightist campaigns purged a number of religious leaders and clergy all across the country and across denominations. This is when ties between the Chinese Catholic church and the Vatican were cut, following the CCP’s hold on the process of electing bishops. In 1959, fearing a plot to arrest him, the Dalai Lama and his entourage fled to India to establish a government-in-exile. The Great Leap Forward thus ‘led to most religious activity coming to an end.’<sup>160</sup> Most of the temples, associations, and churches that were left were ‘empty shells, arenas for political struggles like so many other sectors in Chinese society.’<sup>161</sup> Religious issues were recast as issues of class struggle or class consciousness.

Yet the fact that there remained campaigns to eliminate religion attests to the fact that they were partly unsuccessful. Goossaert and Palmer note how the famines caused by the Great Leap Forward (20–40 million dead)

were being interpreted among the rural populace as divine retribution for failing to worship the gods and Buddhas in recent years, and there was widespread concern that, with temples destroyed and incense unavailable, nothing could be done to restore the cosmic balance.<sup>162</sup>

The communist regime similarly radicalised the “secularising” processes mentioned earlier, with some inflections. This was the case with traditional medicine, which found a new legitimation under the CCP. While the KMT had juggled with the idea of outright banning traditional medicine, the communists’ experience in the countryside during the Long March (1934–1935) and the years of conflict with the KMT and the Japanese—when traditional medicine had been called to the rescue when modern medical resources had been insufficient, that is often—had convinced them of the importance of traditional doctors for popular acceptance and mass mobilisation across rural areas. Combined with the fact that ‘Western-style medical institutions were politically tainted by their association with imperialist bourgeois culture,’<sup>163</sup> the CCP adopted a more pragmatic approach with respect to the “old medicine”. Betting on the fact that traditional doctors were closer to the people, the CCP chose to “help them to reform” in tune with a “scientific orientation”, hoping for a gradual transition.<sup>164</sup> Traditional Chinese medicine finally found political legitimation and was ‘organized as a scientific-style medical institution, and a standardized theoretical system was elaborated, compatible with Marxist philosophy and dialectical materialism.’<sup>165</sup> Discipleship was discarded in favour of specialised medical units and research societies. New hospitals were built that housed modern and traditional doctors, working side by side.

Meanwhile, as China drifted away from the post-Stalinist Soviet Union at the end of the 1950s, the CCP found renewed urgency in exalting a nationalist sentiment. The integration of traditional medicine within a scientific orientation also served to construct the “national essence” which, for all its tabula rasa, the CCP sought to preserve (or be seen as preserving). Traditional medicine was integrated alongside other “traditions”, such as martial arts and self-cultivation techniques. The PRC pursued Republican policies with respect to the nationalisation, standardisation, secularisation, and institutionalisation of martial arts and their repackaging as “sports”. As in other domains, the CCP did exert pressure on martial arts associations in order to purge them of “reactionary” elements, before setting new standardised formats for teaching and competition, before integrating them in the ‘physical education curriculum for primary and secondary schools.’<sup>166</sup>

A similar scenario unravelled with body techniques and sitting meditation, for which achievements during the Republican period had been haphazard. Under the communist regime, and for the first time, a variety of ‘self-cultivation practices were systematically integrated into a single category’<sup>167</sup>—*qigong*—, secularised, and institutionalised. The term *qigong* appeared for the first time in a Taoist text of the Tang Dynasty (618–910 CE) with the meaning “breathing method”. In 1949, it became ‘a general and autonomous category, universally used in medical, scientific, and popular discourse, and encompassing all the traditional techniques of breathing, meditation, visualisation, and gymnastics.’<sup>168</sup> The techniques assembled under *qigong* were known and practiced before 1949, but they were tied to various contexts

such as monasteries, healer lineages, sectarian groups, literati milieux, and martial arts traditions. During the Republican era, these practices and techniques had begun to be purified from esoteric language and repackaged in that of psychology, physiology, and physics. Under the CCP, *qigong* became ‘part of a larger project of state expansion.’<sup>169</sup>

Qigong is a remarkable example of an “invented tradition” meant to attach a set of new values to practices that imply continuity with the past,<sup>170</sup> with the objective of constructing a “Chinese essence”. Qigong was rapidly integrated into the medical system and in hospitals, ‘alongside herbalism, acupuncture, and massage.’<sup>171</sup> It spread quickly, and hundreds of scientific articles were published and conferences were held, with the benediction of the state. *Qi* and *yin/yang* were described in physical and chemical terms. ‘Thus institutionalized and modernized, *qigong*, together with the other disciplines of Chinese medicine, could be marshalled to serve the health and policy needs of the new state,<sup>172</sup> while feeding into the nation’s identity as a symbol of timeless Chinese civilisation—the “national essence”.

The Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) finished off whatever “religion” was left. Communists renewed with a Marxist hard line with respect to religion. Confucius’ temple was destroyed by students, and all temple activity was outlawed. Religion

was considered as one of the “four olds” (*sijiu*) (old beliefs, customs, traditions, and thought) that needed to be eliminated to make way for communism. Destruction and confiscation of religious sites was widespread, visible religious activity ceased, clergy were forced to laicize, and the Bureau of Religious Affairs and religious associations were shut down.<sup>173</sup>

Faced with repression, religion went underground. This is when Christians started the house church movement, which developed the practice of meetings in small groups in private settings, so as to go unseen. The same goes for the myriad of practices of popular religion that had survived the anti-superstition campaigns. Meanwhile, most of the mosques, temples, and monasteries still in activity were forced to close.<sup>174</sup> ‘Images of Buddha, even those in the National Museum, were destroyed or simply disappeared. Scholarly writing about religious history ceased; it was as if the religion of China had never existed.’<sup>175</sup>

I find it worthy to quote a Chinese scholar on ‘religion under socialism in China’ as a token of the official ideology of the CCP with respect to religion, in a phrasing that captures the spirit of the Cultural Revolution and therefore gives us a glimpse of the positive, emancipatory, and utopian significations that accompanied the crackdown on religion:

In old China, imperialists and the feudal ruling class used religion, on the one hand, as a spiritual tool to enslave the people; on the other hand, the masses, pressed down by the three great mountains, were

unable to free themselves from their burden of suffering, so they turned to religion for spiritual sustenance. Thus the main reasons for religious thinking were negativism, escapism, and pessimism. Religion wants people to believe that the world is full of suffering, man is vicious, and “salvation” can be found only by religious faith; that human life is illusory, uncertain, and filled with pain, and only “paradise” or the “Buddhist heaven” can give lasting “happiness.” Humankind should endure all sufferings in the real world while pursuing “happiness” and “blessings” in the future.<sup>176</sup>

Communism, and the CCP, on the contrary, would bring happiness and salvation in a not-too-far-away here and now, if people were willing to brace for it. Secularism can be a powerful and enchanted vehicle for emancipatory politics.

### **The Mao Cult: Continuity More than Novelty**

This secularist utopianism does not lead us as far away from religion as one would think. The salvation proposed by religions could only be unearthed if it was replaced by a soteriology that was at least as powerful, although unmistakably modern.

Let us rewind back to the Nanjing regime of the KMT. Modernists and Republicans were well aware that ridding the country of superstition could not simply mean creating a ‘vacuum in which people would gradually discover new and better customs on their own.’<sup>177</sup> They saw it necessary to actively ‘provide a new regime of training and habit to build a nation and its constituent citizens.’<sup>178</sup> Calls grew increasingly insistent during the 1930s for the reform of family rites and the crafting of ‘patriotic ceremonies to unify the Chinese people.’<sup>179</sup> The shift from old-world devotions to the new ones of nationalism implied a ceremonial of their own. Introducing scientific rationalism and discrediting superstitions did not suffice, since what was destroyed with the religion of old was not just irrational fervour and unscrupulous behaviour, but rather ties to community, lineage, local power structures, pleasure, and a place in the cosmos.<sup>180</sup>

As Rebecca Nedostup explains, this is precisely why the KMT launched what she calls a ‘ritual competition’<sup>181</sup> with local society.

The party pursued this by its attempts to replace the lunar and cyclical calendars with a solar-based “national” one, to ban temple festivals and thus rewrite local spatial and ritual arrangements, to substitute modern public cemeteries and streamlined funeral ceremonies for previous end-of-life ritual, and to create a system of national commemoration by scripting secularized national ceremonial based on revolutionary martyrs, Sun Yat-sen, and a panoply of sanitized heroes from China’s past.<sup>182</sup>

Nedostup writes that ‘the Nationalists saw this competition as a zero-sum game.’<sup>183</sup> Superstition could only be vanquished if a substitute set of symbols and ceremonies was successfully adopted and made into the new habits for citizens of a nation-state. This process involved dissensions regarding the symbols and signification of the new ceremonial, and which “secular” saints were to be sanctified in the national pantheon. Not to mention disputes over what should be done with Confucius—the man, if not the -ism. As Nedostup writes, ‘the real problem for the KMT was the crossing of the boundary between religious and secular.’<sup>184</sup> The construction of Sun Yat-sen’s mausoleum in 1928—and the panic that ensued as rumours that ‘sorcerers were collecting souls in medicine bottles’<sup>185</sup> spread like wildfire—was such a moment. What appears with hindsight is the following paradox. Fuelled by High Modernist ideals, the Nationalists wished to ‘create a secular government stripped of rituals linking sovereignty to cosmic authority,’<sup>186</sup> and the means to achieve this was to purify the religion of superstition and draw a sharp distinction between “the religious” and “the secular”. Yet, at the same time, this artifice could only hold if it was itself grafted onto a brand new ‘system of practices and representations relative to new sacred values’, namely the nation, and hinged on the mythology of Progress and the telos of a collective and this-worldly soteriology.<sup>187</sup> As Nedostup argues, the premises of secular nationalism ‘were shaky at their very outset,’<sup>188</sup> to say the least. While there is little doubt about the at least partial success of the transformation of religion throughout the Republican period, the effective separation of politics and religion is much more complicated. The object was not to construct a secular state as much as to construct the state as the transcendent producer of society, and therefore with a built-in religious dimension of its own. In my view, the case of China in this respect is not special and exceptional as much as it is representative of the underlying logics of the implementation of the Nation-State regime across the world.

Under the KMT, the state assumed religion’s duties with the objective of producing a “good public.”<sup>189</sup> Here again, there is more continuity than discontinuity when we look at what happened under the CCP from 1949 onwards. For two decades before the communists toppled the nationalists, both offspring of the May Fourth Movement had opposed themselves not only politically, ideologically, and militarily, but also through their capacity to organise mass movements and collective rituals that were packed with utopianism, messianism, progressivism, scientism, self-cultivation, and even demonology.<sup>190</sup> The sinicisation of communism operated by Mao involved fomenting a web of grass-roots revolutionary movements that rested on peasant mobilisation. In order to gain the support of rural areas and ‘transforming the consciousness of the peasantry,’<sup>191</sup> the communists recycled the traditional arts and performances of folk religion by stripping them of many of their “superstitious” elements and “religious” content and reinventing them ‘as secularized [sic] instruments for the propagation of revolutionary culture.’<sup>192</sup> Ritual specialists and storytellers were hired as propagandists,

and guided into writing and performing glorious stories about a socialist future. Similarly, opera troupes, which were formerly linked to local temples and performed in temple festivals, were ‘trained to turn their repertoire into revolutionary propaganda.’<sup>193</sup>

These processes continued under Mao, only to reach their climax around 1964, on the eve of the Cultural Revolution. As Jiping Zuo observes:

Ironically, at the same time as it attempted to destroy traditional religious activities, the Chinese communist regime initiated and encouraged a new religion centered around Ma Ze-dong, chairman of the Chinese Communist Party and leader of the People’s Republic during the Cultural Revolution.<sup>194</sup>

I will come back to the question of how to best qualify this ‘new religion’. For now, let us start by recalling how the construction of a nation-state-bound alternative to traditional religion started even before the foundation of the first Chinese Republic, at the beginning of the twentieth century, before becoming policy during the reign of the KMT. Second, the cult of Mao was part of a much more elaborate system for which it was a culmination.

Enlightenment Modernity was a two-fold utopian project: the construction of a New Society, no longer based on the theological foundations of Christianity, and a New Man, freed from the moral constraints of tradition and religion. This framework was imported into China and was essential to the High Modern Ideals professed by Chinese Modernists on all sides. These utopian projects became crystallised in the two major themes making up what Goossaert and Palmer call the new “political religiosity” of twentieth-century China: “collective eschatology” and “individual moral asceticism”.<sup>195</sup>

To create ‘a new kind of man [...], modern China required a new system of moral norms to order the relationships between citizens.’<sup>196</sup> Goossaert and Palmer capture it thus:

Traditional morality, with its focus on filial piety (*xiao*), was particularistic, rooted in filial obligations to kinship networks, which served as the model for personalistic loyalty to rulers (*zhong*). Society was constituted of overlapping spheres of reciprocal ties. The new model of the nation required universalistic standards to harmonize relationships between individuals who had no particularistic ties or loyalties, who were equal citizens in a homogenous collective body. Sun Yat-sen had famously stated, “Foreign observers say that Chinese are like a sheet of loose sand. Why? Simply because our people have shown loyalty to family and clan but not to the nation.”<sup>197</sup>

Contrary to other places in the world (Sub-Saharan Africa comes to mind, as well as places like Papua-New Guinea), the structures and characteristics of imperial China provided a rich material that could be summoned to carry

and perform the new Modern Ideals of national citizenship. ‘Buddhist, Taoist, and Confucian traditions of moral asceticism and self-cultivation’<sup>198</sup> found their way into the thinking of twentieth-century reformers and revolutionaries, including Mao Zedong himself. Reframed as techniques to reinforce the very modern conception of the power of the will, Chinese traditions of self-cultivation could be made to serve the grandiose project of transforming society away from traditionalism. Tied to traditional Chinese philosophy’s attacks on the vacuity of the ego, the modern principles of hygiene were applied to the minds of each individual. Through persistent self-cultivation and collective rituals of denunciation and criticism, one had to unabatedly perform class struggle *within oneself* in order to emancipate one’s mind and become an ideal citizen/modern subject. Self-cultivation served an ethics of self-sacrifice and the submission of the individual to the Party’s vision for collective aggrandisement. ‘In his struggle to acquire communist virtues, the Party member was to transcend the ego and become a selfless being.’<sup>199</sup> Building on centuries of tradition of self-cultivation, Mao’s regime was able to achieve a ‘high level of outward political conformity through the mutual monitoring and criticism of group members, without requiring the heavy apparatus of spying and violent repression which had characterized the USSR under Stalin.’<sup>200</sup>

Producing a New Man thereby served the coextensive project of building a New Society. A number of other collective rituals, in particular at the local level, contributed to extend the modernised ideal of self-cultivation into a national project.

The culmination of political religiosity occurred with the Mao cult, which was manufactured and promoted from 1959 onwards by the People’s Liberation Army under Lin Biao (1907-1971) as a means to reinforce Mao’s charismatic authority at a time when, following the disaster of the Great Leap, his own influence within the CCP was declining.<sup>201</sup>

The Mao cult was also engineered to produce and maintain mass mobilisations motivated by ‘a quasi-spiritual belief in the power of the human will and morality to transform society.’<sup>202</sup> It was of course based on the person of Mao, but also comprised the worship of revolutionary heroes and ‘the demonization of any individual suspected of lacking loyalty to Mao.’<sup>203</sup> This was based on a dualist and exclusive moral cosmology opposing Good and Evil, in rupture with the complementariness of *yin* and *yang*. Zuo mentions how Western scholars suggested that Mao was seen as a god, and reports his own experience of seeing city streets lined with banners claiming slogans like “Be ready to die in defense of Chairman Mao”. Songs to his honour were legion and taught to children at school, churning how the love for the “Red Sun” and “Great Steersman” was greater than the love for one’s parents. In a country with a multi-millennial tradition of filial worship, there is no doubt that repeated and magnified in collective rituals, slogans like this hit the nail on the

head. Indeed, the response of the masses was intense, to say the least. Pictures of Mao were everywhere, including in the homes, where the traditional icons, statues, and ancestor plates had been. Rather than bowing before images of the spirits of heaven and earth as in the traditional marriage ceremony, the bride and groom bowed to a picture of Chairman Mao.<sup>204</sup> Mao's writings were printed, distributed, and given the status of holy writings. His famous "Little Red Book" had the omnipresence of the Bible in Southern USA and was used like a charm and worn like an amulet. The house where Mao was born, the places he had stayed in, the Yanan Pagoda, in the city where the Communist Party set its headquarters from 1937 to 1949, and of course the Tian An-men Gate were all invested as holy places—both by the regime and by the people. The rewards for the zealous were this-worldly: social recognition and praise, opportunities for career advancement in the Party and the administration, but also the intangible rewards of self-sacrifice, and the invaluable feeling of contributing to the construction of an ideal society in which happiness and plentifulness would be shared by all.<sup>205</sup> Richard Madsen's study of political rituals in a Pearl River Delta village shows how the selfless service to the people as a whole encouraged by Maoism allowed the peasantry to translate and re-actualise traditional moral traditions, for example 'the idea that a good person was one treated the entire village like his big family.'<sup>206</sup>

### Political Ritual, Civil Religion, Political Religion?

How are we to understand this apparently paradoxical phenomenon, born from the detraditionalising and secularising of China? Is this politics? Ritual? Civil religion? Political religion? Religion? This question has boggled many scholars and ignited heated debates.

For Stephen Feuchtwang, 'The fourteen years of mass campaigns between 1964 and 1978 are remarkable for the intensity of political rituals that were of a new, congregational kind.'<sup>207</sup> For him, the appropriate term to designate the Mao cult is "political ritual" over anything "religious", even though 'ritual and religion are always close.'<sup>208</sup> For Jiping Zuo, on the other hand, the Mao cult provides a striking example of a "political religion". Having described various elements of the Mao cult, Zuo argues

All of this suggests that the elimination of traditional religion did not lead China to atheism. On the contrary, a new religion was created. In the eyes of the masses, there still existed a "supernatural" power. The "manna" proceeding from Mao prevented a man from believing himself to be the master of his own fate or that social progress could be achieved solely by human effort, as Marxism claims. The phrase *political religion* best conceptualizes this new system.<sup>209</sup>

Zuo argues that 'Maoist political religion is similar to the traditional religions of China in several respects,'<sup>210</sup> namely the way it provides legitimation for the

political system, the appearance and structure of its rituals and ceremonies, and the way it produces fanatic responses on the part of the masses. He makes an interesting argument against the concept of civil religion, as coined by Robert Bellah. ‘While civil religion limits its authority to political matters, political religion claims authority not only over political affairs but over all aspects of social life.’<sup>211</sup> While civil religion tends to build on and support the established church traditions in the country, political religion is ‘in bitter conflict’ with them and aims to supplant them, as in the Soviet Union under Stalin (see Chapter 3). Civil religion is more inclusive (American civil religion can expand to include not only Catholicism and a myriad of Protestant currents, but also Quakerism, Judaism, and eventually Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and even Indigenous religions), while political religion is exclusive and totalitarian.

Yet this “stating of the sacred,”<sup>212</sup> to paraphrase Michael Walsh’s book title, did not start with the Mao cult, far from it. Set in its historical context, the Mao cult is the culmination of a process of sacralisation of the nation-state that started at the end of the Qing dynasty. Incidentally, most of the elements of the Maoist political religion had been developed during the KMT Nanjing regime. I find Goossaert and Palmer’s take on this issue particularly interesting:

If the Cultural Revolution produced the most thorough destruction of all forms of religious life in Chinese and, perhaps, human history, it was far from being a secularizing movement. Rather, it represented the apotheosis of a parallel trend of political sacralization, which had roots in imperial Chinese political and religious culture, as well as in the utopian and apocalyptic dimensions of the modernist revolution.<sup>213</sup>

The Mao cult and, before and beyond it, the “political religion” of the modern Chinese nation-state, partly in continuity with pre-modern China since the imperial state exerted the functions of a Church, was penetrated with the exercise of rituals, and was in many respects a ‘religious state.’<sup>214</sup> Yet there is also an obvious discontinuity at work here, since the secularist nationalism that motivated both the KMT and the CCP was founded on a radical rejection of tradition and the project of a New Society and a New Man. Goossaert and Palmer call “political religiosity” this sacralisation of the nation and the state that culminated in the Cultural Revolution. Following these authors, the story of twentieth-century China can be understood as the—violent and radical<sup>215</sup>—replacement of one type of religion by another. In this respect, the grassroots approach of the CCP was more successful in the end than that of the KMT, from whose achievements it profited.<sup>216</sup>

Ninian Smart’s analysis of the Mao cult similarly points to a complex of continuity and discontinuity.

One reason why Marxism was the obvious choice for China was because it could function with the same assumptions as the religious

heritage of China, part of which had provided the ideological cement for a centralized system. The mandate of Heaven could stay, the People being the new god. [...] Maoism [had] to fulfil a function analogous to the old religious culture's function, and it [had] at the same time to reject the old.<sup>217</sup>

These conceptual quarrels are not entirely superfluous if one is reminded that concepts are precisely that: concepts. They do not exist “out there,” in the empirical world, as positivists imply. They exist as lenses through which to comprehend and even explain human matters. Each set of lenses provides certain insights, and blinds to others. A good theory or concept is neither true nor false, only good or bad, fruitful (heuristic) or not.

In this case, I find Feuchtwang's option particularly deceptive. By choosing to call the Mao cult a “political ritual”, the implication is that China was formerly religious but is now modern—and therefore political. It implies a mutation out of the “religious condition” through the forces of modernisation, and nods to macro-level theories of secularisation and disenchantment. Although Feuchtwang does not argue his position, one can guess that the fact that Mao is *deified* but not a *deity* weighs in on his decision process. However, Confucius was neither a deity, and ancestor worship provides a similar problem. As we have seen, it is most of Chinese traditional religion that causes an analytical problem for Western, Christian-centred approaches to religion such as that implied by Feuchtwang. In this sense, most of the religion of the Chinese imperial state should then be labelled political ritual rather than religion. Yet doesn't this contradict Feuchtwang's idea of political ritual as something specifically modern? In the end, calling the Mao cult and the state-commissioned ceremonies and symbols of the Cultural Revolution political rituals rests on a conception of religion that has no antecedent in China before the twentieth century, as a result of the massive action of the state and its nation-building mission. The argument, therefore, runs in circles, and acts to legitimise a highly ideological and profoundly Western-centric worldview of modernity as the ousting of religion. Here, the blinders are indeed blinding more than they are insightful.

A much more promising avenue is that of Goossaert and Palmer. Theirs is coherent with the perspective of Durkheim and Mauss, that is of religion as a macro-level system of symbolic representations and practices relative to sacralised concepts or objects.<sup>218</sup> In this respect, and contrary to the doxa that wrongly associates Durkheim with secularisation, every human society sacralises, including modern ones. In such a frame, one never ousts religion. What is thrown out the door comes back through the window. Processes of desacralisation can only be carried through if accompanied by parallel processes of sacralisation. On the macro-level at least, major historical changes amount to religious reconfigurations, not disenchantment or secularisation. Such a perspective certainly provides more insights into the Chinese case than the latter.

Bellah's concept of “civil religion”, which is a profoundly Durkheimian, macro-level concept, has a heuristic value that makes it a keeper. The

two-way relationship between it and the religions present at the meso-level is instructive. American civil religion is a product of the mostly Christian, congregational landscape in the United States. Like in Jean-Jacques Rousseau's civil religion, it is something like the lower common denominator of the meso-level religious landscape. At the same time, these denominations are in turn shaped by the overarching civil religion (which also evolves over time), namely as bulwarks of citizenship and matrixes for patriotism. Will Herberg's classic *Catholic, Protestant, Jew*, can be summoned to show how Judaism was adapted to fit American civil religion, and a similar case could be made for other religious denominations present in the United States today.<sup>219</sup>

Kuo's distinction between political religion and civil religion allows for a comprehensive comparison that highlights the specificity of the Chinese case. Here, almost everything that constituted Chinese religion before the twentieth century was destroyed, axed, processed, reformatted, and purified to make way for modernity. The construction of a nation-state in the place of the millennial imperial one involved the complete reordering of society and the uprooting of local autonomy, which revolved around the temples. It was replaced by a vertical system of governmentality imported from the West which proceeded from the top of the state (Mao) out to the familial cell. This certainly is a remarkable feat, one that exceeds what developed in Western societies from their own modernist ideals. However, the implementation of secularist nationalism required the institution of a not-so-secular, full-fledged political religion. In other words, it produced a variety of what Quebecois sociologist Raymond Lemieux calls "religious secularities."<sup>220</sup>

In modernity, whether in China or elsewhere, the construction of a nation-state required the sacralisation of both of these hyphenated terms, either on the civil religion model (which involves a form of continuity with the country's religious traditions), or on the more radical, tabula rasa model of political religion. In the West, the United States and France are exemplars of one and the other model. Since a fair share of those emigrating to the United States was doing so for religious reasons, it follows that the US model was built in order to guarantee the "freedom *to* religion". On the contrary, the obstinate refusal, by the Catholic Church, of anything "modern", whether education, rationality, science, or political representation, pushed not only France but pretty much every Catholic European land into civil wars opposing Monarchists and Republicans. No surprise, then, if France, the country which pushed these logics to their extreme, chose to design a full-scale political religion of its own against Catholicism, complete with a new calendar, new holidays, and official celebrations to the Supreme Being in the aftermath of the 1789 Revolution. As in China, the modernist revolution needed to wipe the slate clean and get rid of traditional religion, in this case Christianity. It is this legacy that continues to unfold in contemporary debates around French *laïcité* (understood as "freedom *from* religion") and France's congenial discomfort with religion, especially its intransigent and fundamentalist avatars.

This brief excursus sheds light on the Chinese path by showing how the extremes of the Mao cult are not to be filed under “social pathologies” as much as they are the almost logical unravelling of dynamics that are inscribed in the very matter of the modern nation-state and its accompanying secularist nationalist project. Since tradition needed to be thrown into the ash heap of history, another religious system needed to take its place. Imperial China arguably had something like an inclusive civil religion at the macro level, in which the varieties of traditional religion on the *meso* level had their place. Even heterodox activities, although repressed and dismissed, were seen as having a place amidst the complementary dynamics of *yin* and *yang*. The new political religion promoted by the Republican and communist forces, however, was required to be as intolerant and exclusive as it was bold and novel.

My argument here is that the whole series of transformations I have been charting in this chapter, from the invention of religion to the triple process of radically transforming China’s millennial traditions by purifying them according to the religion/superstition/secular triad (*i.e.*, religion on the *meso* and micro level), are coextensive to the parallel development of a political religion at the macro level. What appears here is how the whole of these dynamics are *structural*. As the reformatting of religion accelerated, deepened, and radicalised with the shift from the KMT government of Nanjing to the Beijing government of the CCP, it is no surprise that the political religion of the new regime, faced with the difficulties incurred with such radical changes, developed into the totalitarian caricature that was the Mao cult. It is not surprising either that by the Cultural Revolution, the political religion at the macro-level became all-encompassing and institutionalised on the *meso*-level, saturating the social to the extent that no other type of religiosity could be tolerated. As Lizhu Fan and Na Chen write: ‘it was the combination of absolute Communist ideology and the Mao Zedong (1893–1976) personality cult that formed a political sacred canopy, under which the Chinese people’s religious and spiritual life was banned and destroyed.’<sup>221</sup>

Looking back at the preceding chapter on Eastern Europe, the parallels with Stalin’s Russian federation within the wider USSR are striking.<sup>222</sup> As we have seen in Chapter 3, the Russian Soviet Republic was among the most if not the most intolerant and repressive of all communist states regarding religion, *and* the country that went the furthest in creating an explicit political religion. The same with China. Arguably, we are faced with a sociological constant for this period in world history. The countries that have experienced the most elaborate, explicit, institutionalised, and enforced political religions are the same that developed the most violent and repressive policies and actions against all other forms of religion. This is not a coincidence, but a logical possibility, even a necessity, within the frame of the Nation-State regime and that of a three-level concept of religion. The construction of the nation-state involves the sacralisation of both the Nation and the State in order to realise the utopian project of creating a New Society and a New Man. This entails the radical reformation, differentiation, institutionalisation, and churching

of religion in *all* societies that take on this utopian programme. For those in which a radical repudiation of tradition was needed, whether Western or non-Western, the process also involves the institutionalisation of a political religion on the *meso* level and the repression of other religious forms.

### Conclusion

Scholars have focused too much on the sole Mao cult, thereby making it into some kind of anomaly or pathology. The perspective drawn here, on the other hand, shows how it is inseparable from wider developments in China over the course of the twentieth century, whether at the end of the Qing dynasty, the first Republic, the Warlord period, the Japanese invasion, the KMT Republic, or the PRC. It is a moment in a much longer process of fabrication of an overarching, macro-level political religion that sought to unhinge the traditional social order from its cosmic moorings in order to graft it onto the Myths of Progress, Reason, and Science, in order to realise the utopian project of a New Society and a New Man. At the same time, the Mao cult is coextensive to the extraordinarily creative destruction of Chinese traditional religion on the *meso* level through a furious process of purification from superstition and the boxing up of religion in a neatly differentiated, institutionalised, and manageable sphere.

The case of China provides us with a remarkable and radical example of how the Nation-State regime came to be imported, digested, reinterpreted, implemented, and institutionalised in a non-Western civilisation that represented a fourth of the human population in 1900 (slightly less than 400 million Chinese for 1.6 billion humans, including 300 million Europeans), without the experience of direct colonisation. As Mayfair Yang writes, ‘Chinese elite nationalists implemented their own version of a state Enlightenment project.’<sup>223</sup> At the same time, the nationalists of the KMT, and the CCP even more so, were steadfastly anti-Western and anti-imperialist, yet entirely committed to Western Enlightenment (*Qimeng yundong*) and its evolutionism, scientism, secularism, nationalism, and progressivism.

In China, the Enlightenment was adopted as an already proven universal formula of modernity and self-development that only needed to be instilled in a recalcitrant population with the assistance of ever stronger apparatuses of power and authority.<sup>224</sup>

As a consequence, and in reaction to China’s humiliation and ‘obvious backwardness’, ‘nationalist elites [...] demanded something much more radical and difficult’ than a homegrown modernisation of traditional culture, religion, and society. They demanded ‘a totally secular, iconoclastic and de-racinated modernity that would surpass even that of the West.’<sup>225</sup> This is certainly a problem for mainstream Postcolonial theory, as M. Yang argues, since the ostensible critique of the West on which it rests fails to shed light on

either the causes, the means, or the effects of China's forced secularisation. If there was any colonisation, it was a "self-colonization" by Chinese urban elites and officials over the culture of rural and less educated people.<sup>226</sup> In fact, the more China became anti-Western (during the Mao era for instance), the more it 'expanded the critique of "feudal" and religious China to new and destructive heights.'<sup>227</sup>

The Chinese case militates in favour of understanding the Nation-State regime as something relatively independent from the direct involvement of Western powers. The Nation-State regime has been particularly effective in transforming religion *on a global scale* because of the High Modern ideals on which it rests were not only transmitted by direct persuasion or even by force, but by the power of the appeal of these ideals and the bedazzlement provoked by the technological superiority of Western powers. This appeal, in my view, cannot be understood and properly evaluated if its profoundly religious—soteriological, utopian, symbolic, ritualistic, messianic, and prophetic—and therefore performative nature is not apprehended.

There is no doubt that this was a very particular moment in history, the foundation of our heretofore globalised and interconnected world.

I would like to briefly come back in closing to the question of redemptive societies. Redemptive societies were powerful and efficient actors in the transformation of popular religion because they provided religious vehicles that attuned and forwarded the state's campaigns for modern, militarised, hygienic citizenship. In other words, redemptive societies were both a product and a factor of the modernisation of religion in China. So why the pressing need to eliminate them?

I believe the answer adds a layer to the conceptualisation of the ways in which the spectrum of possibilities within Nation-State regime unravelled in various "local" contexts (if you can convince yourself to capture the whole of China under the term local). Duara has pointed out a paradox of modernist nation-state construction with respect to the way that it implied the transformation of premodern religious forms into well-packaged "world religions". As "world" religions, they carried the universalist pretensions of modern societies, yet had at the same time to be successfully integrated as bulwarks of the nation. Yet, 'Despite significant variations, [redemptive] societies were often defiantly universalist.'<sup>228</sup> On the one hand, they drew much of their practices from popular religion and culture, including from the waste bin of those repudiated by the KMT and the communists. On the other, the 'cognitive map of these societies traced a path directly from the individual to the universal,<sup>229</sup> without feeding into the nation. Against the "materialism" and "immorality" of the West, they opposed the 'lost civilizational values'<sup>230</sup> of Eastern civilisation, alongside similar millenarian movements in Japan and elsewhere in Asia. Their goals were thus non-national, even anti-national, and thereby tolerated, even welcomed, by the Japanese puppet Manchukuo regime.<sup>231</sup> In the end, their transcendent vision set them in opposition to the KMT and the CCP. As Duara argues: 'The transnational spiritualism of these

redemptive societies not only transgressed the [KMT and CCP's] definition of the modern, but its definition of the national boundaries of civilization.<sup>232</sup>

In other words, while nationalism saved Chinese traditional medicine and martial arts, which were subsumed into the “national essence” and taken over by the state, it is their defiance of nationalism and the state that designated redemptive societies as renegade modern alternatives. While redemptive societies were undoubtedly modern religious expressions, they were also unacceptable since they failed to submit fully to the state and the nation, and thereby to conform to the model of religion in the Nation-State regime.

## Notes

- 1 Feuchtwang (2001: vi).
- 2 Kang (2015: 491–2).
- 3 Since I am not a scholar of the Chinese language, I will keep to the English transliterations of the various terms and concepts. For those interested in how these translate into *hanyu* pinyin (modern Chinese ideographs), they can be found in most of the works I reference in this chapter.
- 4 On the history of China, including the twentieth century, see Fairbanks and Goldman (2006).
- 5 ‘Liste des minorités nationales en Chine’ (*List of ethnic minorities in China*): <https://www.axl.cefan.ulaval.ca/asia/chine-ethnies.htm>.
- 6 Van der Veer (2011).
- 7 Yang (2011: 3).
- 8 Bush (1970: 9–10), quoted in Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 1).
- 9 Lagerwey (2019).
- 10 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 1).
- 11 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 2).
- 12 Lu (2012: 6).
- 13 Lagerwey (2019: vii).
- 14 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 6).
- 15 See Goossaert (2000).
- 16 See F. Fan (2011) for a recent discussion, and Ching (1993). Palmer (2022) has very recently shown how the Chinese religion studied by French sinologist Marcel Granet (1999) was both influenced by the works of the Durkheimian school and influenced its’ works on religion in return. See Mauss’ three short texts (1899, 1910, 1913) on Chinese funerary rites, demonology, and magic for instance.
- 17 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 6).
- 18 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 8). See also Puett (2004), Lagerwey (2019: vii).
- 19 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 20). See also Goossaert (2003a). Lagerwey (2010: 6–7) writes the following: ‘Confucianism is a religion involving blood sacrifices to the ancestors, to the gods recognized by the state, and to Heaven (by his Son, the emperor); Buddhism was indeed of foreign origin but not only did it “conquer” China, it rapidly sinicized and became an integral and permanent part of Chinese religion and society; the Daoist religion is a complex synthesis of Chinese cosmology, Daoist philosophy, Confucian ethics, Buddhist philosophy and rituals, and shamanistic practices.’
- 20 See the remarkable collection of volumes devoted to religion edited by John Lagerwey, and especially Lagerwey (2019) for a thorough history of religion in China from Antiquity to modernity.

- 21 See Puett (2004). These practices and traditions are often mixed up with Taoism. For concrete examples, see the collection of chapters in Reiter (2011).
- 22 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 20–1). Ching (1993) remains a valuable resource. See also Lagerwey (2010).
- 23 Lagerwey (2019) is a remarkable historical synthesis of Chinese religion from the depths of Antiquity to the near present, which builds on a series of impressive edited volumes (Lagerwey and Kalinowski 2009; Marsone and Lagerwey 2015; Goossaert, Kiely and Lagerwey 2016).
- 24 On the religious landscape in the Late Qing period, see Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 18–41).
- 25 Lagerwey (2019: 4). On the legacy of shamanism in Chinese religion until today, see the contributions in Miller (2006).
- 26 Lagerwey (2019: 1). On how the verticalisation of politics and religion are structurally linked, see Hamayon (2016).
- 27 Ebrey (2015: 73).
- 28 Lagerwey (2019: 133–40).
- 29 Ebrey (2015: 73).
- 30 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 56).
- 31 Consider the title of Lagerwey’s (2010) book: *China: A Religious State*.
- 32 Ebrey (2015: 134). For a comprehensive description of state rituals and the supporting Confucian concepts during the Song dynasty (960–1126 AD), see Guanwei and Shuguo (2014).
- 33 Ebrey (2015: 134).
- 34 Lagerwey (2019: 133).
- 35 Goossaert (2003b: 431).
- 36 McDermott (2015: 187).
- 37 On temple festivals in imperial China, see DuBois (2015), Lagerwey (2010: 95–152).
- 38 Katz (2014) argues that Western scholarship has tended to understand the wild diversity and multi-level dimension of Chinese religion as signifying that it is diffuse, unstructured, and even incoherent. He stresses on the contrary how it forms a coherent system, renewing with the classical sinology of Marcel Granet (1999).
- 39 On Indonesia, see Gauthier (2018, 2020: Chapter 9). On Muslim countries, see this volume.
- 40 Goossaert (2003b: 436).
- 41 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 44).
- 42 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 44).
- 43 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 45). See also Katz and Goossaert (2021) and Goossaert (2003b).
- 44 Lagerwey (2019: 196).
- 45 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 48). See also Katz and Goossaert (2021).
- 46 ‘Inventing Religion’ is the title of Nedostup’s (2009: 27) second chapter.
- 47 Walsh (2020: 63). See also Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 50–2), Katz and Goossaert (2021).
- 48 Walsh (2020: 64).
- 49 I find it important to insist on how the works of sinologist Marcel Granet, a contemporary of Durkheim and a member of the latter’s school in Paris, played an important role in its definition of religion and in the elaboration of a sociological method for studying religion past and present.
- 50 Katz (2014: 10) evokes *shisubua* as the translation of “secularisation”. I thank Danqing Yu for her kind help in sorting out the way in which “secular” translates in Chinese in both Chinese characters and alliteration.

- 51 See Casanova (2011).
- 52 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 50).
- 53 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 51).
- 54 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 51).
- 55 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 51).
- 56 Nedostup (2009: 9), quoting a sixteenth century Chinese scholar on the complementarity of the *yin* and *yang* principles.
- 57 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 50).
- 58 Nedostup (2009: 9). See also Ashiwa and Wank (2009).
- 59 See Nedostup (2009).
- 60 Johnson (2017: 24).
- 61 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 52), emphasis added. On the modernisation of religion in China, see also M. Yang (2020).
- 62 See Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 52).
- 63 For more content, see Katz and Goossaert (2021).
- 64 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 53).
- 65 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 53).
- 66 Walsh (2020: 63).
- 67 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 56).
- 68 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 54).
- 69 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 57).
- 70 Nedostup (2009: 264–78).
- 71 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 57), Nedostup (2009: 229–44).
- 72 DuBois (2015: 372).
- 73 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 58).
- 74 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 69).
- 75 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 73).
- 76 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 73).
- 77 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 74).
- 78 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 51).
- 79 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 74).
- 80 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 74).
- 81 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 75).
- 82 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 76).
- 83 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 76).
- 84 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 76).
- 85 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 80).
- 86 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 83–6).
- 87 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 86).
- 88 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 86).
- 89 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 87). See also Katz and Goossaert (2021).
- 90 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 87).
- 91 For Weber, Theravada Buddhism and Confucianism were “ethical systems” rather than proper religions, namely because they lacked a proper deity.
- 92 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 88).
- 93 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 88).
- 94 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 68).
- 95 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 108).
- 96 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 108).
- 97 Croizier (1968: 17).
- 98 Croizier (1968: 2).
- 99 Scheid and Karchmer (2016: 147).
- 100 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 108).

- 101 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 109).
- 102 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 109).
- 103 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 109). See also Scheid and Karchmer (2016).
- 104 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 109). See also Nedostup (2009: 215–29).
- 105 Croizier (1968: 4).
- 106 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 110).
- 107 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 110). See also Croizier (1968).
- 108 Shen (2016), Goossaert and Palmer (2011). The May Fourth movement refers to the important student protests in Beijing in 1919, of which the republicans of the KMT and the communists were the principal outgrowths. The May Fourth movement is thus the matrix of Nation-State era politics in China, and the main vector for radical reform and the rejection of tradition.
- 109 Lagerwey (2019: 217).
- 110 Lagerwey (2019: 217). The author continues: ‘It is, in other terms, a foundational expression of the current paradigm shift [towards the Nation-State regime], insofar as it consists in the “construction” of modernity as “science vs. religion”.’
- 111 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 112).
- 112 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 113). On the Shaolin tradition, see Shahar (2008). Unfortunately, Shahar’s book stops at 1900.
- 113 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 113).
- 114 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 113).
- 115 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 114).
- 116 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 116).
- 117 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 114).
- 118 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 115–6). Palmer (2011b).
- 119 Lagerwey (2010: 1–17) makes a similar case for Chinese religion in general in a very entertaining and historically informed manner.
- 120 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 117).
- 121 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 117).
- 122 Duara (2001).
- 123 Ownby (2016: 689).
- 124 Ownby (2016: 685). This definition is not accepted by all scholars. Some note that only some redemptive features had all these features, while many did not. In addition, most were not rebellious, many did not practice spirit-writing, and most did not spread into the diaspora (David Palmer, personal conversation).
- 125 Ownby (2016: 691).
- 126 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 93). Palmer (2011a).
- 127 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 93).
- 128 Ownby (2016: 690).
- 129 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 94). On the metamorphoses of Confucianism in post-Qing China, see Billioud (2015).
- 130 Palmer (2011a: 4–5).
- 131 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 95).
- 132 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 97).
- 133 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 97).
- 134 Ownby (2016: 687).
- 135 References for this paragraph: Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 104–8), Ownby (2016: 700–6), Nedostup (2009: 145–53), Billioud (2015). On Yiguandao, see Lu (2008), Jordan and Overmyer (1986).
- 136 China is estimated to have counted 500,000 Buddhist monks, 1 million Protestants, and 3 million Catholics at the time. Palmer (2011a: 8), Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 107). The ignorance of this phenomenon by scholars of religion

- in general and sociologists in particular is very telling of the blinders that were naturalized during the Nation-State regime and its intellectual legacy.
- 137 Palmer (2011a: 34).
- 138 Palmer (2011a: 35).
- 139 Palmer (2011a: 35); Goossaert (2000: 315).
- 140 Palmer (2011a: 36).
- 141 Nedostup (2009: 12).
- 142 Nedostup (2009), Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 123–30).
- 143 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 131).
- 144 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 137).
- 145 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 133).
- 146 Zheng (2014: 1).
- 147 Zheng (2014: 4).
- 148 Zheng (2014: 4).
- 149 Zheng (2014: 6).
- 150 Zheng (2014: 6).
- 151 Zheng (2014: 9); Leung and Xu (2015).
- 152 Zheng (2014: 9); Leung and Xu (2015).
- 153 So and Chu (2016: 40). As Theresa Wright (2015: 19) explains, while the Party (CCP) and the state are ‘nominally separate, the Party ultimately controls the state; this is why the regime typically is referred to as a “Party-state”.’
- 154 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 151).
- 155 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 153).
- 156 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 153).
- 157 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 153).
- 158 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 153).
- 159 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 154).
- 160 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 164).
- 161 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 165).
- 162 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 164).
- 163 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 111).
- 164 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 111).
- 165 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 111).
- 166 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 117).
- 167 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 119).
- 168 Palmer (2006: 14). I am using the original French version from which I am translating into English, so the page numbers and the translation might differ from the official translation (Palmer 2007). *Qi* refers to energy, or breath, and *gong* means work or mastership.
- 169 Palmer (2006: 151).
- 170 Hobsbawm (1992: 1).
- 171 Palmer (2006: 152).
- 172 Palmer (2006: 153).
- 173 Ashiwa and Wank (2009: 9), Zuo (1991: 100–1), Feuchtwang (2001: 214–8).
- 174 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 165).
- 175 Zuo (1991: 101).
- 176 Zhufeng (1991: 76).
- 177 Nedostup (2009: 227).
- 178 Nedostup (2009: 227).
- 179 Nedostup (2009: 227).
- 180 Nedostup (2009: 227–9).
- 181 Nedostup (2009: 229).
- 182 Nedostup (2009: 229). See also Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 174–6) on the KMT’s New Life Movement, which translated the traditional civility of

- Confucian rites (*li*) into the ‘civic responsibility of the Republican subject, modelled on military discipline’ (p. 175).
- 183 Nedostup (2009: 229).
- 184 Nedostup (2009: 272).
- 185 Nedostup (2009: 272).
- 186 Nedostup (2009: 279).
- 187 The text in the quotation marks paraphrases of course Durkheim’s (1990) definition of religion in the *Elementary Forms*.
- 188 Nedostup (2009: 279).
- 189 Nedostup (2009: 288). The expression “good public” is Adam Chau’s.
- 190 See van der Veer (2001).
- 191 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 182).
- 192 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 183).
- 193 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 183).
- 194 Zuo (1991: 101).
- 195 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 169).
- 196 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 172).
- 197 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 172). Sun Yat-sen quote is from *San Min Chu*, I, 5.
- 198 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 173).
- 199 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 178).
- 200 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 182).
- 201 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 187).
- 202 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 167).
- 203 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 187).
- 204 Jankowiak and Moore (2017: 79).
- 205 Zuo (1991), Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 187–90).
- 206 Madsen (1984: 129), quoted in Feuchtwang 2001: 218).
- 207 Feuchtwang (2001: 217).
- 208 Feuchtwang (2001: viii). Unfortunately, the author does not offer more discussion on this theme, nor justification for his conceptual choice.
- 209 Zuo (1991: 103), emphasis in text.
- 210 Zuo (1991: 103).
- 211 Zuo (1991: 105). See Bellah (1970).
- 212 Walsh (2020).
- 213 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 167).
- 214 Lagerwey (2010).
- 215 Van der Veer (2001).
- 216 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 137).
- 217 Smart (1974: 88).
- 218 Durkheim (1990), Tarot (2003).
- 219 Herberg (1983). Herberg presented the overarching civil religion that binds Catholics, Protestants, and Jews, was a generic, watered-down form of religion.
- 220 Lemieux (1999).
- 221 Fan and Chen (2015: 924).
- 222 A similar case could be made for National-Socialist Germany under Hitler, which developed a political religion on the macro and *meso* level, and repressed and/or instrumentalised other religions, including the Christian Churches.
- 223 Yang (2011: 10).
- 224 Yang (2011: 11).
- 225 Yang (2011: 11).
- 226 Yang (2011: 12).
- 227 Yang (2011: 13). I am only doing partial justice to this article which I suggest should require the reader’s full attention.
- 228 Duara (2001: 117).

- 229 Duara (2001: 121).  
 230 Duara (2001: 122).  
 231 Duara (2001: 124).  
 232 Duara (2001: 122).

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# 6 Chinese Revolutions II

## Booming Economy, Booming Religion

*The People's Republic of China (PRC) has been undergoing economic and social change at a rate and a scale that is unprecedented in world history, ever since the country abandoned socialist-style centralized planning and adopted market-based economic reforms, with a policy of opening up to the rest of the world, in December 1978.<sup>1</sup>*

*We could say that “the practice of structuring values” has migrated away from the Church, away from statecraft, to economics, and that the “dismal science”, with its prophets, clergy, and debates about orthodoxy is an integral part of the religion of [i.e., economics] our age.<sup>2</sup>*

Mao died in 1976, and with him the Cultural Revolution. Yet, while the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) rule have continued until today, this continuity hides a rupture that is arguably more significant with respect to the dynamics of history than the violent transfer of power from the Republican forces of the Kuomintang (KMT) to the Mao-led Communists in 1949. What developed from Mao's death onwards, however, obeys different logics and opens onto a substantially different era—one in which we are arguably still in today. What started as the de-collectivisation of agriculture and the opening to foreign investors ended up being a decisive turn in the history of modern China, and perhaps the world.

This turn was originally economic in principle, but it transformed the whole of Chinese society to an unthinkable extent. While the Cultural Revolution did advance industrialisation to a significant extent, China was a poor third world country, although one of the most egalitarian. Living standards were very low, and there were practically no television sets, refrigerators, or cars. State-run shops were aesthetically dull and un-branded, as were the goods, which were limited to necessities.<sup>3</sup> Within a few decades, though, all of this changed as China experienced one of the most remarkable economic booms in history.

China's economic transformation is one of the most significant developments in contemporary world history. Within barely three decades, the

country has transformed from a planned economy dominated by the rural sector to a vibrant market economy dominated by modern manufacturing and service sectors.<sup>4</sup>

With a hundredfold increase in its gross domestic product (GDP) and an average growth rate of 9.6%, China is now the world's second economy behind the United States. While it represented only 1% of the global GDP in 1980, China is today the largest exporter and importer of goods in the world as well as the largest automobile market in the world. In 1949, 80% of the population were rural and linked to agriculture. Since 1978, 600 million people have migrated from rural areas to urban centres, many of them as low-cost industrial labour. Four hundred million people were lifted out of absolute poverty. Seas of ultra-modern high-rises and webs of infrastructure have been erected in cities across the country at a ferocious pace. In 2012, 42% of the population was connected to the Internet, 420 million did so with smartphones, and 300 million were regularly active on social media sites.<sup>5</sup> Since then, a veritable Internet revolution has overcome mainland China, and levels of digitalisation are higher than in the West.<sup>6</sup> Shopping malls and Western-style fast-food restaurants scatter the cityscapes as in every other global metropolis. At the same time, China is now one of the most unequal countries in the world. The development of a market economy has not only been an economic phenomenon. It has changed every facet of daily life and every aspect of society.<sup>7</sup>

What most of us do not know, however, is that this economic boom has been accompanied by a massive *religious* boom. That is if your conceptual lens allows you to see it.<sup>8</sup> For this boom has not occurred for the most part within the five recognised and institutionalised religions. In fact, official state policies towards religion have not really changed since the death of Mao. Instead, the boom comes from *outside* the state-sponsored and state-controlled category of religion (*zongjiao*).<sup>9</sup> This in turn raises very important questions for the wider social scientific study of religion. These developments can be differentiated between rural and urban phenomena and involve forms of ancestor worship, temple reconstruction, pilgrimages, and a wide variety of practices that have to do with the revival of traditional and folk religion. They also include new forms that are linked to the penetration of the ethics of expressivity and authenticity and the tropes of self-realisation, as in the Qigong fever that swept over China starting in the 1980s. Finally, there have also been important changes in the makeup of the Chinese political or civil religion at the macro level, which have allowed the stunning return of Confucius and Confucianism.

This chapter examines these transformations and links them to the economic, social, and cultural changes that have occurred in the post-Mao "Reform Era". There are very few places in the world where the shift from the Nation-State to the Global-Market regime has been so sudden, so sharp,

so salient, and so readily legible. Interestingly, many sociologists, especially those in the mainstream (of secularisation or Rational Choice obedience), have been blind to these changes, fixated as they are on churched forms of religion. Other scholars like Peter van der Veer have been meticulous in their mapping of the different pathways of modernity and secularity in countries like India and China, but have concentrated their efforts on the formative decades, i.e., the colonial and early republican periods. Van der Veer barely mentions more recent developments, which he continues to file under the effects of secularism.<sup>10</sup> He thereby misses the importance of the post-Mao shift and the effects of marketisation. Scholars of Chinese religion and anthropologists, on the other hand, have been very attentive to these changes, and have mapped them with great descriptive and analytic finesse, especially in the last decade or so.<sup>11</sup> This chapter is profoundly indebted to these very recent works, which it attempts to assemble and synthesise. My only contribution is the insistence on the pivotal nature of the turn to market economics and the explicit relationship that I posit between this turn and the nature, dynamics, and characteristics of religious change in China over this period. As in the preceding chapter, I argue that the case of China has a lot to teach us about religion in global societies, and how wider processes of marketisation play out in the field of religion. In fact, the sidestep I am pledging for completely changes our gaze when we return to look at developments in the West.

### **A New Era of Reform**

Mao's death on September 9, 1976, was followed by a period of instability and internal fights within the CCP between Maoist radicalism and reformist currents. By the Third Plenum of the Eleventh Central Committee meeting in December 1978, the reformists, led by Deng Xiaoping, had dislodged Mao's old guard. The project was now to 'Liberate Thought, Seek Truth from Facts, and Unite to Look Forward.'<sup>12</sup> The decisions made then constituted 'a major turn in the history of the People's Republic.'<sup>13</sup> For Deng, the most pressing reforms were economic. It was imperative to meliorate the living conditions of the Chinese people, as Mao had promised to do decades earlier. Under the guise of pragmatism, the Party allowed for the return to household-based exploitation of land, as well as the sale of surpluses in village marketplaces at unregulated prices. The government did not set out to radically transform society at first as much as the economy. The reforms were first conducted in rural areas, which involved less political peril, before being extended to urban areas. They were also based on trial and error rather than a grand strategy, with periods of acceleration being cut with periods of slowing down and crackdown on some undesirable effects, such as calls for political liberalisation and democracy. In the immediate aftermath of Mao's death, the Party adopted a more lenient policy in matters of political opinion and cultural mores. Yet the genius of the first decade of reforms was to liberalise the economy while re-founding the Party and the state's legitimacy. The reforms

conducted under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping (1978–1989) therefore occurred within the political system established by Mao.<sup>14</sup> For Deng, political reforms, like a certain amount of decentralisation, ‘did not aim to question the socialist system, but rather to modernise it and make it more efficient in the service of growth.’<sup>15</sup>

There was a consensus within the Party concerning the reassessment of Mao’s heritage and the need to ‘change from “politics-in-command” to “economics-in-command”.’<sup>16</sup> The revolutionary project was therefore abandoned to privilege economic growth. Tensions did emerge, however, between the “conservatives”, who wanted to inscribe the market within a planned economy, and Deng’s reformers, who thought that ‘socialism could [...] accommodate a market economy.’<sup>17</sup> Yet the hardships of the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) had put an irredeemable dent in the powers of the Maoist ideology, and the CCP was in desperate need of a new source of legitimacy. The new ideology was less utopian than its predecessor, yet it was effective enough to accompany the surge that was to come. It had two heads: economic growth, first and foremost, and nationalism. Deng Xiaoping is famous for saying that “poverty is not socialism. To be rich is glorious”. He also stressed that it was alright if some got rich before others, dismissing class struggle as the basis of Chinese socialism.

Where class struggle was the ruling ideology in Maoist times, economic development is the ruling ideology in China today. It is impossible to exaggerate the degree to which this single term, “development,” continues to permeate all official political discourse, often as well in casual conversations, about the state of China’s “progress”—almost always framed in unilinear terms by way of comparison with the “West.”<sup>18</sup>

The reforms worked to undo the socialist welfare system and promote entrepreneurialism, provoking various waves of unrest and contestation. These movements culminated in the pro-democracy movement and the Tiananmen Square protests of 1989, whose violent repression was ordered by Deng against the advice of the reformers and in line with the conservative current in the Party. In the words of David Harvey, this ‘clearly indicated that neo-liberalization in the economy was not to be accompanied by any progress in the fields of human, civil, or democratic rights.’<sup>19</sup> As a response to the biggest social protest movement in the history of the PRC, Deng appointed Jiang Zemin as his successor and allowed for a partial return to the government regulation of the economy. These measures were a failure though, and by 1992, Deng promoted a new wave of reforms that significantly deepened the marketisation processes. This put an end to internal dissensions: there was no longer any other alternative than the road towards a market economy.<sup>20</sup> This conclusion was certainly comforted by the collapse of the communist bloc in Eastern Europe and that of the USSR (1989–1991). If the Party wanted to avoid a similar fate, the only way forward could only

be the adoption of the neoliberal principles that were now hegemonic across the world. The CCP rallied around Margaret Thatcher's slogan that "there is no alternative". Hence decentralisation was accelerated, market mechanisms were generalised, and individual initiative was promoted. This is when many Chinese gathered their courage and became entrepreneurs. The policies developed in the free-market laboratory boomtowns known as the Special Economic Zones (SEZ) were later extended to a series of other coastal areas, and then inland. Policies shifted to promote interior consumption as well as production to raise the material living conditions of the population and bolster consumerism as a legitimate ethos. The repatriation of Hong Kong from the hands of Great Britain in 1997, of Macao from Portugal in 1999, and the integration within the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in 2001 were all the means and the result of processes that turned China into a full-fledged market and consumer society.<sup>21</sup>

When power was transferred from Jiang Zemin to Hu Jintao in 2002, the Party Constitution confirmed it was no longer proletarian but 'a political entity that would represent and coordinate the interests of various social classes,'<sup>22</sup> and not only the proletariat. The first decade of reforms had effectively raised the living standards of the majority of the population, even if discrepancies appeared between rural and urban areas. Yet the 'ruthless, single-minded pursuit of GDP growth'<sup>23</sup> strategy of the last decade of the twentieth century produced soaring inequalities, environmental destruction, pollution, a major rift between rural and urban areas, generalised corruption, and the erosion of welfare provisions. The dismantling of the *hukou* and *danwei* system acted to privatise and marketise social provisions, including health care, and worked to transfer risk from the state and the collective to the individual.<sup>24</sup> Hu therefore realigned the "Development First" model to incorporate social policies to address these growing problems. In 2004, Hu's concept of a "Harmonious Society" (*hexie shehui*), whose aim was to steer growth in a more sustainable fashion, was adopted as a general orientation. A year later, Hu made a long discourse on the idea of a Harmonious Society in which he sought to reinscribe contemporary China within a historical continuum that no longer sought to make a tabula rasa of premodern traditions. Among those quoted were Confucius in the *Book of Rites*, as well as his disciples Mencius and Mozi. This confirmed the nationalist turn that arose during the reunification of Hong Kong as a way to defuse some of the tensions produced by ultra-rapid growth, massive interior migration, and generalised insecurity.

The 2008 Summer Olympic Games in Beijing and the 2010 Universal Exposition in Shanghai were experienced as the culmination of the transformation of China into a world power. These events symbolised the long-awaited success of China in overcoming its nineteenth-century humiliations. This narrative was and is repeated incessantly in the regime's propaganda. The organisation of the 2008 Olympic Games was successfully led by a man named Xi Jinping, who was rapidly climbing the Party's political echelons.

The grandiose opening ceremony narrated the millennial history of China, celebrating its inventions (gun powder, silk, the Great Wall), the Tang and Ming dynasties, as well as Confucius; it carefully avoided references to the Qing and the whole nineteenth century. In 2013, China successfully landed a rover on the surface of the moon. The return of Hong Kong was presented by the regime as the end of the colonial period. It was the end of what the government called “national humiliations”, “national pains”, “national shames”, and “national disasters” (on television, in museums, films, and print). It was now time for “national revitalisation”.<sup>25</sup>

While the 2008 economic crash rattled the foundations of the West’s economic order, China could boast about its stability and sustained growth. Its ambitions became clear at that time. It wanted to challenge the US-led world order by deploying a new brand of imperialism celebrating the “Chinese model” as a global alternative for developing countries: a digital era mix of market economics and authoritarian politics. By this time, three decades of economic reforms had transformed Chinese society to a far greater extent than three decades of Maoism. The rise to power of Xi Jinping as the new president of the PRC in 2012 was the confirmation of these ambitions, yet it has also enacted a reorientation of the country’s trajectory. Through sustained “anti-corruption” campaigns, Xi proceeded to eliminate rival factions and broke with the post-Mao tradition of collegial government. Dissidence has been crushed with increased severity. Xi reinstated a very personalised type of power and a form of recentralisation. He has reactivated Maoist-era communication strategies, including the cult of his personality, as well as censorship and social control. The amazing possibilities offered by digital technologies have been put to good use in this respect, something which the COVID pandemic has accelerated and reinforced to an even higher degree. Faced with the constitutional rule according to which a president cannot hold his functions for more than two terms (i.e., ten years), Xi rewrote the constitution to remain in power. The legitimation for this has come from the millenarian narrative known as the “Chinese Dream” (*zhongguo meng*), which has become the country’s official ideology: to restore the Chinese nation to its natural greatness and put China at the centre of the world (renewing with the imperial appellation of China as the Middle Kingdom), while making every citizen prosper and happy and providing political and social stability and security.<sup>26</sup> Parallel to this, the Chinese government has launched an ambitious project called the Belt and Road initiative, also known as the New Silk Roads project, in order to grow its international influence and power, especially among developing countries, in addition to investing heavily in its military capacities.

China’s authoritarian regime seems to be rapidly turning into a digital era totalitarian regime, seen from the outside. Some scholars who frequent China remark that surveillance is also part of life in the West and that the differences are not as great as some claim. However, the coming to power of Xi Jinping has enacted a change in direction towards a reaffirmation of

the power of the Party and the state on the whole of society and on parts of the economy. This demonstration of strength especially aims at those actors who have gained tremendous wealth and therefore potential political power (like the Alibaba Internet platform's founder Jack Ma). It seems too early for definitive conclusions as to how far this re-statisation process might go. Yet it is true that China remains dependent on economic growth and the continued expansion of the market, which puts limits on the extent of the state's control over Chinese society. It is also unlikely that soteriological investments in the state, so typical of the Nation-State regime period, can be renewed with. The times have changed. And for now at least, the general direction of religious change is not showing signs of reversal or modification. The case of post-Mao/Reform Era China illustrates how a strong state can persist within the Global-Market regime, without fundamentally modifying the latter's structural logics and driving characteristics. As we will see, the fundamental legal dispositions of the state towards religion have remained virtually the same, yet religion has spilled into wider society in new forms that exceed the confines of *zongjiao*. I will come back in the general conclusion with some thoughts regarding what may be coming next.

### Neoliberalism with Chinese Characteristics<sup>27</sup>

If the Global-Market regime is the product of the joint processes of neoliberalisation and consumerisation, then it is important to look closer at the Chinese case. Can we really talk of neoliberalism in the case of China? Similarly, can we really talk of consumerism? The present section tackles the first of these questions before turning to the second. The intuitive reaction of many readers can understandably be to doubt that there is such a thing as Chinese neoliberalism, namely because the political system has remained authoritarian and the state continues to play such a fundamental role in Chinese society. This is an important question to discuss if we are to have any kind of serious use of the term "neoliberalism", in contrast with the very careless uses one often encounters today, and which basically equate capitalism and neoliberalism. If neoliberalism is capitalism, all forms of capitalism are not necessarily neoliberal.

My approach to neoliberalism as a heuristic concept is detailed in the introduction, yet it is worth recalling some of the basics here. In sum, neoliberalism is a 'type of broad categorical ideology that takes the economy as its core concern.'<sup>28</sup> At the deepest level, neoliberalism means a transfer of sacrality (or charisma) from the idea and ideal of the State (hence the capital letter) to that of the Market as the preferred mechanism for social regulation, social transformation, modernisation, and progress. Neoliberalism marks a shift from the embedment of societies in the political sphere through the means and ideal of the State to an embedment within the economic sphere through the means and ideal of the Market. This shift is enacted by processes of neoliberalisation, which are seldom if ever linear and homogenous. Neoliberalisation

tends to remodel all social spheres and affects the relation between state and society. This is typically accompanied by a shift from government (vertical, centralised, and top-down exercise of power) to governance (interest-based and horizontal exercise of power on the stakeholder model, with a high level of self-governing). Concretely, this means the implementation of private sector types of management in many sectors of society, including in the private sphere. It means indexing the whole of society and the success of the nation on economic growth and material indicators. It means an often-radical transformation of a society's welfare provisions, whose responsibility is transferred from the state to individuals within a marketised environment. Finally, it means the active promotion of entrepreneurialism in the marketplace and other social domains. Neoliberalism does not mean the reduction of the importance of the state, its budget, or its size, but rather its transformation and reorientation towards the primary objective of serving economic growth.

Neoliberalism has never been antithetical to authoritarian rule, on the contrary. The founder of neoliberalism, Friedrich Hayek, believed that authoritarian governments were more efficient in providing stable conditions for free markets than democracies. Historically, the laboratories for neoliberal policies were devised by the University of Chicago (where the other big name of neoliberalism, Milton Friedman, was based) trained economists in two US-backed dictatorships: Suharto's Indonesia (1968–) and Pinochet's Chile (1973–). For neoliberals, economic freedom is the mother of all freedoms (the “freedom to choose”, in Friedman's words); it supersedes political and other liberties, which are reinterpreted as matters of personal choice. Neoliberals believe that these “other” freedoms will eventually and naturally flow from economic freedom in a totally marketised society. It is from this definition of neoliberalism that we can investigate what David Harvey calls ‘neoliberalism “with Chinese characteristics”’<sup>29</sup> in a way that is suitable to cross with an analysis of religious change in Reform Era China.

The adoption of neoliberal policies and the actual processes of neoliberalisation occur within existing institutional environments. Here is how Zheng Jongnian describes the situation prior to China's economic reforms:

In the Maoist era, the Chinese lived in a highly centralized and closed system, where economic, social, and political functions were all intermingled and integrated in the administrative framework of the state. In compensating for low levels of wage income, the state provided a range of fringe social goods including housing, health care, childcare, and education through work units in urban areas and, to a lesser degree, in rural areas. [...] There was an implicit social contract between the state and society in which the former provided a minimum social protection to the latter and the latter accepted the rule of the state.<sup>30</sup>

In contrast with the communist experience in the USSR and Eastern Europe, the continuity of the authoritarian rule of the CCP gives a special character

to Chinese neoliberalism. Some scholars hold that we cannot talk of neoliberalism in China because of the state's continued intervention in the economy and the place that it continues to have in society at large. Yet as we have seen, neoliberalism does not mean the absence or recession of the state, but rather a fundamental realignment of its mission and rapport to society. As Wang Hui argues,

For this reason, using the existence of state interference in the economy as to prove—as some have done—that there is no neoliberal hegemony in China is really beside the point, as the hegemonic position of neoliberalism in China was established precisely from within a domestic process during which the state's crisis of legitimacy was overcome through economic reform itself.<sup>31</sup>

This is a strong argument, since economic growth became the main component of the post-Maoist ideology of the CCP from 1978 onwards. This reorientation completely changed the ideological foundations of the CCP and had important effects on its administrative modes and structures. Instead of political mobilisation and ideological education, the Party turned to economic performance and the deliverance of economic goods 'to regain its legitimacy'<sup>32</sup> among the Chinese people. Cutting all links with the Cultural Revolution, "development" became the 'undisputable truth.'<sup>33</sup> Marketisation-oriented economic reform became the new means by which to revolutionise society, forward the achievement of a new, modern China, and get rid of the remnants of the "old, feudal world" that had continued to be the obsession for close to a century. Here, the full power of the state was directed to the gradual institutionalisation of market institutions. This is, as its core, a neoliberal project.

The implication of the state in leading the marketisation process is not completely new in world history, far from it. Karl Polanyi's works on the birth of capitalism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries show how the creation of integrated markets required the marketisation of intangibles like soil, work, and money by the means and will of the state.<sup>34</sup> Similarly, neoliberal policies have always been implemented by states, with more or less coercive "guidance" from international regulating bodies like the IMF. In the case of China, the shift from a planned to a market economy was a choice made and led by the CCP. What differentiates the Chinese case from that of Eastern Europe is the will of the Party to remain in power and guide marketisation processes as much as it could. The facts of history, which show how markets are always the product of state intervention, contradict *neoliberal discourse*, which imagines the market as 'a kind of "spontaneous order".'<sup>35</sup> Neoliberal discourse (and the dominant brand of neoclassical economics) insists on the ex-post establishment of institutional controls to guarantee security and norms for the market to operate "freely" and therefore optimally. Yet neoliberal claims should not blind us, and social scientists should always beware of economists; especially concerning economic matters. Since the market is

believed to be natural, neoliberalism is well set to exclude critiques and ignore other possibilities within liberalism, like those proposed by Rawls or Dworkin, for instance, who championed brands of liberalism more preoccupied with inequalities and political issues than neoliberals.<sup>36</sup> As elsewhere in the 1980s and 1990s, the liberalism that became hegemonic among Chinese elites was essentially neoliberal and therefore first and foremost concerned with the “free market”. The works of neoliberals like Hayek, Friedman, and Ronald Coase circulated widely among Chinese political and intellectual elites, as well as in managerial classes.<sup>37</sup>

The gradual and experimental nature of marketisation in China should not deter us from acknowledging how radical it has been. It is indeed difficult to imagine anything more radical than the transformations in Reform Era China. Key features of neoliberalism were implemented by the state to create and reinforce market expansion, such as the decentralisation of power, the privatisation of benefits, property rights, and the institutionalisation of a contract system. China was opened to foreign investments in low- or no-tax zones and encouraged interior migration to fill the needs of the low-skilled, low-wage labour of new export-oriented industries. There is a little-known story that involves Milton Friedman, the champion of University of Chicago neoliberalism, and the head of the CCP. In 1980, when he was probably the best-known economist in the world, Friedman was part of the first set of American economists to receive an official invitation to tour China and give a series of lectures. Friedman’s free-market gospel divided the Chinese delegation and appeared either radical or dangerous. In 1988, amidst an inflation crisis and growing tensions within the CCP after a decade of liberalisation and one year before the Tiananmen protests, Milton Friedman met with premier Zhao Ziyang, who had steered the economy’s liberalisation. Friedman was accompanied by Hong Kong neoliberal economist Steven Cheung, who had ties with the CCP and had arranged the meeting. Friedman and Cheung penned a report that they handed to Zhao in which they called for ‘ending price control, ending inflation, decontrolling individual prices and wages, and decentralizing government controls of the economy and privatizing state enterprises.’<sup>38</sup> By 1990, barely a decade after the reforms were launched in a country that had no markets whatsoever, “the market” had been institutionalised as the principal means of resource allocation.<sup>39</sup> In the second decade of marketisation that followed the 1989 crackdown of the pro-democracy movement and the few years of the state’s reigning in of liberalisation, Friedman’s list of neoliberal reforms, which had appeared too radical to most, were ‘systematically adopted.’<sup>40</sup> (Until his death in 2006, Friedman continued to praise China’s economic growth while refraining from critiquing the regime for its authoritarianism and repression of democracy. He continued to believe that markets would eventually lead to democracy...)

De-collectivisation and economic liberalisation seriously impacted the Maoist social protection system, producing ‘widening income and regional disparities, including inequality in access to social protection and social

services.<sup>41</sup> The state significantly rolled back social provisions, including in the fields of housing, medical aid, education, and retirement. Market-oriented and fee-driven reforms of social services and social security were introduced, significantly limiting their access. As a result, medical fees soared and expensive private health insurance became the norm, excluding large portions of the population.<sup>42</sup> While unemployment insurance was introduced in 1986, its coverage remained very limited. China has therefore aligned itself with what authors call the “East Asian welfare model” or the “Confucian welfare state”: ‘Confucian values emphasize social stability and order over conflict’, and state authoritarianism is preferred over ‘social justice, social rights and redistributive policies.’<sup>43</sup> This model also involves ‘low social spending, strong occupational welfare, limited government intervention [...] and the subordination of policy to economic growth.’<sup>44</sup> Even after the social adjustments made under Hu Jintao, China spent 5.4% of GDP on social protection social protection in 2013, higher, higher than Singapore (3.5%) but less than South Korea (7.9%), and well below Japan (19.2%).<sup>45</sup>

Compared with the total protection awarded by the PRC in the Mao era, the difference in welfare provision remains extraordinary. Alongside the opportunities and “freedom” (to choose) these reforms have induced, the dismantling of the social safety net introduced a fair load of insecurity; to the extent that the state has had to respond by rebuilding ‘an increasingly comprehensive social welfare system to alleviate inequalities and return to the socialist spirit’<sup>46</sup> under Xi Jinping, mainly spurred by the need to quell sources of civil unrest. Meanwhile, the contradictions and negative consequences of economic reforms have been addressed on the ideological level through the tropes of “transition” and “development”.<sup>47</sup> The “national reunification” with Hong Kong (one of the most liberalised economies in the world)<sup>48</sup> and the integration of China into the WTO were occasions to re-actualise and renew the soteriological promises of a Harmonious New Society through economic growth.

China embarked on the path of reform in the 1980s and 1990s, ‘during the high tide of neoliberalism’ in the West, and the adoption of neoliberal principles by the World Bank and the IMF. These supranational organs enforced the Washington Consensus and piloted the “shock doctrine” of radical neoliberalisation in Russia and other Eastern European countries, with the intention of dismantling the communist state and implementing free-market policies. In China, however, ‘neoliberal market reforms were intended to allow the communist party-state to survive as an instrument of economic development.’<sup>49</sup> The 1989 protests and the consequent collapse of the Soviet Union confirmed China on its path. In contrast, the Chinese strategy consisted in putting the full powers of the authoritarian state to serve the creation of markets and pursuing growth. The strategy was nevertheless to proceed carefully, the spirit of which Deng Xiaoping captured by saying that China should “cross the river by touching the stones”. The central state forced not only state-owned enterprises (SOE) but also local governments

and governmental agencies to face market competition and become profitable by imposing hard budget constraints and eliminating state bailouts. “Cultural institutions” (like museums) were turned into profit-seeking “cultural enterprises”.<sup>50</sup> Neoliberal style governance and measures of “efficiency” were implemented at all state levels as a means of furthering reforms and producing ‘a well-structured, clean, efficient and service-oriented government that has scientifically defined functions that people are satisfied with.’<sup>51</sup> A quantitative system of evaluation of local officials and governments was implemented with ‘economic development success as the primary indicator for determining compensation.’<sup>52</sup> As a result, the ‘communist party-state was rapidly transformed from a “*virtuocracy*” to a *meritocracy*.’<sup>53</sup> The transformation of China from a planned to a market economy was not only the result of state voluntarism, however. The enterprise worked because it was met by a bottom-up process in which Chinese entrepreneurs, at first in rural areas, were the main agents, supported by family networks.

How, then, are we to qualify China’s brand of neoliberalism? In light of the above, I argue that it is analytically pertinent to talk of neoliberalisation in China. The massive changes brought on by the extraordinarily rapid marketisation of the Chinese economy amount to what Deng Xiaoping himself called a “second revolution”. The radical changes that have affected welfare and social provisions, however corrected in recent years, and the reengineering of state governance are prime examples of neoliberalisation. Furthermore, the emphasis on economic development and growth has consistently acted as the main pillar of the Party’s legitimation and the motor driving its renewed nationalism and commitment to Progress. However, the Chinese pathway is marked by the resilience of the party-state in comparison with the types of dismantling and “roll-back” that occurred in other post-communist contexts like Eastern Europe and Russia. Alvin Y. So and Yin-wah Chu propose the concept of “state neoliberalism”<sup>54</sup> to characterise the case of China and similar countries (like Viet-Nam for instance) who have pursued radical marketisation and exponential growth while maintaining an authoritarian party-state. Apart from being an element of propaganda seeking to convince the people of the ideological continuity of the CCP, the Chinese state’s continued pledge to socialism has meant a form of restraint in neoliberalisation processes that has limited the ‘dispossession/proletarianization of peasant workers, and [prolonged the] dependence of capitalists on the state.’<sup>55</sup> As such, China is a case of “embedded neoliberalism”, in the sense that neoliberalisation processes have been buffered and acculturated within the party-state’s existing institutional framework. For now, the authoritarian turn taken by China under Xi Jinping has re-extended the control of the state on significant parts of the economy and society, yet it has not challenged market institutionalisations to the extent that we could talk of a qualitative shift. One reason for this is the increasing importance, for China’s continued economic growth, of interior consumption. This, in turn, acts as a further incentive to promote consumerism, to which we now turn.

**Consumerism with Chinese Characteristics<sup>56</sup>**

Consumerism is intricately tied to the promotion of an ethos of authenticity and an expressive type of individualism. Is it therefore possible to talk of consumerism in China? Can such an ethic, which has been the result of long-stemming developments within Western culture, have developed and penetrated Chinese society in such a short period of time, after decades of radical egalitarianism and an ethic of self-sacrifice? The answer to this question, remarkably, is yes. With the perspective available to us today, we are able to judge how the cultural and social changes produced by China's marketisation are both encompassing and profound. As Willis writes, 'This wholesale practical and ideological reordering is also a cultural reordering.'<sup>57</sup> For Willis, the 1978 turn has ushered in a "new symbolic order"<sup>58</sup>—what I call the Global-Market regime.

Karl Gerth starts his history of consumerism in China in the officially anti-capitalist and anti-consumerist Maoist era, as a product of industrialisation. He points to 'the broader social value of the Big Three'<sup>59</sup> of non-everyday products (a wristwatch, a bicycle, and a sewing machine). While owning any one of these consumables was an accomplishment in the 1950s, the *desire* for them was already widespread. The state-led reforms of 1978 allowed consumerism, which Gerth defines as 'the desire to communicate identity through the consumption or use of things', to grow exponentially 'in the form of new desires.' By the 1980s, the Big Three 'became some combination of TVs, washing machines, electric fans, and portable cassette players. By the 1990s, people desired stereos, mobile phones, microwave ovens, refrigerators, and personal computers.'<sup>60</sup> Today, people dream of cars, apartments, leisure travel, and luxury items. The ideology of economic growth is not only a top-down creation. It has been happily appropriated by the Chinese of all social classes. Willis talks of the hundreds of millions of internal migrants that have flooded China's booming cities to fill the need for low-wage labour 'with an unquenchable optimism that the future will be better; there is a glorification of mega-city life and a devoted use of smartphones accompanied by a ferocious self-devouring consumerism.'<sup>61</sup> For to flee poor rural life for the opportunities of the city is to make a symbolic travel into modernity and its "enchanted materialism".<sup>62</sup> Market research reflects this analysis: 68% of Chinese confide feeling "positively indebted" to brands, compared to 35% in the US and 31% in France.<sup>63</sup> In China, partaking in consumerism is to modernise oneself, like it was in Western countries at the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>64</sup>

As elsewhere, the development of the Internet and digital technologies catalysed the encroachment of consumerism. Yet authors agree that the effects have been even more important in China: 'Vested with transformative potential powers, the internet in China is another powerful arrow of change and on a scale even larger, more different and fuller in meaning than in the West.'<sup>65</sup> More than 'just another gadget', the Internet arrived in China like a

‘time machine, a portal opener, a means of jumping from feudalism straight to modernity no matter what local customs and constrictions still bound you.’<sup>66</sup> It also rapidly became a means of participating in consumerism even from the countryside. Today, China is the world’s biggest e-commerce nation.

Hongmei Li’s history of marketing in China shows how the state was active in the creation of this industry, and how marketers use ‘a wide range of advertising and marketing practices to cater to and engineer consumer demands, consequently shaping the power relations between advertisers/consumers and the state/businesses.’<sup>67</sup> Rapidly, ‘advertising became ubiquitous on Chinese television.’<sup>68</sup> The media were deregulated (to allow for new actors and competition) and turned into profit-making ventures while continuing to serve the state’s social control objectives. The same is true for the IT industry. The advertising industry seized Western (mostly American) practices and drove the late 1990s shift from a production to a consumption-based interior economy. As Li writes, ‘advertising functions simultaneously as an apolitical activity and a political project that diverts citizen-consumers’ attention from politics.’<sup>69</sup> At the same time, the communication strategy of the Chinese state has espoused the shift in modes of governmentality typical of the passage from the Nation-State to the Global-Market regime:

the Chinese state has shifted from a propaganda mode of communication—centrally planned, message centered, and top-down communication—to a public relations model of communication that cultivates a message’s effects and is interested in the audience’s responses.<sup>70</sup>

As with the competitive and cost-effectiveness principles implemented within the whole of the administration, these changes in communication strategies highlight how the Chinese state has adopted neoliberal governance while maintaining its authoritarian grip on society.

China’s growing middle class, meanwhile, is the focus of both governmental and marketers’ attention. As elsewhere in the world, the middle class drives consumerism. There is a lot of debate as to how to define the criteria of what constitutes a “middle class” in China. There is less debate about the fact that a middle class did not exist prior to economic reform. Four decades later, it is estimated that about 10% of city dwellers (about 70 million people) can be considered to belong to a largely homogeneous middle class.<sup>71</sup> At the same time, research also shows that 46.8% of the Chinese population *self-identifies* as middle class.<sup>72</sup> These discrepancies point to the fact that consumerism is about *desire* more than it is about actually buying products. This is why Willis writes that China has become ‘a mass consumer society before becoming rich.’<sup>73</sup> The ‘evident orientation to consumption is perplexing in a way because it has to be set against an overall lack of relevant means to actually consume.’<sup>74</sup> In his book *Being Modern in China*, the ethnographer describes how the Chinese massively flock to stores, shopping malls, and car dealers to spend the day with friends and family, taking pictures of themselves with

their smartphones and posting the pictures on social media—without actually buying these products at the end of the day.

There is no doubt, when going through the literature, that consumerism in China functions as a dream machine, a soteriological mechanism that effectively opens the floodgates of future possibilities; possibilities that combine national destiny with individual prosperity and happiness. In this respect, the smartphone practice of taking selfies at the wheel of a BMW or reclining in an IKEA couch and posting it on social media reveals how consumerism involves the production of the self; and increasingly so with the younger generations with little or no experience of China under Mao. ‘[S]elf-production through the smartphone’<sup>75</sup> shows how consumerism explodes the public/private divide. The Chinese case puts an axe to the idea dear to the proponents of “mediatization theory”, for whom media technologies are best thought of as an autonomous sphere with its own logic and that pushes itself on other spheres to shape them.<sup>76</sup> Rather, it shows how digital technologies and social media are social practices that are constitutive of and indissociable from consumerism and marketisation in contemporary societies.

The features of consumerism as analysed in the West therefore apply to China, with local variations. If consumerism preceded (and most probably helped to legitimate) the neoliberal revolution in the West, China provides a clear case in which neoliberal reforms preceded and created a mass consumer society and the massification of the consumerist ethos. ‘Chinese people now consider what to consume and how to consume it to be important ways of defining their identity, and they also accept the new freedom that is often associated with consumer choice.’<sup>77</sup> Consumerism in China is modelled by the paradox of its emulation of Western culture and the affirmation of its own self-declared alternative modernity. Hence the more recent revival of nationalism through the means of consumerism. As we will see later in this chapter, traditional culture (including a wild array of traditionally *religious* practices) is being massively promoted by the government and businesses alike. At the same time, the values of neoliberalism and consumerism have penetrated ever deeper into the social fabric.

Chinese society has shifted from traditional values to modern values (prioritizing career mobility, pursuit of diverse lifestyles, competitiveness, and consumption), from other-orientation to self-orientation, from obligation-orientation to profit-orientation, from collectivism to individualism, and from idealism to pragmatism.<sup>78</sup>

The rapidity with which China has gone from the Maoist culture of complete self-sacrifice and asceticism to an individualist consumer culture aligned on the tropes of self-realisation and self-fashioning is mind-blowing. One enabling factor has been the one-child policy, which has produced ‘little emperors or empresses showered with gifts from their parents, grandparents, and relatives, resulting in a pleasure-seeking consumerist ethos.’<sup>79</sup> Nevertheless,

the speed of these changes questions the extent to which the ethics of authenticity and expressivity, which are constitutive of consumerism in the West, has penetrated Chinese society. One would at least expect to see significant variations between urban and rural populations as in Eastern Europe, and this is effectively the case. Nevertheless, certain ongoing changes can be directly linked to the massification of the ethics of authenticity in China, like those regarding love, marriage, family life, and sex for example. If this can be established, there are good chances that we can see these ethics factoring in on the changes affecting religion.

In the words of Jankowiak and Moore: ‘The rapidity with which the Chinese family has undergone change, particularly over the past few decades, is remarkable.’<sup>80</sup> While the state was the main regulator of family life in the Nation-State period, Reform Era changes ‘reflect a growth in individual independence’, and are ‘connected to the expansion of individual opportunities in the labor market. They amount in particular to a shift toward increased freedom in mate choice, the timing of marriage, and, finally, an increase in divorce rates.’<sup>81</sup> In the midst of the feeling of unprecedented change and opportunities that have accompanied the marketisation of China and the spread of consumerism, communitisation has become voluntary rather than assigned by tradition or the state’s *hukou* and *danwei* systems. Similarly, Chinese marriages are increasingly based on romantic love rather than familial arrangements. ‘At the heart of this historic shift is the conviction that a good relationship is identified by the degree of emotional *satisfaction* present.’<sup>82</sup> For women, expectations underlying marriage have shifted from security to personal fulfilment. Beyond the confines of marriage and reproduction, China has been going through its own “sexual revolution”.<sup>83</sup> The emancipatory potential of the new “freedom of choice” here is clear.<sup>84</sup> Against the supposedly “unnatural” equality of Maoism, where women and men were made to wear the same attires and sexuality was repressed, expressive individualism is portrayed as ‘setting human nature free.’<sup>85</sup> Lisa Rofel relates this to the effects of neoliberalism on subjectivity: ‘This model of human nature has the desiring subject as its core: the individual who operates through sexual, material, and affective self-interest.’<sup>86</sup> The author charts how these conceptions that are integral to the ethics of authenticity are produced and circulated throughout popular culture, whether television, film, advertisement, books, magazines, or the Internet. These productions naturalise what Han Dequiang calls “Market romanticism”: ‘the belief that so-called free competition will automatically lead to progress,<sup>87</sup> prosperity, happiness, and self-realisation.

In China as elsewhere, neoliberalism and consumerism entail a new brand of subjectivity. As Hai Ren argues: ‘In the individualization process in neoliberal [and consumerist] China, new forms of the Chinese self are developed, “fashioned”, or empowered to take on entrepreneurialism, affects, desires, and activism.’<sup>88</sup> Nevertheless, the expressive individualism and the ethics of authenticity that are coextensive to consumerism remain embedded within a conception of the (extended) family (rather than the Western nuclear family)

that is distinctly Chinese. This particularity is important when we consider the forms taken by the religious revival.

### **Religious Change 1: Document 19 and the CCP's Official Religious Policy**

The preceding sections have painted a general portrait of the economic reforms of post-Mao China and their important social and cultural consequences. They also establish the importance of the processes of marketisation in China and the nature and characteristics of neoliberalism and consumerism in its context. My argument is that it is impossible to understand what is happening today in China without taking these processes into account. In a period of only four decades, the transformations in China have been remarkable, profound, and massive, and have affected every dimension of life, whether on the societal level or that of individual lives. The same goes for religion. As we have seen in the last chapter, it is hard to exaggerate the extent to which late imperial religion was transformed during the course of the twentieth century, until the death of Mao. What has been happening since, however, is equally radical, and the directions in which these changes have been occurring are inseparable from the combined effects of neoliberalism and consumerism.

In the wake of the coming to power of Deng Xiaoping, a relative spirit of openness and tolerance ensued. Intellectuals and scholars were allowed to think anew about religion and re-evaluate Marx's claim that it was the "opium of the people". These thoughts were reflected in what is known as "Document 19", a policy document released by the CCP's Central Committee that aimed to clarify its policy regarding "the religious question" (*zongjiao de wenti*), following a general reappraisal of the Cultural Revolution. Because the consciousness of the people lags behind social change, it argued, and even though social classes had been effectively abolished, the Party recognised that religion would not disappear altogether until the last stage of socialism was reached, somewhere in the indistinct future. As Goossaert and Palmer write, Document 19 'outlined the fundamental religious policy, which remained essentially unchanged thereafter.'<sup>89</sup> It upheld the principle of freedom of religion, which it framed as an entirely private matter, as "freedom of choice" and belief. It states that only Party members are required to be atheists, yet they are permitted to attend weddings, funerals, and other rituals 'with a religious content', especially in minority regions. In addition,

The official religious associations were reinstated, officially designated places of worship were reopened, and religious communities were allowed and even encouraged to engage in international exchanges with their coreligionists. But the policy drew a clear line between "normal" religious life, which was permitted, and other illegal activities.<sup>90</sup>

‘Reactionary secret societies’ (redemptive societies, *huidaomen*) were forbidden to reactivate, as were ‘spirit mediums and witches’. Similarly, ‘practitioners of superstitious professions such as divination, physiognomy, numerology, and fengshui were to be reeducated to find another profession to make a living’<sup>91</sup> or disbanded. A series of repression campaigns aiming to crackdown on “spiritual pollution” were launched between 1982 and 1984 to make sure everyone understood the message. Overall, the spirit of eradication that had characterised the Maoist period and the Cultural Revolution was significantly toned down, but the CCP’s official policy regarding religion remained relatively stable, with the State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA) made ‘responsible for overseeing of religious activity in China.’<sup>92</sup>

In the aftermath of the 1989 Tiananmen protests and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the government cracked down on various religious leaders with foreign networks, namely Catholics and Protestants. Political interference on the part of the five recognised religions continued to be the CCP leadership’s main concern. In 1993, Jiang Zemin insisted that they “adapt to socialism”, meaning that ‘religious believers were free to keep their theism and their religious faith, but politically they should love the motherland and defend the socialist system and the leadership of the CCP.’<sup>93</sup> Notwithstanding the violent outlawing and repression of the Falun gong movement, to which we will return below, official discourses concerning religion became increasingly positive. In 2007, Hu encouraged ‘religious people to “play an active role in economic and social development” by providing some of the moral foundations required to build a ‘moderately prosperous society’.<sup>94</sup>

Overall, the restating of the CCP’s official policy towards religion and the repression that did take place had little effect overall on the religious boom that was already brewing. Meanwhile, the slow evolution of official Party *discourse* on religion hides a tidal wave of developments that occurred outside of the state-regulated category of *zongjiao* over the same period, and which put the ruling CCP and the various levels of its administration before a fait accompli. As Adam Chau remarks, authorities have even facilitated this revival: ‘Most local cadres not only tolerate apparently superstitious activities but even encourage and participate actively in them. The central government has so far avoided using Maoist-era campaign-style strategies to deal with the “superstition boom”.’<sup>95</sup> As we will see, this boom took the shapes and forms typical of religion in the Global-Market regime.

## Religious Change 2: Qigong Fever<sup>96</sup>

The transmutations and meteoric rise of qigong exemplifies many of the underlying logics of the religious reconfigurations that have been at work in Reform Era China. Qigong is an urban phenomenon, and therefore at the heart of China’s new market society. We have seen in the preceding chapter how the state packed and sanitised a wide array of body techniques into the single category of qigong, which it secularised and institutionalised within

the medical system in support of ‘the communist state’s project of developing the health of the masses and of extracting and transforming all useful elements of traditional culture in the service of building the New China.’<sup>97</sup> While body cultivation was banned during part of the Cultural Revolution, qigong mutated once again to reappear within urban parks and a series of other contexts. In the space of decade, China was taken over by a veritable “qigong fever”. By 1990, it is estimated that there were over 100 million qigong practitioners—that is 20% of the urban population—in mainland China. As David Palmer writes, ‘Body cultivation practices known as qigong [...] were the most widespread form of popular religiosity in post-Mao urban China between 1979 and 1999.’<sup>98</sup>

The story of the qigong fever starts with a sixty-year-old Chinese woman who successfully cured herself from cancer by using qigong. In the midst of the Cultural Revolution, Guo Lin, a somewhat renowned landscape painter, started to teach the qigong method she developed in Beijing parks, initiating other miraculous cures. An increasing number of participants started to attend her free courses, and she developed and systematised her method, for which she trained new teachers. Accused of superstition, she was obliged to move to other parks to lead her practice and was interrogated seven times by the authorities between 1971 and 1977. Because of this, she contemplated emigrating to the US before changing her mind and deciding to devote her life to treating illnesses through qigong in her homeland. Mao had passed away in the meantime, and Guo Lin eventually benefited from the protection of Party officers she had helped to cure. In 1977, she was habilitated and asked to give lectures and showcase her technique at the most prestigious universities. The same year, new research projects were launched to investigate the powers of qigong in various medical and research institutions. In 1979, one of these researchers, Gu Hansen, claimed to have discovered the “external *qi*”. Contrary to the “internal *qi*”, which the patient or practitioner can learn to manipulate and circulate in order to treat and heal her or himself, the external *qi* can be emitted from a therapist to a patient, or even an object. Shortly after, an official meeting was held with the heads of the Chinese Medicine and Health Ministry in the presence of several high-seated Party officials: the rebirth of qigong was approved.<sup>99</sup>

From then on, the practice of qigong literally exploded, well beyond what the government could control. ‘The fact that qigong is a type of body practice that blurs the boundaries between physical fitness exercises, mystic visualizations, and even apocalyptic militancy, opened a space for the massive spread of a body-centered religiosity.’<sup>100</sup> Some lineages that had managed to survive underground during Mao’s reign re-emerged, and bunches of new lineages were created, each with its own method and technique. Qigong rapidly branched out through transnational networks, intermeshing with New Age constellations in the West. The mass movement initiated by Guo Lin was based on a charismatic leader and networks of teachers and practitioners that communicated through books and videotapes, and later CDs, DVDs, and

the Internet. The “qigong milieu” became organised through a web of associations, publications, and institutional relays within the research, health, and higher education sectors, in a decentralised and rhizomatic manner.<sup>101</sup> Qigong lineages developed rapidly and with a democratic impetus, worlds away from the traditional esoteric modes of transmission. While body cultivation techniques were formerly part of a repertoire and inscribed within wider religious, mystical, medical, and ritual complexes, they became an end in themselves.<sup>102</sup> Methods were compact and modular, easy to understand and to teach, and made to provide clear paths of progression in view of self-realisation. From an audience of hundreds, some qigong masters grew their following to millions when they appeared on television and other media.

Nancy N. Chen relates the qigong boom to the neoliberalisation of the Chinese state and the marketisation of health services.

The momentous change in the health care system were a key catalyst for the pursuit of these more accessible forms of medicine. They provoked a deep crisis in faith in the government’s ability to provide for its citizens, especially the elderly who were loyal supporters. Concern about falling through the cracks of the existing medical system was thus a critical backdrop to the increased popularity of qigong as an alternative form of healing. [...] Qigong was thus part of the shift to market medicine. Promoted both by the state and by medical practitioners and masters, qigong fitted well with people’s desires for better health and less costly prescriptions. As the state health care system became entrepreneurial so too did Chinese medicine and other healing practices. Compared to costly and time-consuming visits to clinics, practitioners found that qigong was more convenient, inexpensive and enjoyable. Practitioners claimed that it decreased stress and anxiety, and gave energy immediately.<sup>103</sup>

The state allowed this proliferation since it soothed some of the effects of the shift to a market economy. Moreover, ‘the patronage of well-known and well-positioned officials was crucial for the formation of a master’s social networks.’<sup>104</sup> It was only when these masters had accumulated significant capital that the authorities started to pay attention with a less benevolent eye.

Because of its roots in traditional Chinese practices of self-cultivation, qigong provided a formidable vehicle for the appropriation and dissemination of expressive individualism, the ethics of authenticity, and self-realisation. Qigong promotes and produces transformations hinged on a charismatic bond with a master and a branded technique. It emphasises experience over belief, dogma, and exclusive and explicit belonging. Practitioners are attracted to qigong for a variety of reasons, including healing, fighting disease, well-being, life balance, solace and company (especially for the elderly), experience seeking, interest in the paranormal, or simple curiosity. While only some are animated by a mystical desire and a spiritual quest from the outset,

many develop such an interest as a result of their practice. In the words of David Palmer, qigong functions as a “converter”;<sup>105</sup> through qigong, many adepts become involved in Chinese medicine, Taoism, Buddhism, and a score of other religiosities.

Meanwhile, methods involving the manipulation of the external *qi* rapidly developed parallel to the more inward methods oriented towards self-healing and self-mastery. Blurring the borders between science, tradition, medicine, and the paranormal (which were upheld by the state during Mao’s reign), various therapies were developed that aimed to cure and heal through the emission of *qi*, without the active participation of the patient. Qigong also evolved as a way to cultivate the purportedly innate potential for extraordinary and paranormal capacities (called “exceptional functions”), from telepathy to moving objects with the power of the mind. In another variety that Palmer calls “ecstatic qigong”, qigong masters assembled thousands (sometimes in stadiums) for multiple-hour conferences (called “conferences imbued with the Force”) in which people fell into trance and numerous miraculous healings occurred. Forms of glossolalia emerged, as well as ecstatic behaviours very much reminiscent of Pentecostal assemblies.<sup>106</sup> These events were reported by the media and generated immense enthusiasm. They resonated with trends within pop culture, such as the enormous popularity of martial arts, which were featured in novels mixing science-fiction, tradition, and futurism. In the 1980s, religious themes were everywhere: on air, in books, and on television.<sup>107</sup> The trend has barely receded since.

Investing in the potentials of the external *qi* within a scientific framework allowed Chinese to reconcile their “civilisational essence” with modernity, qigong generated national pride and fed the general utopianism of the 1980s. Healing, personal growth, and the search for religious experiences animated the qigong movement, whether in its internal (New Age-like) or external (Pentecostal-like) *qi* forms. Qigong conveys an immanent-transcendent animist cosmology, in which the body and the mind are one, individuals and the cosmos are linked by a universal flow of vital energy, and every living creature has a spirit with which humans can communicate. The explosion of qigong is linked to its social function as a catalysis for an embodied, individualised brand of religion in the wake of the collapse of Maoism. For Palmer, qigong not only acted to fill a social, cultural, and spiritual void, it also reconciled the contradictions of Chinese modernisation in the new era of reforms by repackaging traditional practices of body cultivation and cosmologies with science, giving new dignity to Chinese civilisation. Qigong in this period reconciled the tensions between tradition and modernity that had been at war for the whole of the twentieth century. It also offered a powerful means by which to simultaneously work to realise the utopian project of a New Self and a New Society.<sup>108</sup>

The religious impulse of the qigong movement asserted itself increasingly over the course of the 1980s, as it grew and diversified within the logics of the market, feebly organised yet immensely profitable for some masters.

As qigong developed through entrepreneurialism and the power of charismatic authorities, some lineages began espousing millenarianism and messianism. The authorities had let qigong develop, surprised as they were by the unanticipated boom, but became concerned by the potential menace of the largest of the rapidly expanding lineages. In 1988, national media began urging the population to practice qigong and not the “religion of qigong”.<sup>109</sup> With the massive expansion of qigong, the rise of negative reactions (headaches, sickness, delirium, and mental disorders for instance) turned it into a national health issue. In 1989, some scientists started to cast doubt over the existence of the external *qi*, and some masters were accused of charlatanism.

The Tiananmen events coincided with an increase in rules aiming at mass lineages, which were obliged to institutionalise within structured organisations. The state demanded that the qigong milieu submit to the state, profess the compatibility of qigong with materialism (*qi* as an empirical and material force), continue to develop within scientific parameters, contribute to hygiene, health, and economic growth, and, finally, work for the moral and spiritual education of the nation through the renewal the millennial Chinese tradition.<sup>110</sup> The largest lineages and those who saw some interest in doing so accepted to come under the state’s scrutiny by complying with its demands and seeking the approbation of the authorities. The regulation of qigong was enforced by a variety of state offices linked to sports, health, education, medicine, science, commerce and industry, the Central Committee, and even the national defence—but not the Religious Affairs Bureau.<sup>111</sup> Meanwhile, smaller lineages opted to avoid contact with the state bureaucracy and act in order not to attract attention.<sup>112</sup>

The latent messianism and millenarianism built into the charismatic nature of qigong, combined with the massification of the movement and institutionalisation of the larger lineages, produced a variety of destinies. First, a movement called the Zangmigong was approved by the regime. It derives from Tibetan Buddhism, from which it took its modes of initiation, meditation, and sutra recitation, in addition to body cultivation. It strictly followed the state’s directives and presented itself as a science, negating its religious dimension.<sup>113</sup> Another movement, the Zhonggong, experienced a different destiny. Led by the highly charismatic Zhang Hongbao, the Zhonggong, which Palmer calls an “industrial lineage”,<sup>114</sup> exemplifies the strategic commercialisation and rationalisation of qigong. After securing political support within the Party, Hongbao founded an American-Chinese joint venture that expanded into a national network aiming to ‘transform the human energy liberated by qigong into economic benefits.’<sup>115</sup> In 1994, as Zhonggong became too big, the authorities in Beijing decided to close it, and Hongbao went into exile.

A last—but not least—example is the Falun gong, which expanded rapidly after the demise of the Zhonggong. For all its entrepreneurialism, the latter had a heavy and bureaucratic structure, while the Falun gong spread as a decentralised, supple, and reticular organisation. Its founder and charismatic leader, Li Hongzhi, ‘condemned the commercialization of qigong.’<sup>116</sup>

Rather than economic success, the Falun gong focused on the ethical and religious dimensions of qigong, releasing tremendous energies as it captured and crystallised the religious aspirations of the Chinese. Its message mixed esotericism and demonology, as did other qigong masters, but Li Hongzhi progressively shifted the focus of the movement from bodily practice to religious ideology (and therefore belief). His apocalyptic vision denounced the moral decadence of humanity and the omnipresence of the forces of evil. He cranked up the messianic dial by presenting himself as a universal prophet and saviour, while exhorting his adepts to purify their hearts and free themselves from attachment to materiality. Finally, he imposed exclusive belonging and forbade the practice of other techniques.<sup>117</sup> In other words, the Falun gong ‘exited qigong’<sup>118</sup> and became too much like “a religion” (*zongjiao*). Note however that the state officially called Falun gong an “evil sect” (*xiejiao*), renewing with the terminology of prior repression campaigns against superstition and forms of religion deemed dangerous. To qigong’s optimism and reconciliation of body and mind, modernity and tradition, the Falun gong opposed radical pessimism; to qigong’s inclusiveness, the Falun gong opposed exclusion and sectarianism; to qigong’s hopes for the future, the Falun gong opposed the apocalyptic end of the world; to qigong’s immanent-transcendence, the Falun gong opposed radical, vertical transcendence.

Falun gong’s extraordinary success shows how it tapped into some of the contradictions of Chinese society during the radical economic liberalisation of the 1990s. The Falun gong denounced generalised corruption—economic, political, and moral. The Falun gong also denounced the anarchy of the qigong milieu, which was ridden with charlatans and false masters. Interestingly, the Falun gong spread within the masses and the lower classes. It claimed to be rooted in Taoism and Buddhism, whose institutions, it denounced, were corrupt. *A contrario*, it claimed a continuity with an ancient and pristine millennial tradition. On the other hand, the Falun gong transgressed every one of the state’s directives and contested the Party’s hegemony in matters of morality. It also voiced a radical critique of materialism, and therefore the state’s strategy of development into a market and consumer society. Finally, as with the redemptive societies in the former Nation-State regime, the Falun gong opposed universalism to the CCP’s renewed nationalism. After some escalation, the Falun gong organised a silent protest of over ten thousand practitioners ‘outside Zhongnanhai, the official state compound where leaders reside,’<sup>119</sup> in April 1999, resuscitating the memory of Tiananmen. A few months later, a national anti-Falun gong campaign was launched and the movement was dissolved and outlawed.<sup>120</sup> Li Hongzhi exiled to the US, where he still lives.

Worried that the qigong milieu would produce more Falun gongs, the state imposed a centralised administrative system for qigong and gave official recognition to eleven lineages that satisfied its criteria (including that of Guo Lin). Other movements were disbanded, and many masters were arrested and imprisoned. The qigong movement had lost its autonomy, apart from

the smaller networks that decided to continue under the radar or in strictly regional confines. What subsists is what the government calls “hygienic qigong”: entirely “secularised” (i.e. spiritual but not *zongjiao!*) and personalised offers, some of which have blended with global New Age networks and/or have been reformatted on the yoga model—yoga, which, incidentally, has become ubiquitous in Chinese metropolises in recent years. As in the West, Eastern Europe, and Latin America, New Age therapies and yoga have become ‘fashionable among upwardly mobile professionals seeking relaxation in the large urban centers.’<sup>121</sup>

### Religious Change 3: The Return of Temple Festivals

A divide between city and rurality existed in the Nation-State era, but it has been growing in the Reform Era. Yet, masses of Chinese who are part of the first and now second-generation internal immigration from the country to the city regularly travel back to their place of origin during national holidays such as the Lunar New Year celebrations and Tomb Sweeping day. While qigong was exploding in Chinese cities, another wave was sweeping over the countryside. Indeed, ‘an extraordinary renaissance of reinvented traditional forms of ritual activity’ spread over rural China. This revival revolved around the temples, which were massively reinstated and reconstructed from the very first days of Deng’s economic reforms. Since, a number of temple destruction campaigns have been registered, yet, overall, it ‘is estimated that *one to two million* village temples have been rebuilt or restored nationwide, and ritual traditions long thought lost [have been] redeployed and celebrated in many of these temples.’<sup>122</sup> The number of reconstructed and reactivated temples is even more astonishing when we consider that there were officially *no temple* in operation at the time of the Cultural Revolution, and when we remember that there were approximately *one million* in operation in 1900.<sup>123</sup> As Adam Yuet Chau puts it,

all of a sudden people [were] busy rebuilding or renovating temples, ancestral halls, and graves that were torn down during the Cultural Revolution, reconstructing family genealogies that were burnt by the Red Guards, reenacting long suppressed rituals around births, weddings, and deaths, going to temple festivals, reading ritual handbooks and consulting fortune-tellers and geomancers, praying for male babies, or simply thinking feudalistic thoughts.<sup>124</sup>

As with the qigong boom, the temple boom came as a surprise for the authorities, yet it has produced a dynamic whose dimensions are formidable by all measures, and which are inextricable from the wider processes of marketisation that have transformed Chinese society from top to bottom.

As we have seen, early economic reforms were operated in the countryside, as authorities encouraged trade in local markets. Traditionally, temple

festivals played a significant role in rural economies, and were what Gene Cooper calls, following Marcel Mauss, “total social facts” that united peasant society. Temple festivals were vibrant social events that mixed religious, political, cultural, and economic dimensions. During the Cultural Revolution, even secularised fairs had been outlawed as “sprouts of capitalist restoration” and expressions of the “four olds” (old habits, customs, beliefs, and culture). With the sea change following Mao’s death and Deng Xiaoping’s reforms, these fairs became authorised and even encouraged by the local authorities as effective means of ‘stimulating rural commodity production, circulation, and commerce, and boosting rural commodity trade’ while feeding the growth of the ‘spirit of consumerism.’<sup>125</sup> With the festivals came the temples, and with rebuilt and reassigned temples came festivals. Temple fairs are special and spectacular events in which market activities are embedded in wider celebrations, performances, games, and other activities (divination, martial arts, acrobatics, music, operas, competitions, entertainment, and processions). Authorities were quick to understand that these events were efficient means by which to fuel economic development.

This massive popular religion revival did not seem to worry the Communist state as do the Falun gong and some Christian churches. The category of *zongjiao*, introduced in early twentieth-century China to define “real” and acceptable religion, and against the standard of which superstition could be defined and suppressed, comes with a twist in the Reform Era. This category, which is used to officially recognise five world religions (Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Catholicism, and Protestantism) and suppress others (Falun gong, some Christian churches), enables the state to contain at least as much as it enables these institutionalised “faiths”. As we have seen, in the Nation-State era, a purification process aimed to separate religion (*zongjiao*), superstition (*mixin*), and secular activities. In the Reform Era, however, the very limited horizon of *zongjiao* has enabled the state to label as “culture” and “folk customs”, rather than as religion or superstition, wide portions of the popular religion revival. Moreover, the authorities have actually encouraged this revival as a means of accelerating economic growth and development, namely through rituals, temple festivals, pilgrimages, and tourism. Popular religion has served economic growth at the same time that ‘secular commercial fairs have served as incubation sites for popular religious activity.’<sup>126</sup>

A key for understanding these developments is to distinguish between ‘two guises of the Chinese socialist state: the policy-making central state and the local state that implements and often bends the policies.’ As neoliberal reforms have contributed to decentralise and “subcontract” or delegate significant portions of state regulation, ‘the local state has increased its administrative and fiscal autonomy considerably vis-à-vis the central state.’ Therefore, it is not the central state that acts ‘upon popular religion; rather, it is the local agents of the state who do.’<sup>127</sup> The central state’s objective of economic growth and its evaluation of local governments according to their success in achieving this objective has led to experiments in which religious revival and economic development have proved to be a “win-win” combination, to use

neoliberal vernacular. Furthermore, while Chinese diasporas were cut off and eminently suspect during the rule of Mao, they were actively courted in the Reform Era as potential investors. One effective means to ensure such investments has been to allow these foreign Chinese to finance the reconstruction and renovation of temples and ancestral halls, as well as ritual activities. This was particularly true in China's take-off phase with its diasporas in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau, and places like Singapore and Malaysia. These were indeed the first sources of investments that led to the industrialisation of the Free Economic Zones and the Coastline areas. At the turn of the millennium, overseas Chinese accounted for 85% of total foreign capital.<sup>128</sup>

This scenario was multiplied across mainland China at various paces and with different starting points depending on where you look. Cooper's study of 'Jinhua, a middle-rung city on the prosperous east coast of China,'<sup>129</sup> that is in a region that was among the first to be opened to foreign investments and economic liberalisation, shows these trends at work in the late 1980s when he started his fieldwork. He reports a spectrum of temple festivals that go from the almost purely secular (e.g., Huqi, Luodian) 'to the fully fledged "total" religious festivals of Fanqyan (the Hugong temple fair), with several communities occupying intermediate levels by virtue of potent religious traditions pregnant to revive.'<sup>130</sup> These findings converge with those of Kenneth Dean in Southeast China. Dean insists on how the revival of tradition produces a new synthesis and new social configuration that comforts the new meaning of "modernity" in the Market era. He also insists on how this revival has touched very wide portions of the rural population:

A person who has grown up in South-east China over the past 30 years will have performed many different roles in ritual events, carrying lanterns, marching in procession, carrying the sedan chair of the gods, perhaps becoming possessed by the gods.<sup>131</sup>

The temple-based popular religion revival, in other words, is not a marginal phenomenon.

Adam Chau's study of the Heilongdawang (Black Dragon King) temple in the Shaanbei area (northern Shaanxi Province) of North-central China provides another example. Completely destroyed during the Mao period, the Heilongdawang temple was reconstructed in 1982, and has developed into a multibuilding and multifunctional complex that includes 'the main temple, two subsidiary halls, a primary school, and a large-scale reforestation project.'<sup>132</sup> In and around it, one also finds the whole spectrum of activities and services of popular religion, including exorcism, protective talismans, divination, spiritual counselling, burning incense, burning paper money, geomancy (*fengshui*), spirit writing, spirit mediums, fortune-telling, and a score of other rituals, from seeking healing powers from a deity to feeding the hungry ghosts and performing animal sacrifices. Heilongdawang is a perfect example of the type of mixed phenomena that thrives in the blurred boundaries of the Global-Market regime. It has become a major pilgrimage and

touristic site and was given official recognition as an official Taoist shrine in 1998, something unimaginable a few years prior. Chau insists on temple-based popular religion's liturgical and theological simplicity, enabling it to "hibernate" under unfavourable conditions. 'Under favorable conditions, however, popular religion expands, elaborates, and no degree of exuberance is unimaginable.'<sup>133</sup>

Local elites now gravitate around the revived temples, and Chau notes how 'many temple leaders are current or former village Party secretaries.' They therefore have 'the know-how and connections to negotiate with, for example, the local Religious Affairs Bureau.'<sup>134</sup> Another common phenomenon is 'actual entrepreneurs entering into contractual agreements to run temples, sometimes at the invitation of locals who want the temple to benefit from the entrepreneurs' business skills and wide connections.'<sup>135</sup> As Chan and Lang write, 'An important part of the story of the revival of religion in these sites [i.e. temples, but also shrines, monasteries, churches, and even mosques] is the activity of the developers, managers, and promoters of these religion sites.'<sup>136</sup> Since temples and ancestral halls are local resources situated at the crossroads between the state, the people, and the business world, they are crucial for the local production and distribution of power and legitimacy across the social spectrum. Talking about the situation in the Fujian South-eastern coastal region, Dean writes how some 'temples became so wealthy that they were able to establish scholarship funds, direct local infrastructure projects such as paving roads and laying down electricity, and dispense charity to beggars and impoverished families.'<sup>137</sup> In accordance with the general consequences of neoliberalism for religion, temples have taken up responsibilities that were hitherto a prerogative of the state. As Dean captures it, 'The temples of the gods [have] returned to a central role in Chinese rural life,'<sup>138</sup> at the intersection of politics, economics, and religion.<sup>139</sup>

### **Religion: Bad, Superstition: Good (for Business)**

Mayfair Yang's research in the Wenzhou region reveals similar dynamics. Wenzhou is a geographically, culturally, and linguistically enclaved region on the southeast coast of Zhejiang Province, south of Shanghai and northwest of the island of Taiwan. This essentially rural region, surrounded by mountains and poor in arable land, has been hit by rapid urbanisation and reform-led changes, yet with some delay compared to other coastal regions. In her book *Reenchanting Modernity*, M. Yang tells how she didn't initially set out to study popular religion but rather the constitution of civil society. Yet she noticed that the

organizations that showed a truly independent grassroots character and self-organizational ability in a bottom-up, spontaneous development all had a ritual or religious orientation. These were deity temples, Daoist and Buddhist temples, lineages and their ancestor halls, and Christian churches.<sup>140</sup>

Having tuned her research interests to accommodate the growing importance of popular religion, she also observed a sea change in the general attitude towards these practices, including among local officials.

Throughout the 1990s, local officials actively discouraged or prohibited local temples and lineages from launching public rituals; now they were competing with each other to nominate local rituals and festivals for inclusion as an Intangible Cultural Heritage! Whereas in the 1990s local officials were embarrassed, telling me not to pay attention to “old things”, now they were talking about “salvage projects” to save Chinese indigenous traditions that they had had a hand in endangering.<sup>141</sup>

M. Yang notes how the terms used to talk of popular religion in Wenzhou changed around 2005 from the pejorative “superstition” (*mixin*) to more neutral or even positive terms such as “popular beliefs” (*minjian xinyan*), “customary beliefs”, and “belief customs”.<sup>142</sup> These new categories ‘serve to renormalize popular religion as a way of life or peasant culture, by invoking a historical category of Chinese civilization, reversing a century of modern labelling as “superstition.”’<sup>143</sup>

Probably because of the influence of Western Christian churches in the 1989 protest movement and the pro-democracy movement more generally, in addition to the Falun gong scare, the state’s perceived source of instability has changed. While danger came from superstition in the Nation-State era, now danger comes from “religion”. The term religion (*zongjiao*) now connotes rebellious movements and is

associated with political unrest, such as global Islamism and the Catholic Church in 1980s Poland. Thus, in a strange about-face, just as the term “superstition” is subsiding, its counterpart, “religion,” may now inspire more concern in China as a threat to the secular order.<sup>144</sup>

In fact, it is the whole triad of religion/superstition/secular that is eroding. Its boundaries are changing. Its social functions are no longer operating. Within the new symbolic order of the Global-Market regime, this triad is no longer a foundation of the nation-state. As we will see, the legitimacy of the state, its rapport with society, and the constitution of the nation now rest on other pillars and other dynamics.

### Give Me Hot and Noisy

Explaining how what used to be violently repressed as “feudal superstition” only a few decades ago could experience such a revival and place temples and temple festivals at the centre of Chinese religious, social, cultural, political, and economic life requires a complex and multi-layered response. My underlying argument here is that this sudden and drastic turnaround has been made possible by what Lagerwey calls a “paradigm shift”, or what

Willis calls a “change in the symbolic order” of Chinese society. In my own terms: the move from the Nation-State to the Global-Market regime. Yet many other lower-level factors come into play and reveal some of the concrete dynamics of such important structural changes.

As Chau argues, any monocausal explanation for the religious boom in Reform-Era China can only be partial and misguided. He insists on the importance of “magical efficacy” (*ling*) at work in popular religion, meaning the ‘miraculous response (*linying*) to the worshipper’s request for divine assistance (granting a son, granting magical medicine, bringing rain, resolving a dilemma through divination, granting prosperity, etc.).’<sup>145</sup> Among the social forces that are at work to enable the revival of *ling*-seeking practices, Chau cites

the political ambition of local activists, the regulatory and paternalistic interventions of local state agencies, the economic interests of temples, merchants, and related specialists (including folk musicians and opera performers), the collective religiosity and fun-seeking spirit of the worshipers, and the increasingly frequent translocal linkages between social actors in local communities and outside actors.<sup>146</sup>

As M. Yang observes, popular religion is much more about ritual action than belief.<sup>147</sup> This is even truer for what happens at temple festivals and which the Chinese call *renao* or *honghuo*, and which scholars translate as “hot and noisy sociality” or “heightened excitement”.<sup>148</sup> *Honghuo* captures what the post-Reformation Western Christian model of religion aimed to suppress with its emphasis on individual belief and sober ritual. This mission was key to the formatting of religion in the Nation-State era and the elimination of superstition. During the reign of Mao, the preferred and authorised outlets for hot and noisy sociality were Party-licensed political rallies: ‘the red-hot pageantry of the Tiananmen Square parades and large-scale struggle meetings’<sup>149</sup> were self-conscious political instrumentalisations of the powers of *honghuo*. Besides these officially-licensed events, no temples meant no temple festivals; and no temple fairs meant no *honghuo*. In the post-Mao era, however, hot and noisy sociality is back, and it is as integral to the reconfigurations of religion in the Reform Era as they were to premodern popular religion. The return of temple festivals is a Chinese version of a larger, global trend by which religion spills out of its box and thrives in experience-rich mass gatherings and spectacular, event forms.<sup>150</sup> Paradigmatically, religion in the Global-Market era thrives both in personalised (*qigong*) and collective forms (festivals).

The experience of *honghuo* at temple festivals includes practices which mainstream Western sociology of religion is perhaps not used to have in its catalogue. Chau’s description is worthy of a quote:

The worshiper gets off the bus or tractor-truck, whichever is his means of transportation to get to the temple festival, passing through noodle

stands, watermelon stands, gambling circles, song-and-dance tents, buys a few bundles of incense and spirit money from the incense hawkers, climbs up the steps to the main temple hall, throws the spirit money into the bonfire, lights a string of firecrackers, kneels and prays, burns incense, puts some money in the donation bowl, shakes the divination cylinder and gets his divination slip number, gets immediately pushed aside by worshipers coming up from behind, goes to the divination room and has the divination poem interpreted, then squeezes his way through the crowd to catch a glimpse of the opera performance, and wanders through the different parts of the festival ground, snacks or eats a bowl of noodles, chats with acquaintances and co-villagers or complete strangers, plays a few rounds of gems, watches the fireworks at night, and always finds himself in the company of tens of thousands of other worshippers.<sup>151</sup>

Traditionally, rural society coalesced during temple festivals. With the rapid urbanisation of the Reform Era, however, many rural and agrarian regions are being bled of their inhabitants. This changes the rituals' functions in part. Festivals today are less what binds a community of people who actually live on the same territory, know each other or situate each other with respect to lineages and villages, and are increasingly events that cater to the need for effervescent communion and authentic experiences. We have seen how temples have played a key role in attracting foreign investments and fueling economic development. One means for this are pilgrimages and tourism. Ian Reader has shown how pilgrimages and tourism were inseparable in premodern times, whether in Japan or in France, and how the same is true today.<sup>152</sup> This argument applies to contemporary China. Temple festivals aim to attract those who have emigrated for a trip back home, but also people from surrounding regions and urbanites in need of a break in the country and a taste of China's civilisational essence. A momentary return to cultural fundamentals.

### Comeback *Nuo*

Temple reconstruction and the revival of popular religion also concern minority cultures. Lan Li's research on the *nuo* religion of the Tujia ethnic minority group in Guizhou province in South-west China provides an interesting case. *Nuo* religion 'combines exorcism, divination, religious drama using face masks, and ancestor and deity worship.'<sup>153</sup> It dates back to Antiquity and has experienced varying rapports with the imperial state. While it enjoyed a privileged status during the Zhou dynasty (1121–249 BCE), it was progressively marginalised as Confucianism was adopted as the religion of the state and reduced to a form of folk religion. The prestige of *nuo* was revived during the Ming dynasty, before declining again by the time of the Qing. In the early twentieth century, *nuo* unsurprisingly fell on the superstition side of the *mixin/zongjiao* divide and was suppressed, before being simply banned

as “superstitious poisonous weeds of feudalism”, and driven underground, barely maintained by a small number of initiated.<sup>154</sup>

Once the economic reforms were launched and the ideological framework of Maoism was loosened, local authorities answered the call for economic development by investing in the revival of *nuo*. Lan Li captures it remarkably in this passage worth quoting at length:

To avoid ideological disagreement and debate, the post-Mao ideologues allow religion to be defined and categorized as a secular subject, as just another manifestation of local culture, custom or belief. The effect of this ideological transformation cannot be [overstated], as it removes important sources of conflict between religion and an official state ideology preventing the effective use of religion by a regime bound by its own Marxist dogma. In the case of *nuo*, this form of traditional religion has been re-categorised as various forms of culture since the early 1980s, such as a cultural marker of an ethnic minority group, the Tujia, a “living fossil” of primitive culture, a valuable piece of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) at national level and a cultural product supporting the local tourist industry. As such, although *nuo* remains much the same as it has been practiced for generations among the rural populace, it is now being used by the party-state to implement its revised policies on ethnic minorities while demonstrating the “evolution” of Marxist theory and hence buttressing the legitimacy of the CCP. *Nuo*, along with other forms of local custom, is also being harnessed by the party-state as useful instruments of social control, enhancing the cohesion of the nation and safeguarding national unification, while at the same time “culture” and its local manifestations are being exploited, commodified and commercialized as new product-lines in a fast-growing economy. Consequently, *nuo* has ceased to be regarded as “feudalistic superstition” and has gained official endorsement at all levels: from township government all the way up to the central government of the party-state.<sup>155</sup>

Eventually, the Dejiang regional government decided ‘to accelerate local economic development by turning the whole municipality into a tourist site called the Nuo World Capital City.’<sup>156</sup> This site houses

a *nuo* ritual and mask display area, a business negotiation area, a leisure area, a shopping area with three culture streets (a food culture street, a tourist commodity street and an ethnic minority culture street), a herbal medicine health recuperation area, a Buddhism-experiencing area and a tourist resort.<sup>157</sup>

With the full support of the central government, the commodification and commercialisation of *nuo* culture is part of a national strategy for accelerating development, maintaining political stability, and legitimating one-party rule.

The reinvention and revival of *nuo* comes with its paradoxes and challenges. While the commercial exploitation of *nuo* by its practitioners is a tool for *nuo*'s continuation, the 'solemn religious ritual has become a purely theatrical show of acrobatics'. Made-for-the-stage dramatisations edit the ritual and emphasise exotic skills, like when a performer climbs a ladder of knives barefoot or when an iron nail is inserted in the head of the *nuo* master. Similarly, new movements are added in these showcase performances that do not have ties to the religious function of the ritual. Incidentally, 'the original connection between the ritual and sufferer of misfortune'<sup>158</sup> is lost in the process. At the same time, entertainment-driven performances are legitimate *nuo* rituals and have allowed practitioners to restart the chain of succession and develop their business as service providers, alongside the performances.

In ancient times, *nuo* rituals were performed at the emperor's court to exorcise evil spirits, and in the countryside for whole communities. The enforcement of Confucianism in the Ming and Qing dynasties forced *nuo* to evolve into a more private ritual service 'dealing with various personal life crises and problems, such as serious or terminal disease, infertility, child mortality, accidents and so on.'<sup>159</sup> The principle of these rituals then as today is communication with and animal sacrifices (chicken, goats, pigs for the most elaborate, which can last up to seven days) to the *nuo* gods, which are shown by diviners to be responsible for the person's ills. *Nuo*'s constitution seamlessly blends into the service orientation of religion in the Global-Market regime, providing fertile ground for it to thrive anew. The lavish and vibrant costumes and masks, meanwhile, as well as the spectacular and danger-filled choreographies, enable *nuo* to find its niche within China's consumer culture. Religion and economics are inextricably intertwined.

### Religion as Culture, or Culture as Religion?

The revival of popular religion in Reform Era China has been made possible by the rebranding of banned superstitious practices and beliefs as "culture". Surprised with the eruption of temple reconstruction and the revival of practices, the CCP reacted pragmatically and sought to find its advantage. It found a way to do so through categorial alchemy. Rebranded as culture, popular religion like *nuo* 'was identified as a means of promoting rapid economic growth, maintaining state unification and social stability, and raising the country's cultural "soft power" in the eyes of the world.'<sup>160</sup>

In this respect, UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) program has been at the centre of China's strategy to link economic development and popular religion. The ICH convention was adopted in Paris in 2003 to confer protection for immaterial traditions worldwide. As M. Yang explains, "Intangible Heritage" refers to traditional customs, folksongs, arts and crafts, and so forth that are indigenous to a culture and have a long history.'<sup>161</sup> The program has been successful in bringing attention to and safeguarding many traditions, yet it has also provided 'numerous opportunities for

profit or political advantage.<sup>162</sup> ICH has been seized as an opportunity by the CCP in the wake of its integration within the folds of the WTO and its new global orientation. It also served as an internal design with respect to nation-building. As Li Changchun, the CCP's top propaganda official, said in 2006,

The protection of intangible cultural heritage and maintaining continuity of the national culture constitute an essential cultural base for enhancing [the] cohesion of the nation, boosting national unity, invigorating the national spirit and safeguarding national unification.<sup>163</sup>

Inspired by South Korea's recognition of the Gangneung Dano Festival as "Korean cultural heritage", China instilled 'competition between local governments to win recognition for items of ICH.'<sup>164</sup> Such a strategy of generalised competitiveness is a perfect embodiment of the principles of neoliberal governance. The process requires that regions first give recognition to a given tradition and lobby in order to secure recognition at the national level. The aim is then for the central state to bring the case to the international level. At the time of writing, forty-three Chinese traditions have been inscribed as UNESCO ICH, including the following, which are all expressions of popular religion: Mazu (goddess of the sea) beliefs and customs, Duanwu (Dragon Boat festival), the Manas epic of the Kirgiz minority, the Gesar epic of Mongolian shamanism, the Qiang New Year festival, acupuncture, and Taijiquan, a qigong-related body technique that mixes martial arts and healing.

This is the process by which *nuo* religion was given recognition as a "living fossil of primitive Chinese culture". The result was a surge of media, academic, touristic, and business interest.<sup>165</sup> Examples like these have been contagious, pushing other regions to imitate them. In Wenzhou, authorities have endorsed the Ning village Tang He religious procession honouring a Ming dynasty military general-turned-god as a "Folk Belief Custom". Similarly, legends about gods, ancestors, and Daoist immortals are granted protection under the category "folk literature", while other religious rituals, operas, and deity processions are celebrated as "folk music".<sup>166</sup>

How are we to understand this peculiar branding of popular religion as culture and its promotion by the Chinese secularist state? It is possible to say that the initial impetus for the revival of popular religion was largely bottom-up before meeting the support of some of the authorities: 'it would have been difficult, if not impossible, [for the state] to initiate any unified large scale revival movement across the country.' It was forwarded by home-grown enthusiasts 'who were determined to revive their traditions' and who 'came up with all kinds of excuses to convince the authorities that they were following government policy or at least were not spreading superstition.'<sup>167</sup>

As we have seen in the preceding chapter, *qigong*, martial arts, and traditional Chinese medicine were secularised—that is: "de-religionised"—in order to purify traditional Chinese culture of all of its progress and

modernity-hindering superstitions. In the Reform Era, the means of modernising China are no longer the same; they can be boiled down to one thing: economic development. The meaning of “being modern”,<sup>168</sup> therefore, has changed. It is no longer necessary to fight the “Four Olds” if they can help modernising China by generating economic growth. Officials and social actors were therefore prompt to ally religious/cultural and economic development in order to show the central government some results in the “construction of a new socialist countryside”. ‘For the officials at the grassroots level, a convenient interpretation can be seen in a popular reform-era slogan: “Culture builds the stage, economy sings the opera”, that is, promote the economy by developing the culture industry.’<sup>169</sup>

This cultural branding of popular religion is an ambivalent process. As M. Yang argues, it is both a saviour and a problem.<sup>170</sup> It is a problem because popular religion becomes partly commodified, and risks being dissolved into entertainment. It also brings it under some control of the state. Yet is it also a saviour because the state’s strategy has allowed for an unexpected return of many forms that were deemed forever lost (even while many revivals involve a fair amount of reinvention). By being labelled as “culture”, forms of popular religion enjoy much more autonomy than the practices and institutions officially labelled as religion (*zongjiao*) and regulated by SARA and the RAB. The condition for this freedom is clearly to pose no political threat to the CCP.<sup>171</sup> The latter thereby renews with a late-imperial tradition ‘when religious practices were grouped under the indigenous label of “local customs”’.<sup>172</sup> Rather than expanding the official category of “religion” (*zongjiao*), the CCP is happy with keeping mainly church-ed forms on a leash. Here, pragmatism serves the (post-Marxist) party ideology well. At the same time, the religious dimensions of temple festivals and other popular religion forms are patent.<sup>173</sup> Hence, while recognition and protection as heritage ‘are formulated from a secular point of view, they have allowed religious practices to hide under [cultural] categories.’<sup>174</sup> Boundaries between entertainment and religion, or between tourism and pilgrimage, are blurry at best. They certainly were so in premodern times, and they are again in today’s consumer culture.

### Sweeping Tombs and National Holidays

In premodern times, festivals and rituals lined up the calendar, uniting localities to their territory, and linking these to the nexus of the empire. Twentieth-century reforms swept these festivals away, and by the time of the Cultural Revolution, the only official festival left was the Spring Festival, also known as the Chinese New Year. Parallel to the redemption of Confucianism, to which we will return below, the central state added three “new” traditional festivals to the list of paid national holidays in 2007: *Qingming jie* (Tomb Sweeping), *Duanwu* (Dragon Boat), and Mid-Autumn. ‘All these festivals could be described as belonging to popular religion. Qingming festival in particular is the traditional time in the spring to sweep family tombs and

pay tribute to the ancestors.<sup>175</sup> The practice had already been taken up by many people before its officialisation by the CCP, yet the paid holiday meant people had the means and the leisure to make trips “back home”, helped by the new modernised and functional transport facilities. While these national holiday festivals re-enact premodern, traditional celebrations, they differ in the ways in which they articulate the local and the national. According to Lagerwey, traditional festivals like these ‘were, in a sense, pan-Chinese festivals and may therefore be said to have contributed to the creation of a “Chinese” identity before China was a modern state.’ Yet they were also ‘intensely local in the way they were celebrated.’<sup>176</sup> Today’s re-established festivals, which all have an ancestor worship component, are distinguished by their inversion of the national/local dynamics through their state accreditation and mediatisation in the national media.

It is worth at this point letting M. Yang explain the basics of ancestor worship.

In China, lineages (*zongzu*) are kinship groups that trace their common ancestry through the patrilineal line to a founding male ancestor, many generations in the past. These descent organizations are ritual communities composed of member family units. These families come together a few times each year in ritual sacrifices and tomb-sweeping ceremonies during the Qingming Festival to honor their ancestors. Lineages trace back to archaic China, but they became most prominent in late imperial times, especially in southeastern China, which was an area of frontier settlement by Han Chinese. Here, far from the imperial court, lineage organizations became a form of self-government by local gentry.<sup>177</sup>

Anti-Confucian and anti-superstition campaigns led to the destruction and shutting down of ancestor halls and ritual practices during the Nation-State regime. Official discourse and general attitudes towards lineages remained negative in the early Reform Era, yet ancestor halls began to re-emerge, as did their associated rituals. Ingenious ways were devised to have these halls accepted by the authorities, such as uniting lineages together in secular “memorial halls”.<sup>178</sup> By the turn of the millennium, ancestor halls were built as “cultural centres” that were open to all and offered services to the community such as education and sports. Alongside these activities, ritual practices could resume. Notably, women’s names were made to appear for the first time in the lineage, and women were allowed to participate in the rituals. The tide turned completely when lineages were integrated into the Party’s new brand of nationalism and developmentalism. As the former head of the Wenzhou City Bureau of Culture outlined,

lineages have historical value, and their genealogies supplement official history-writing; they preserve historical relics and develop folk culture; they organize cultural educational activities; they promote scholarship

in history, folklore, and archaeology; and they have strong organizational skills and can help local governments in economic development and connecting up with overseas Chinese.<sup>179</sup>

Thus refashioned, ancestor halls and lineage rituals and sacrifices have been added to the list of tangible and intangible cultural artefacts that can be protected, promoted, and even given the status of ICH.<sup>180</sup>

### Fengshui Revival: The Cosmos in the Room

Fengshui, or “geomancy”, was labelled as superstition and therefore repressed starting in the early twentieth century. Once the CCP took over power, the Red Guards’ book-burning campaigns destroyed incalculable numbers of fengshui books and manuals between 1949 and 1976. As with so many other practices bulked together under the term popular religion, fengshui survived the ban through the stubbornness of tradition, especially in the countryside. Ageing Party officials would secretly consult with a geomancer before passing away in order to arrange for a propitious burial place. As Ole Bruun explains,

In very simple terms, the essence of fengshui is that configurations of land forms and bodies of water are seen to direct the flow of the universal *qi*, or “cosmic current”, which with the help of a specialist can be brought to optimum advantage for a person’s health, wealth, happiness, longevity and procreation; similarly, a malicious flow of *qi* may bring disaster. The flow of *qi* is influenced by all natural bodies and human constructions, which may either repulse, redirect or catch the *qi*.<sup>181</sup>

These principles are applied to the dwellings of both the living (*yang*) and the dead (*yin*). Fengshui masters work with a geomantic compass and consult traditional calendars to determine the best location, design, and orientation for new buildings. Normally a sacrifice must be made on site, such as beheading a chicken. These are some of the channels through which China’s ancient traditions live on.

Fengshui boomed immediately after the implementation of economic reforms. Higher living standards meant the construction of new private houses and new tombs, all of which required the services of a fengshui master. In his study of rural Sichuan, Bruun found ten active fengshui masters per township, which means that local people can easily find a geomancer in or near their village. Most of those in activity in the 1990s and early 2000s were old men who had been trained before the PRC. They had survived underground, as ordinary members of the community. In the Reform Era, they have become extremely busy, and Bruun calculates that every household usually consults a fengshui master every two years. ‘Added to this are the numerous occasions on which people drop by a geomancer’s home to ask for advice, to determine correct days for marriages and funerals or to ask him to

write posters bearing fortune-bringing characters and symbols.<sup>182</sup> Fengshui masters also provide other services, such as exorcism, spirit mediation, and curing illnesses or infertility.

Across mainland China, 'the fengshui situation of a building site is now routinely considered,<sup>183</sup> as it is for graves. 'Fengshui is used by all strata of rural society: government officials, the new rural entrepreneurs, labourers in the new rural industries and ordinary peasants'. Potentially more controversial with respect to official state policy is the 'increasing authority that rural people grant to fengshui with regard to disease aetiology, mental disorders, accidents, the sex of unborn babies, business affairs, and a host of daily-life occurrences, on which geomancers are now consulted.'<sup>184</sup>

The marketisation of China has had a direct impact on the fate of fengshui. The most obvious is linked to the privatisation of healthcare, which has led to expensive care and the concentration of resources in the cities. Before the economic reforms, healthcare was inexpensive and available, and people would first see a medical doctor and then (secretly) a geomancer if things did not improve. The "division of labour" was clear: 'The doctor inspects the body, while the geomancer is in charge of external forces, including ghosts and ancestors.'<sup>185</sup> Now, people see the geomancer first, especially those with low incomes, since he is cheaper. On the other end of the spectrum, businesses and factory owners have become new clients as they wish to ensure that their installations will attract wealth, or to seek correction in case of low profitability. Stories abound of businesses that went from broke to flourishing after a geomancer intervened to change the orientation of gates or add a large stone in the entrance to stop "money flowing out of the building".<sup>186</sup> Such phenomena are not as superfluous as they may appear: they show how popular religion is involved in the incorporation of the new capitalist imperatives in Chinese culture. There is a symbolic analogy at work here between the flow of *qi* and the social imaginary of the market, with its flows of merchandise and money, and its dream of material affluence and upward mobility. Furthermore, fengshui acts to bridge traditional Chinese culture and utilitarian individualism, by embedding individual fates and success (or lack thereof) within a cosmology in which external agencies such as destiny, astrology, and the flow of *qi* all influence personal luck.<sup>187</sup> As Bruun remarks, 'There is a virtually universal Chinese conviction that a good life has material satisfaction as a precondition.'<sup>188</sup>

Fengshui also helps to address the paradox between the individual pursuit of wealth and the common good. The reader might remember how classical liberalism resolved this paradox by insisting on how private vices (Mandeville) or the butcher's self-interest (Smith) miraculously produced the greatest happiness for the greatest number (Bentham), "as if led by an invisible hand". Closer to us, Milton Friedman fired up the financial sector in the 1980s when he claimed that "the social responsibility of business is to make profit".<sup>189</sup> In China, which lacks such a "profound" tradition of liberal economics, fengshui inadvertently contributes to the symbolic

resolution of the paradox between utilitarian behaviour and the production of the common good. Because the social and physical world are interconnected in a whole in which *qi* circulates, enrichment, conspicuousness, and being generally well off are seen as a contextual capacity to ‘catch more of the fortune-bringing *qi*’.<sup>190</sup> The massive revival of fengshui is therefore anything but anecdotal: it is crucial for the penetration of the idea and moral ideal of the Market in Chinese society and the resolution of the inevitable contradictions of neoliberal capitalism.<sup>191</sup>

### Unrooted in Shenzhen

In the words of Chau, ‘It is not an exaggeration to characterize temples as the “motor” of popular religious revivals and a major carrier of folk cultural traditions.’<sup>192</sup> Yet, if temple reconstruction and re-establishment had been massive in the countryside, things have been different in urban areas. Here, the religious revival has taken another path. ‘In sum,’ Fan Lizhu argues, ‘the development of popular religion in contemporary China has two directions. One is the communal type in rural areas, one is privatization in urban areas.’<sup>193</sup> As double-digit growth led to massive urbanisation, the historical neighbourhoods of many cities were simply torn down ‘to make way for broader roads and apartment complexes. Nevertheless, even in these new high-rise developments, local temples to the earth god were being built alongside and in between rows of apartments.’<sup>194</sup> Still, their presence is less noticeable in the urban landscape than they are in the countryside, and their functions differ accordingly.

One of the most extreme examples of urbanisation is the city of Shenzhen in Southern China, facing Hong Kong. Shenzhen was part of the first Special Economic Zones opened by Deng Xiaoping in 1980. Formerly a small fishing town of about 80,000 inhabitants, Shenzhen has grown into a metropolis of 13 million—half of which are “temporary workers” without resident rights—fuelled by radical liberalisation and an average economic growth rate of 25%.<sup>195</sup> This is to say that everybody living in this ultra-modern mega-city is not from Shenzhen and is therefore essentially unrooted from her or his place of origin. One could imagine that if there was one place in China that was preserved as a haven of rationality, sound utilitarianism, and secularism, it would be there. According to Fan and Whitehead, however, this is far from being the case.

These researchers’ work plunges us into a spiritually thirsty Shenzhen. The five recognised religions are present—Taoism, Buddhism, Islam, and Protestant and Catholic Christianity—, and their new and refurbished worship sites are relatively well frequented. Yet, this is not the main thing going on:

evidence from Shenzhen reveals another, often overlooked, dynamic of Chinese modernization. One of the most significant—and surprising—developments has been the extent to which the urbanized Chinese in

Shenzhen adopt and adapt elements of their common spiritual heritage as part of an intentional spiritual search.<sup>196</sup>

The extreme modernisation of Shenzhen has catalysed the emergence, among its constituents, of ‘new questions of meaning and purpose’. Yet, rather than turning to the approved religious institutions, urbanites give ‘very personal expression to their spiritual search in the age-old idiom of China’s common spiritual heritage.’<sup>197</sup> While the need for a “return to fundamentals” provoked by the disruption of market-led globalisation finds a communal expression in rural areas, the process is personalised in urban areas, especially for the middle and upper-classes. (Migrant workers are too busy surviving and working to engage in such introspection.) In other words, Chinese metropolises are home to a massive rise in “spiritual-not-religious” religiosities whose basic structures and dynamics are akin to what is experienced in the West.

As we have seen, post-Mao reforms have had a profound impact on Chinese society and individual lives. The security of the “iron rice bowl”—Mao-era ‘state-sponsored guarantees of lifetime employment’<sup>198</sup> and access to basic necessities, housing, and social provisions—has ceded to the anxieties, insecurities, and thrills of a flexible and open versus fixed career and lifepath. In cities more than anywhere else, ‘a dominant feature of life is the exhilaration of personal choice’ that comes with this insecurity. At the same time, emancipation from the obligations of village and familial obligations does not do away with the need for belonging, orientation, meaning, and recognition. Religion is reconfigured accordingly: in this realm ‘as in much of the rest of their lives, personal choice has become the standard.’<sup>199</sup> Fan and Whitehead relativise the common explanation according to which the “spiritual” boom is simply an answer to the void created by the dissolution of the Maoist ideology and political religion. They write how most of their interviewees

offered another explanation. [...] Respondents wanted to make clear that their new moral convictions and ritual practices, too, represented personal decisions. These decisions are personal because they were not made in deference to social pressures exerted by family and village life. Their religious choices are personal because these were not coerced by government control or political orthodoxy.<sup>200</sup>

In other words, Chinese urbanites have reconfigured their religious lives according to the ethics of authenticity carried by consumerism, which values personal choice as a means for self-realisation. These religiosities are cornerstones in the construction of these urbanites’ subjectivities: their “spiritual” choices are affirmations of the autonomy of the self in the face of an authoritarian state, and the expression of individual liberty in the face of the regime’s demand for obedience. “Freedom to choose” deploys itself in the consumer and the religious realm, coextensively, if not in the political realm: ‘In Shenzhen, the personalized quality of spirituality is less a private journey of the

interior life and more a heightened awareness of personal responsibility.<sup>201</sup> The politics of these “spiritual quests” combines the neoliberal value of personal responsibility with the ethics of authenticity and expressivity.

Concretely, the spiritual quest in Chinese cities takes on different forms, including home altars, reading moral and spiritual literature (mixing psychology, self-help, religion, well-being, etc.), mantra chanting, prayer, burning incense, meditation, listening to Buddhist pop music and other religiously attuned genres, participating in workshops, discussion groups and other events, and so on. Fan and Whitehead detail how home altars combine eclectic material and how, even when this material is predominantly Buddhist or Taoist, people do not consider themselves Buddhist or even “religious” (in the *zongjiao* sense). They note how, even when Buddhist or Taoist monks are hired to sing sutras or perform rites, the leadership is in the hands of the laypeople. Another remarkable feature is the importance of bookstores and vegetarian restaurants in these reconfigurations. Many events, discussions, and even rituals now occur in these “profane” environments, blurring what was left of the boundaries between religion and “the secular”.

For all of this eclecticism, however, the situation is far resembling an aggregate of individuals picking and choosing indiscriminately in an all-you-can-eat Chinese buffet. Rather, beyond the dizzying array of symbols and practices that are summoned, Fan and Whitehead identify three recurring elements of traditional Chinese cosmology: fateful coincidence, personal destiny, and cosmic recompense, which combine to construct a “moral universe”<sup>202</sup> and catering to self-realisation. These notions can be tied to the traditional conception of “Heaven”, an immanent-transcendent order that is conveniently summoned to explain luck, whether good or bad. Many successful people in environments such as Shenzhen struggle with the reasons for their success. “Why me? Why not the others, who also work hard?” Cosmic retribution, personal destiny, and fateful coincidence help to transform sheer luck into the workings of some kind of intentionality or in accordance with some kind of divine justice, in a way similar but not reducible to what we have seen with fengshui. Chance becomes destiny, and indeterminate luck appears in the guise of fortune. There is a moral bonus to this, as it shifts the responsibility for success from the sole individual to external factors, buffering personal pride on the one hand and guarding from envy and resentment on the other.<sup>203</sup> All of this therefore plays an important, even crucial, social function in today’s market society. These religious reconfigurations are not only shaped by the forces of marketisation: they are also necessary for the cultural appropriation of capitalism by individuals in their own lives while providing foundations within China’s common religious and cultural heritage:

In the preceding [...] stories from Shenzhen we have seen Chinese in a thriving urban environment returning to moral memories and religious images that had been considered by many scholars to be premodern, rural, and perhaps bankrupt in today’s world. But in the late modern,

urban China of Shenzhen these resources of a common spiritual heritage remain motivating resources for Chinese lives.<sup>204</sup>

Traditional beliefs such as these are powerful in the way they can be made to serve the very pragmatic and even material concerns of today's consumer societies, such as soothing relationships, reducing conflicts, bringing or legitimating success, fertility, love, and happiness, and producing social harmony.<sup>205</sup> They play a similar role in the revival of communal forms of religion in the countryside. They put an end to the Nation-State era's desire for a tabula rasa of tradition in order to be modern. Modernity is now to be oriented towards and embedded in the Market, and committed to economic *and* personal growth. It thus becomes possible, and even necessary, to rebuild a bridge with the essence of China's millennial culture, within the framework of marketisation. We are therefore faced with a mixture of continuity and discontinuity. The eclecticism, non-sectarian, pluralist, and practical nature of traditional Chinese religion offers itself for these re-actualisations and re-investments. At the same time, the modes and mood in which these revivals occur are entirely new, and linked to the social context of a globalised economy and culture.<sup>206</sup>

### **Buddhism, Daoism, and the Marketisation of *Zongjiao***

While the main religious transformations in Reform Era China have not been happening within the highly differentiated, regulated, and institutionalised "churched religions", there have been some significant developments here as well. I argue that recognised religions have not been leading the transformations of religion as much as following them. This being said, there has been a notable revival of all of the five *zongjiao*: Buddhism, Taoism, Catholicism, Protestantism, and Islam.<sup>207</sup> China's 2004 Economic Census listed 72,887 officially registered religious sites linked to these traditions across all thirty-one provinces.<sup>208</sup> This is only a small fraction of the estimated 2 million temples that have been reconstructed or reinstated since 1978, yet it is that much more than there were during the Cultural Revolution. With these official sites come monks, priests, and other clergy, as well as followings of laypeople. The last few decades have seen a revival of vocations, with the regular intronisation of monks for instance.<sup>209</sup> Still, official religion remains marginal with respect to the other trends discussed in this chapter. Goossaert and Palmer quote a survey made in various cities that shows a growth in official affiliation with one religion from 2% in 1995 to 5% in 2005, with 33% of respondents claiming to be firm atheists. In the same survey, by contrast, 'most people [declared being] engaged in incense burning for ancestors, Buddhas, or gods, and fate-manipulating techniques; 15 percent had deities' statues at home; and 77 percent believed in divine retribution.'<sup>210</sup>

Buddhist and Taoist temple reconstructions have also been at the centre of local and regional strategies for spurring economic growth and attracting

tourism and foreign investments. Focusing on the case of Buddhism, Yoshiko Ashiwa notes 'the economic interest of the state at all levels in encouraging some degree of religious revival to further market development' and provides 'overseas Chinese incentive to invest in China.'<sup>211</sup> The famous Shaolin Buddhist monastery is a telling example. During Mao's rule, a handful of devoted monks had managed to keep the tradition alive. In the Reform Era, the monastery was able to resume its activities and benefited from its celebrity as well as the popular appeal for martial arts to attract new monks. Like many other temples, it was incorporated as a business and produces a series of commercial products that capitalise on its global brand and exploit the pilgrimage/tourism potential of the site. Some local temples have also been attached to one or the other official religions once they became powerful enough, partly in order to grant them recognition and protection, and partly in order to put them under increased surveillance. At the same time, official temples and monasteries have had to redevelop certain forms of traditional religion that had been banned for decades as superstition, such as divination, spirit writing, and other services. They have also reactivated temple festivals, processions, and many other rituals, blurring some of the boundaries between official and popular religion.

Being a *zongjiao* in the Global-Market era comes with a degree of potential, but also limitations. Many Chinese fear becoming too involved with Christian churches and therefore imperil their autonomy and privacy by coming under state surveillance in yet another aspect of their lives. At the same time, the corporate form of official religion makes it particularly vulnerable under Global-Market conditions. Taking an example on Taoism, Chau compares the fate of these institutional actors with that of the independent household-based ritualists who suffered anti-superstition repression in the Nation-State regime:

In a curious reversal of fortunes, during the reform era it is the members of the official Daoist temples who are complaining about a lack of financial income, because they are chafing under a lot of restrictions that prohibit them from conducting rituals outside their temples. And there are fewer clients who would commission rituals to be conducted at temples than at their own homes or villages. Nonetheless, the dispersed householder priests in suburban and rural areas are enjoying brisk business as never before. The officially-affiliated priests (i.e. the big temple clerics) even make use of intermediaries to find ritual work outside of their temples to make money.<sup>212</sup>

As religion becomes oriented towards service provision, official religion appears ill-equipped and institutionally hindered in its response. On the other hand, more entrepreneurial and charismatic actors are advantaged. Incidentally, the biggest revival has been happening within lay circles. These dynamics are driven by 'the central role [awarded] to individual choice, their

recasting of Chinese tradition in relation to Western modernity, and their affirmation of morality within a market economy.<sup>213</sup> This is why scholars like Der-Ruey Yang argue that understanding the situation of Taoism in contemporary China requires a shift in focus away from the old boundaries of national institutions towards the mass of new agents that are reviving the tradition from the bottom-up and making innovations. These agents tend to be organised in delocalised networks that coalesce and criss-cross around nodes consisting of charismatic leaders, reconstructed temples, or dot.com companies run by lay devotees. As a consequence, ‘the previously clear-cut distinction between the officially recognized system of Daoist associations and the dispersed dwelling Daoist priests, who make their living by performing death rituals for rural folks, is now increasingly blurred.’<sup>214</sup> Independent and household actors play a more important role in the development of Taoism than the formal institutions today.

While the former clients of Taoism were typically described as being rural, older, subaltern, and female, an increasing portion of the new clientele tends to be more urban, more privileged, younger, and male, including ‘government officials, entrepreneurs, [and] well-paid white-collar employees.’<sup>215</sup> In addition, the development of Taoism-related products and services linked to well-being, longevity, geomancy, astrology, almanacs, etc., involves yet another set of actors. Der-Ruey Yang concludes that, with these new actors, ‘the central dynamics of Taoism and its articulation with the wider society appears to have drifted away from political/ideological control toward economic/commercial development.’ Alongside the institutional structure of “official” Taoism, ‘the daily practices and discourses constituting [the Daoist] social sphere are now mainly driven and organized by the production, marketing, and consumption of the symbolic things relating to Taoism.’<sup>216</sup> The neatly differentiated sphere of churchd Taoism has dissolved into a complex of networks and layers tied to market forms.

A very similar situation can be found in the case of Buddhism in Han-majority mainland China.<sup>217</sup> Buddhist monasteries counted a clergy of half a million in 1949, of which about one hundred remained during the Cultural Revolution. Since 1978, the number of clerics has risen again to about one hundred thousand in 2006.<sup>218</sup> Buddhist institutions are known to be required by the state to provide charity, social services, and humanitarian aid to the population (like after the 2008 earthquake in Sichuan), in the wake of the state’s neoliberal roll-back and privatisation of provisions.<sup>219</sup> Meanwhile, lay movements, which are often led by women, are responsible for some of the major developments in Chan Buddhism, which has become globalised and supported by vast international networks and the very positive view that many cosmopolitans, not only in the West, have of this tradition.<sup>220</sup> Within China itself, there has been a shift in the focus of Buddhist practice towards meditation, body cultivation techniques, and self-improvement rather than textual learning.<sup>221</sup> These trends occur amidst a flourishing market for Taoism and Buddhism-inspired morality, self-help, and spirituality literature and innumerable “by-products”, from DVDs to music and mandala

representations.<sup>222</sup> In more wealthy circles, meanwhile, Tibetan Buddhism has become fashionable, as in the West. Some high-profile entrepreneurs use their wealth ‘to maintain a relationship with a personal master’, while other “less fortunate” are confined to buying all-inclusive packages to practice ‘the famed spiritual mysteries of the Roof of the World.’<sup>223</sup> Overall, then, Buddhism and Taoism have infused Chinese popular culture, well beyond the proportionately small population of those who declare themselves members of these “religions”. Here again, a perspective fixed on cleanly delimited institutional spheres misses the essence of the massive reconfigurations of religion that are underway.

### **On a High with Jesus, God, and the Holy Spirit**

The government’s new attitude towards religion similarly allowed Christians to rebuild their churches, recover some of their property, and allow house churches to operate more openly. Since then, growth has been sustained, although unevenly among denominations. The communal dimensions of Catholicism put a stop to recruitment during Mao’s realm, while Protestantism’s focus on individual conversions allowed it to better survive and even spread mildly during this period. This constitution also resulted in the explosion of Protestantism into a ‘diffused galaxy of thousands of independent congregations.’<sup>224</sup> Following the CCP’s imposition of a break between the Vatican and Chinese Catholics, the challenge has been to manage the existence of two parallel hierarchies. A partial solution was found, as a fair portion of bishops was recognised by both Rome and Beijing. Still, there lacks a formal system of training for clerics in the unofficial branches of the Church, which hinders development and provokes frictions with the official, Vatican-bound branches.<sup>225</sup> For Protestants, one challenge has been to avoid appearing oppositional to the regime and overly bound to the US, especially after the 1989 Tiananmen protests.<sup>226</sup>

Research shows that conversions and affiliations were ‘primarily among elder, poorly educated rural residents’<sup>227</sup> in the early 1990s. This changed over the course of the decade, with a stronger ‘appeal among educated urbanites and affluent entrepreneurs.’<sup>228</sup> General attitudes towards Christianity have become mostly positive, including among urban and educated youth. Still, the fastest growing Christian groups in China, by far, are Pentecostals.<sup>229</sup> In the Wenzhou region, which is often called the “Chinese Jerusalem”, the estimated 10% of its population that registers as Christian are mainly Pentecostal. Charismatic Evangelical Churches claim to have also made significant ground in places like Inner Mongolia, Henan, and Anhui. Pentecostal churches rank as unofficial, and they shun being brought into national organisations. They are partly the inheritors of the house church movement that managed to survive the Mao era by going underground. 1982’s Document 19 made explicit that house churches—most of which were charismatic—should not continue, even though ‘this prohibition should not be too rigidly enforced.’<sup>230</sup> Crackdowns did occur in the 1980s and 1990s, but have

died down since. Because they refuse to register with the state as religious groups associated with Protestantism, they operate in a legal grey zone; they are neither illegal nor legal.<sup>231</sup> Their horizontal modes of organisation and networking make it hard for the state to monitor and control them. Alongside the mostly women-led small rural churches, a new brand of urban, upwardly mobile, and men-led churches have emerged more recently and have experienced spectacular growth. They now operate above-ground and are informally recognised by the authorities. They are, in a sense, churchled religions operating outside the *zongjiao* box—and thriving.<sup>232</sup>

Pentecostal Christianity is about as far away from Lutheran, mainstream Protestantism—with its sober liturgy, rational de-symbolisation, and well-differentiated churchled brand of religion—as one can imagine. Pentecostalism is charismatic, emotional, and experiential. The evangelical movements promote healing, speaking in tongues (glossolalia), prophetic visions, and emphasise the spectacular workings of the Holy Spirit in everyday life through individual repentance (becoming “born-again”). They answer the need for the moralising of capitalism by promoting strict ethics and a conservative morality, while valuing inner-worldly success and economic growth, personal and collective. In the words of Hunter and Chan, Chinese charismatic churches are ‘vibrant in faith, evangelistic in outreach, fundamentalist in doctrine, pious in devotion, informal in liturgy, spontaneous in development, and flexible in structure.’<sup>233</sup> Pentecostalism, in China as elsewhere, is perfectly attuned to the preferred model of religion in the Global-Market regime. It strikes me as surprising that scholars have not been keener on making categorical differentiations within Protestantism to clearly demarcate rational/sober currents and the charismatic ones that can be filed under Pentecostalism. The latter—and only the latter—thrive under Global-Market conditions. We find a fair share of business owners amidst the most ardent and zealous believers and leaders of charismatic congregations. They preach a prosperity gospel and build ‘ever-larger and dynamic churches’ that make use of music, audio-visuals, and digital technology while offering an array of services that aim to reenchant everyday life and eat at clear differentiation between religion and “the secular”. As Goossaert and Palmer remark, ‘They consciously [try] to refashion Chinese Christianity into a more modern and sophisticated lifestyle that [can] satisfy the aspirations of people living in a market-oriented culture.’<sup>234</sup> For Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye,

they are flexible, “low-rise” institutional forms; they motivate a discourse of evidence and authenticity in a culture of fakes; and they constitute a mode or strategy for dealing with life’s challenges that exists alongside other paradigms such as scientific rationality.<sup>235</sup>

Contrary to ‘[l]arge, structurally-complex, vertically-oriented religious institutions’ that are exposed to the state’s scrutiny, the ‘minimalist organizational structure’ of Pentecostalism makes it modular and ‘based on expansive social networks rather than localised settlements.’<sup>236</sup> In addition, Pentecostal

churches are internationally networked and are highly active in building two-way relationships with Chinese diasporas worldwide.<sup>237</sup>

The entrepreneurial nature of Pentecostalism brings it much closer to the other developments we have seen in this chapter and to popular religion. The success of Pentecostal Christianity in China, I argue, is linked to the major shifts in the social conditions of our globalised era, and the erosion of the Nation-State regime and the rise in its stead of the Global-Market one. In China, I believe that the expansion of Pentecostalism is also due to the proximity and even continuity of this brand of charismatic religion with respect to some of the traditional forms of Chinese religion. In other words, Pentecostalism is closer to Chinese popular religion than it is to mainstream Western Christian forms of religion. Calling upon the presence of the Holy Spirit, receiving divine gifts, emitting prophecies, practicing exorcism, and speaking in tongues are all practices that are akin to traditional Chinese religion and its spirit mediums, healing techniques, exorcism, and millenarianism.<sup>238</sup> Similarly, heated born-again assemblies provide their share of *honghuo* and *renao* (arguably more than the Catholic mass), and are excellent places to cultivate good social—and business—relations (*guanxi*). Surveying the “Boss Christian” phenomenon in Wenzhou (an example of rich entrepreneurs becoming leaders in charismatic communities), Nanlai Cao shows how the workings of God are summoned to explain the reasons behind economic success. At the same time, the economic success of Christian individuals is linked to the realisation of “God’s China vision”: how God wants China to convert to Christianity and shift from being on the receiving end of the missionary process to being on the sending one, and from the world’s economic, political, cultural, and religious periphery to the centre. Thereby, Pentecostalism seamlessly embraces the dual ideology of the CCP by promoting economic growth and nationalism. Significantly, Pentecostalism thrives in regions of intense economic development (urbanisation, industrialisation) *and in those regions where the eradication of traditional religion and culture has been the most severe*: between Beijing and Shanghai, the two main sites of state power, and the coastal regions, including the SEZ.<sup>239</sup> The “spiritual nationalism” of Wenzhou Boss Christians reveals how Pentecostalism—of foreign origin—paradoxically functions as a means for both indigenising capitalism and modernising Chinese tradition while supporting the central state’s ideology. Pentecostal churches provide a conservative and nationalist-friendly alternative to Western-style cosmopolitanism. This explains at least in part why the authorities have tolerance for these low-rise institutional structures.<sup>240</sup> Pentecostals are also much less inclined to promote democracy than mainstream Christian churches and therefore obey the main rule set by the CCP: to not criticise its power.

### The Revenge of Confucius

For most of the twentieth century until the end of the Cultural Revolution, Confucianism—and the figure of Confucius—were synonym with Tradition

and the Four Olds that were held responsible for China's backwardness and therefore had to be destroyed. By the time of the KMT's Republican government, 'Confucianism had become virtually extinct in mainland China.'<sup>241</sup> Its legacy had been transferred into other completely different forms, such as the redemptive societies, which were destroyed in turn by the CCP after 1949. A couple of decades of economic reform later, things have become entirely different, and Confucianism has become ubiquitous in mainland Chinese culture. The tipping point occurred in 2004, when President Hu Jintao explicitly borrowed the idea of a "harmonious society" (*hexie shehui*) from Confucian political philosophy to define his government's central political idea at the Sixteenth Chinese Communist Party Congress. A few days later, the Party organised the first annual official celebration of Confucius in the newly rebuilt Qufu Confucius Temple, the country's second largest temple structure after the Forbidden City in Beijing. The lavish and spectacular state-sponsored celebration has been ritually broadcast on Chinese national television since 2005, and numerous formal ceremonies honouring Confucius are routinely organised in many provincial cities across the country in newly renovated temples.

Still in 2004, the government founded the Confucius Institutes as part of its soft-power strategy intended to build prestige for Chinese culture and China worldwide. By 2011, 353 Institutes had been created in 104 countries, including hallmark universities such as Penn State in the US and Paris-Diderot University in France, and from Argentina to Zimbabwe. As Anna Sun writes, Confucius Institutes 'not only promote the name of Confucius as a Chinese cultural brand but also attempt to recast contemporary China as synonymous with Confucianism.'<sup>242</sup> In 2008, the opening ceremony of the Beijing Summer Olympics made sweeping references to Confucius and Confucianism, making it the first (but not the last) 'event that attempted to link China's recent economic growth [...] with its Confucian past.'<sup>243</sup> In 2010, China launched a Confucius Peace Prize as a rival to the Nobel Peace Prize, turning Confucius into 'an explicit political tool on the stage of international politics.'<sup>244</sup> On the interior scene, the CCP's Central Party School in Beijing started teaching the Confucian classics as part of its core curriculum. The new president Xi Jinping continued the rehabilitation of Confucius and Confucianism, 'accentuating the compatibility between' the latter and the CCP, 'presenting communism as the natural continuator of the Confucian Chinese tradition.'<sup>245</sup> Since the 2004 turn, Confucius and Confucianism have been omnipresent in popular culture and mass media, whether in the form of a blockbuster movie on Confucius to lectures on national television to fantasy, self-help, and morality books.<sup>246</sup>

This may make it seem as if the Confucian revival was a top-down process, but this would be misleading. As with the other phenomena described in this chapter, the Confucian revival started at the very beginning of the Reform Era with the reconstruction of temples and the return (and reinvention) of personal rites. A particularity of Confucian temples is that a fair share of them have been (re)built or renovated in urban areas, attracting

many visitors. Yet, as with other temples, their rehabilitation has been made possible with the support of the authorities in view of supporting economic development and promoting tourism. As Anna Sun writes, ‘Administratively, Confucius temples are property of the state and managed by the Bureau of Cultural Relics (*wenwu ju*) through its numerous local branches in most provinces and cities’. This means that ‘the temples are not officially classified as religious sites but cultural ones, charging a modest entrance fee at the gate the way museums do.’<sup>247</sup> Because of this constitution, ‘the temples are relatively free to develop new ways of increasing visitor traffic and income, and the revival and reinvention of rituals are welcome signs of growth.’<sup>248</sup> The most common practices however remain burning incense, bowing and praying to statues of Confucius, and writing prayer cards. As the god of learning, wisdom, and examinations, people ask Confucius for blessings, in particular concerning ‘career advancement and general good fortune.’<sup>249</sup>

As within Buddhism, women constitute a majority of the leaders of the booming Confucian lay movements. The most obvious sign of the Confucian revival, however, is that of ‘rituals related to the worship of ancestral spirits.’ Sun quotes a survey that indicates that 67.6% of Chinese venerate ancestral spirits at their graveside, with an equal gender representation.<sup>250</sup> Filial piety is one of the most essential Confucian virtues. It is expressed through graveside veneration (usually of parents and grandparents), a practice that had virtually disappeared in the Mao era and which has made a stunning return, including among the younger generations. Practices linked to this are cleaning and tidying up the graves, but also burning incense, paper money, and other crafted sacrificial goods, like paper airplanes, houses, and cars. The practice became so popular that the government followed suit by making Sweeping Tombs Day (*Qingming jie*) a national holiday, as we have seen, ‘with the explicit aim of managing the traffic flow of people returning to their ancestral hometown for graveside rituals throughout the country.’<sup>251</sup> Another notable innovation is the Confucian wedding, in which the married couple dress up in traditional clothes and bow to a portrait of Confucius, in front of which they speak their vows.<sup>252</sup> Particularly popular among the youth, this practice legitimises the very new practice of romantic love, which is a consequence of the penetration of the ethics of authenticity carried by consumerism, with a veneration of the representative of timeless Chinese tradition par excellence. Furthermore, the seventeenth-century Confucian text *The Rules for Students and Children*, which preaches moderation, filial piety, and benevolence, has become a best seller. In line with today’s reconversion of religion in the service of personal ethics, the *Rules* state how one should express filial piety and how to behave in everyday life and social settings, how to correctly sit, walk, speak, and so forth.<sup>253</sup> Finally, the reader might not be surprised at this point to learn that one of the trends that have ‘gained tremendous momentum’ over the last two decades are the so-called “Confucian businessmen and -women”, who have ‘trained in *guoxue* classical studies classes opened by universities’ all over China.<sup>254</sup>

The revenge of Confucius has therefore been a grassroots phenomenon, amplified by state encouragement of economic development, before it was adopted and institutionalised as part of the official ideology of the CCP.

### **China's New Civil Religion**

The way that the Confucian revival has been captured and forwarded by the state begs that we return to the macro level and how the Nation-State era's political religion has changed in the Reform Era turn to the Market. In the preceding chapter, we saw how, over the course of the twentieth century and especially from the KMT to the CCP, a full-fledged political religion was installed in China that revolved around the state and, in its ultimate phase, the charismatic person of Mao Zedong. Recall how, in the preceding chapter, Jiping Zuo distinguished between political religion and civil religion. The latter, following Bellah, is limited to the legitimation of the state and of the political sphere, and tends to build on and support the established religious traditions in the country. Political religion, on the other hand, intends to substitute itself to all other religious institutions, traditions, and movements, in order to embrace the whole of society, and not only political affairs. By examining the shifts in the CCP's ideology in the Reform Era and the place and function of Confucianism and religion in general within it, I argue that a new civil religion has taken hold in China in the Global-Market regime, in the place of the former Nation-State era political religion.

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, the CCP felt the pressure to move away from the tenets of the Mao cult and the ideological moorings of Mao-style communism after the death of the Great Helmsman. Under Deng Xiaoping, the CCP adopted a new ideological basis consisting of economic development and the melioration of the population's material conditions first and foremost, coupled with nationalism. While China's state-led and progressive turn to a market economy was a success, and while many Chinese have seen their material conditions change substantially, the inevitable contradictions of capitalism have also produced adverse effects, such as exploding inequalities and the creation of a new brand of pauperisation, as well as a deep urban/rural rift. Intense economic development has also led to the fragmentation of Chinese society, the creation of new social classes and new societal categories that question and challenge Chinese unity. In addition, going from communism to capitalism is not self-evident, and requires a fair amount of ideological and practical support. Many scholars have also diagnosed a moral crisis born out of the intense changes affecting Chinese society, and the ultimate vacuity of sole materialism. Finally, the CCP's objective has always been to safeguard its power and hold on society, and to avoid the West's pathway, in which economic development and democratisation are presented as coextensive. The CCP's opinion is that democratisation would lead to fragmentation, and the rise of separatist movements in Tibet, Xinjiang, Hong Kong, and Taiwan.<sup>255</sup>

In Southeast-Asian countries, marketisation has been accompanied by authoritarian states, in support of which Confucianism has been mobilised, sometimes quite explicitly, by intellectuals and politics alike. In the larger Chinese cultural sphere, Confucianism—or New Confucianism—has been invested in order to chart an alternative to Western civilisation and critique some of the cardinal notions of the political philosophy underlying democracy, like human dignity and human rights. This was the case in Singapore at the turn of the 1980s, when public discussion about a moral crisis due to intense economic development spurred resistance against ‘evil influences from the West’. As a result, ‘it was considered necessary to revive traditional values, and thereby to increase people’s confidence in their own culture and ethnic identity.’<sup>256</sup> The Singaporean state followed suit by promoting Confucian education at all levels, and this example was followed in mainland China. From a Southeast-Asian point of view, the Christian moorings of the supposedly “universal” Western conceptions (including secular liberalism) appear with more clarity than they typically do to Westerners. This analysis sparked the need for “indigenous” foundations for a modern society in a globalised world.<sup>257</sup> Comparison and rivalry with “the West” is obsessive in China.<sup>258</sup> In other words, the dynamics of orientalism also work powerfully the other way around, through what could be called “occidentalism”. Finding alternatives and indigenous moorings has been a Chinese priority after Tiananmen, and the institutionalisation of Confucianism within the state’s official ideology in the early twenty-first century is the culmination of this process. Yet, Confucianism is also just one element in a wider system made up of much of what has been discussed in this chapter.

Max Weber’s work on China and Confucianism insisted on how the inner-worldly asceticism of the latter (which he called Confucian rationalism) inhibits the development of capitalism, contrary to the Protestant ethic. This thesis was seriously challenged around the time of the neoliberal revolution by scholars who asserted that, on the contrary, Confucian ethics could be ‘promoted as a motivating force to generate a spirit of capitalism.’<sup>259</sup> Starting in the 1980s, the thesis of an “elective affinity” between Confucianism and capitalism grew increasingly popular within Southeast-Asian intellectual circles (and beyond) to explain the economic success of the “Asian Tigers”: Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Vietnam, and China.<sup>260</sup> Within political circles, this has led to an attempt to design a new brand of Confucianism by sifting the scholarly tradition to retain what is useful for economic development and political stability.<sup>261</sup> In other words, to identify what, in the Confucian tradition, could be summoned to legitimise the CCP’s market-orientation while buttressing its authoritarian regime. In this respect, Confucian values have been defined as

thrift, hard work, educational achievement, social harmony, respect for authority, acceptance of paternalistic forms of government, the need to achieve worldly success, which [is] related to a fear of shame and a need to glorify the ancestors, and filial piety.<sup>262</sup>

The state has namely used Confucianism to promote the three-generation family in order ‘to reduce pressure on the government to provide public housing and social welfare.’<sup>263</sup> Dependence on the family to provide welfare services is a convenient answer to the state’s roll-back and privatisation in these domains. The Confucian valorisation of self-sacrifice also appears as an antidote to abusive individualism and to the utilitarian self-interest carried by consumerism and globalised capitalism.

Neo-Confucianism is an essential part of the Southeast-Asian alternative to the West’s neoliberal Washington consensus, which a former Singaporean senior minister has called the Beijing Consensus. This program ‘claims that economic growth requires order, certainty, hard work, market-friendly policies, savings and investments, trade, education and training,’<sup>264</sup> but not democracy. Neo-Confucianism has been a pillar of a renewed and capitalist-friendly form of ethnic nationalism in the face of globalisation in Chinese countries (not only in mainland China), and a foundation on which to claim ‘moral and spiritual superiority’ over the “decadent West”.<sup>265</sup> In this sense, Chinese nationalism is no longer multi-national, as it was in 1912 at the foundation of the Republic of China (remember the five-striped flag evoked in the preceding chapter) and until the end of the Cultural Revolution. In the wake of the neoliberal revolution, nationalism has morphed into more ethnic and exclusive forms in China—as it has in Spain (think of Catalonian separatism), ex-Yugoslavia, or Russia, to name only a few examples. This new ethnic nationalism revolves around the Han majority and assimilable minorities (like the Tujia), explaining in part the highly repressive and assimilationist policies of China in Tibet and Xinjiang.

The shape and content of Neo-Confucianism are therefore inseparable from the context of economic globalisation and the indexing of the Chinese state’s mission in pursuing marketisation. Yet it is not the only Chinese tradition that has served as a resource for the CCP’s objectives of national unity, political stability (the hold of the CCP on Chinese society), and economic growth. The Taoist tradition has been similarly poached for contributions. Jack Barbalet has examined the rehabilitation of the notion of *wuwei* by Chinese economists in Party journals. *Wuwei* can be translated as “effortless action”, or “non-action”. It refers to ‘a type of action that is effortless and non-coercive’ while stressing the interdependence of things and the likelihood of mutual responsiveness between them.<sup>266</sup> Contemporary thinkers have unearthed the concept in support of the idea that Chinese tradition had invented *laissez-faire* economics eighteen centuries before the French Physiocrats and Adam Smith. Beyond *laissez-faire*, *wuwei* supports the idea that state interference or self-assertive action (in economic matters) is unnatural, while non-intervention or self-effacing and non-wilful action coincides with the natural order of the universe. Applied to contemporary economics, *wuwei* provides an indigenous model for the principles of neoliberal governance: accommodating and accompanying economic relations rather than directing them top-down. Accompanying rather than leading market forces, *wuwei* provides an alternative to Marxist economics as well as to the shock

doctrine applied to post-Soviet countries. Traditional notions like *wuwei* serve to both explain the success of China's state-backed gradualist approach to market development and legitimise what the Party calls "socialism with Chinese characteristics".<sup>267</sup>

An extremely important yet overlooked aspect of this re-legitimation of tradition at the grassroots but also at the central state level is the break with the powerful imaginary of rupture and tabula rasa that characterised Nation-State era China and its appropriation of the Western "modern cultural programme" (Eisenstadt). From the late nineteenth century to the death of Mao, the overarching narrative was based on the radical dismissal of tradition in general and religion in particular in order to produce a new society and a new individual. This messianic and mythological framework was a pillar of the Nation-State regime, and the underlying motive for the purification and compartmentalisation of society. This narrative has completely seceded in the Reform Era. The following quote from Kang Xiaoguang, an important New Confucian thinker and advisor to former Premier Zhu Rongji, is instructive of the prevailing views within the CCP and its followers:

In the following 20 to 50 years, Confucianism will fight a decisive battle with Western culture. This will be a battle on life and death, since it concerns the future of the Chinese nation. I am firmly convinced that democracy will doom the future of China, while Confucianism or Confucianizing can best serve the interests of the Chinese nation. [...] The hegemony of Confucian culture first has to be established. One has to realize that it will take continuous efforts for Confucianism to beat the West.<sup>268</sup>

These arguments are even more spectacular when one considers that in 1966, at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, the Red Guards were encouraged to assault the Qufu temple complex, destroy its statues, pillage its tombs, dismember and burn the cadavers they contained, and burn its library. Three decades of market reforms later, Qufu was celebrated as China's "spiritual home". During his visit to Qufu, Xi Jinping said the following:

That I come here, to Qufu, to the Institute for Confucian Research, shows that the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party enhances traditional culture. [...] The Institute for Confucian Research [...] incarnates the conviction of the Party and the State. [...] *We may not cut off history*. We have to summarize it and adopt the valuable heritage of Confucius to Sun Zhongshan. Comrade Mao Zedong has used a lot of quotations from Confucius and Confucian ideas in his speeches. [...] In my speeches, I also use a lot of words of Confucius. [...] Now we see the value of Confucian thinking much more clearly.<sup>269</sup>

Note that Sun Zhongshan is another spelling for Sun Yat-sen. Xi therefore starts from Confucius to the founder of Chinese Republicanism and leader of the communists' historical arch-enemy (he does not include Chang Kai-shek),

before citing Mao and himself. The civilisational continuity of China could not be expressed with more clarity. At the same time, the rupture with the May Fourth movement's progeny (especially the KMT and Mao's CCP) could also not be clearer. Tradition is no longer something that needs to be abolished in order to let sprout a new utopian society from the rubble, through the wilfulness of the state. The utopian society corresponding to Xi's "Chinese Dream" will result from the (purportedly) un-wilful or effortless action of the state and the magic of the Market (not to mention that of digital surveillance). We have seen in this chapter on Market Islam how Global-Market conditions have obliged Islamic thinkers into some particularly crafty theological handstands. The same is true here with the CCP, with the same justification: fidelity to the Origins and the purest of Tradition.

I argue that the signification of this break with the modern mythology of radical rupture cannot be overstated, since it refers to the underlying assumptions upon which the radical modernisation program of China was built in the Nation-State regime. A change on this level therefore means a change in the symbolic foundations of Chinese society, a move from the Nation-State to the Global-Market regime. This perspective also informs how we can understand the CCP's promotion of a "harmonious society" (*hexie shehui*) during the first decades of the twenty-first century. This Confucian concept, which can also be traced back to the Taoist tradition of Laozi, refers to a spontaneous and paradoxical form of coordination that entails 'the non-contradictory combination of opposites, [...] the fundamental interconnectedness of things, and [...] dynamic unfolding of events.'<sup>270</sup> In other words, *the idea of a harmonious society wonderfully translates the idea and ideal of the Market as a spontaneous and natural order*, and is perfectly adapted to the exercise of power in the Global-Market regime. As Jochim concludes, 'The main national goal [...] is no longer to be in harmony with the cosmos; it is to respond to the ebb and flow of market forces.'<sup>271</sup>

This chapter shows how the new macro-level religion (i.e., the religious) has changed in the Reform Era; how it is no longer an all-encompassing political religion, as it was in the Nation-State regime and under Mao especially. Rather, there is a new civil religion in China which, freed from the millenarian imperatives of total rupture with Tradition, re-actualises parts of it—those parts that are compatible with nationalism and capitalism—in a loosely-knit system that allows other types of religious revival on the meso and micro levels.

## Conclusion

The reign of Xi Jinping has signalled a form of *retour en arrière* on a certain number of important issues, such as the centralisation of power in the President's hands versus a collegial direction, the illimitation of his mandate at the head of the Party, and the renewal of a form of personality cult. While the general context—global, regional, and national—is very different

from the twentieth century, it is difficult at this stage to imagine how the situation may evolve in China. It is nevertheless hard to imagine there being a renewed enforcement of anti-superstition campaigns and a ban on popular religion in light of the extent to which the population has invested in it and how much it is now a fundamental element in the regime's general policy and civil religion. In other words, it is difficult to imagine a return to a political religion under Global-Market conditions. There is the possibility, nonetheless, of a new brand of surveillance, deployed namely through the formidable potential of digital technologies. China's new social credit system, which is founded on generalised surveillance and the consequent rating of individuals in function of their everyday behaviour, has the potential to become a nightmarish example of Foucauldian neoliberal biopolitics through the interiorisation of utilitarian principles and self-regulation. While this form of governmentality is more a fear than a reality for the time being,<sup>272</sup> there are chances that the Confucian planetary battle against the West might lead to it becoming ordinary, if other countries (Russia comes to mind) follow suit. The future, I agree with the late Leonard Cohen, does not appear to be very bright.

The sudden, massive, and multifarious religious revival in post-Mao China requires a refreshed pair of lenses in order to be appreciated and appraised. From the mainstream perspective in the sociology of religion, the vast majority of what has been described in this chapter would pass under the radar and remain unseen. A case in point is Fenggang Yang's *Atlas of Religion in China*, which barely mentions any of this (including the reconstruction of *two million* temples, most of them independent) and rather focuses on quantifying the various official religions across China's administrative regions. F. Yang's metaphorical use of Rational Choice theory leads him to define "three markets" of religion: the red (highly regulated) market, the grey (not allowed but not forbidden) market, and the black market (the forbidden "sects", namely Falun gong and redemptive societies like Yiguandao). Yet, this categorisation does not allow him to seize the ample phenomena described in this chapter. It does not allow to see how the massive rise of popular religion is linked to the regime's ideological armature. Because it mimes market terminology while focusing polemically on the state, it fails to see any connection between the religious revival in its actual forms and marketisation. It similarly fails to even begin to recognise the interplay between the societal categories of culture and religion. F. Yang's *Atlas* is not as much *of Religion in China* as it is about *churched religion* in China. This goes to show how the avenues of Rational Choice are dead ends, and how they paradoxically replicate the model of religion of what I call the secularisation paradigm: real religion is congregational; real religion is *zongjiao*. The fact that F. Yang's Rational Choice approach (thinking of religion in economic terms) has been so popular within China itself shows how it aligns with the CCP's ideology and comforts it. The reasons for this are clear: it keeps religion within the neatly defined and

highly controlled category of *zongjiao* while dissimulating what is truly going on in the field, and it promotes an understanding of the world in market terms.

It is difficult to find a better illustration of the shift from the Nation-State to the Global-Market regime than China. Here, the logics of the former were pushed to their extremes. Moreover, the transition to the latter was practically instantaneous, and can be dated with great precision: the inauguration by Deng Xiaoping of economic reforms in 1978. I argue that such a clear-cut example can serve to better understand what has happened elsewhere in the world over the last century and some. The easiest place to start is in China's immediate region. Those who may be specialists of countries like Taiwan, Singapore, South Korea, and Vietnam will find a lot of resonance with their experience. As stated in the introduction, national variations occur within a given frame, a given spectrum of possibilities. In my view, social sciences would also gain invaluable insights into developments in the West from this vantage point. I will come back to some specific issues to exemplify this in the general conclusion.

This chapter shows how it is impossible to truly understand the religious situation in China without taking into account the profound impact of marketisation over the last four decades. Over the last two decades in particular, a landmass of quality work has been published on religion in China. These authors, women and men, have achieved this by breaking out of the narrow categories that enclose religion in a well-differentiated box. It is true that the makeup of traditional Chinese religion helps to break out of this hall of mirrors, but researchers have still spent decades, if not a century, debating whether Chinese religion was religion at all. Thankfully, we are over this. Practically all of the authors quoted in this chapter have drawn attention to how consumerism and marketisation have affected religion. As Weiming Tu captures it: 'marketization is pervasive in China today. It penetrates all spheres of interest—government, academia, mass media, social institutions, and even religion.'<sup>273</sup> Yet, apart from Goossaert and Palmer's magnificent *The Religious Question in China*, there are few publications that undertake to paint the whole religious picture and connect the dots. My only contribution here has been to synthesise and bring these unconnected strands together and show how they are coherent within the Nation-State to Global-Market framework.

## Notes

- 1 Jeffreys and Yu (2015: 1).
- 2 Lagerwey (2019: 217).
- 3 So and Chu (2016: 1).
- 4 Zheng (2014: 43).
- 5 Yu (2014: 49–50), quoting 2013 figures from the China Internet Network Information Center. Zheng's (2014: 94) figures vary slightly, but the general picture is relatively the same. With Internet appearing in China in 1994, Zheng reports the number of connected people to be estimated to have risen from 2 million in

- 1998 to 513 million in 2021, with 356 million connected cell phones. Age differences are substantial, with the younger generation being very connected, as in most places in the world.
- 6 LiAnne Yu (2020) and David Palmer (2024), personal conversations.
  - 7 Yu (2014), Zheng (2014), So and Chu (2016), Li (2014), and Willis (2020).
  - 8 L. Fan (2003, 2011), Ashiwa and Wank (2009), Lu (2013), Fan and Chen (2015), and Johnson (2018).
  - 9 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 315).
  - 10 Van der Veer (2011: 276). The author mostly refers to churching religion forms and religious movements like the Falun gong that have attracted the state's attention See also Van der Veer (2014). The same can be said of Jocelyne Cesari's (2022) otherwise insightful book. Her chapter on China says nothing about religion outside the official category.
  - 11 Scholars of Chinese religion start from the traditional, temple-based religious ecology, and are not fooled by the churching of religion in the twentieth century (see the discussion at the beginning of the preceding chapter). Anthropologists meanwhile tend to be simply better at seeing what is before them than blinder-bound sociologists.
  - 12 Deng Xiaoping, quoted in Zheng (2014: 23).
  - 13 Guiheux (2018: 99), my translation.
  - 14 Zheng (2014: 22).
  - 15 Guiheux (2018: 111), my translation. On decentralisation and China's "de facto federalism," see Zheng (2014, chapter 8).
  - 16 Zheng (2014: 24).
  - 17 Zheng (2014: 24).
  - 18 Willis (2020: 10).
  - 19 Harvey (2005: 124). See Harvey's book as well as Sperber (2021), So and Chu (2016), Zheng (2014), and Sen (2000) for detailed descriptions and analyses of post-Mao economic reforms.
  - 20 Guiheux (2018: 122).
  - 21 Zheng (2014), Guiheux (2018).
  - 22 Zheng (2014: 30).
  - 23 Zheng (2014: 34).
  - 24 Ren (2013: 34).
  - 25 Ren (2010: 163).
  - 26 Guiheux (2018: 161).
  - 27 This is the title of David Harvey's (2005) chapter on neoliberalism in China. Harvey mostly describes the economic policies of Reform Era China and charts the explosion of inequalities. This is not sufficient to characterise neoliberalism in a way that makes sense for understanding the deep social and institutional changes that are important to relate to the religious changes, hence the following developments.
  - 28 Wang (2004: 48).
  - 29 Harvey (2005: 120–51).
  - 30 Zheng (2014: 162).
  - 31 Wang (2004: 8). This argument is practically unanimous among the authors listed in this chapter.
  - 32 Zheng (2014: 15).
  - 33 Ren (2010: 10).
  - 34 Polanyi (2001).
  - 35 Wang (2004: 50).
  - 36 Wang (2004: 49).
  - 37 Sperber (2021: 367).

- 38 Ren (2010: 11). On the little-known story of Friedman in China and the influence of Western economists on Chinese reforms, see Gewirtz (2017).
- 39 Sperber (2021: 367).
- 40 Ren (2010: 11).
- 41 Leung and Xu (2015: 4).
- 42 Leung and Xu (2015: 30–1), Li (2016: 62). See also Zhang and Ong (2008).
- 43 Leung and Xu (2015: 10).
- 44 Leung and Xu (2015: 11).
- 45 Numbers from the Social Protection Index (total social protection expenditures per total reference population divided by a regional poverty line) developed by the Asian Development Bank, quoted in Leung and Xu (2015: 11).
- 46 David Palmer, personal conversation.
- 47 Wang (2004: 8–9).
- 48 Ren (2010) argues that the reunification with Hong Kong played a pivotal role in China’s neoliberalisation process.
- 49 So and Chu (2016: 25).
- 50 Ren (2013: 146).
- 51 Emmanuel (2014). The author was secretary general of Uganda National Farmers Federation, and this text aims to convert African countries to Chinese neoliberal management (“benchmarking”).
- 52 So and Chu (2016: 16).
- 53 So and Chu (2016: 17).
- 54 So and Chu (2016: 56). See also Ren (2010: xiv–xvi).
- 55 So and Chu (2016: 19).
- 56 Yu (2014: 172), Willis (2020: 48).
- 57 Willis (2020: 11).
- 58 Willis (2020: 23).
- 59 Gerth (2020: 84), Li (2016: 2).
- 60 Gerth (2020: 83). See also Yu (2014), Li (2016).
- 61 Willis (2020: vi).
- 62 Jaffrelot and Van der Veer (2018: 25).
- 63 GroupM marketing company in France applies Marcel Mauss’ theory of the gift to measure brand reputation and brand loyalty. These numbers figure in Roy (2022). On branding and the gift, see Gauthier (2014).
- 64 See Gauthier (2020: Chapter 5).
- 65 Willis (2020: 50).
- 66 Willis (2020: 51).
- 67 Li (2016: 29).
- 68 Rofel (2007: 43).
- 69 Li (2016: 31).
- 70 Ren (2013: 16).
- 71 For an overview of these debates, see Ren (2013), Li (2016), Xiaohong Zhou (2018), Jaffrelot and Van der Veer (2018), and Rocca (2018). Estimates vary between 5% and 48% of the Chinese population counting as middle class.
- 72 Xiaohong Zhou (2018: 115).
- 73 Willis (2020: 36).
- 74 Willis (2020: 37).
- 75 Willis (2020: 40). See also Li (2016), Yu (2014).
- 76 See Gauthier (2020: Chapter 7).
- 77 Li (2016: 65–6). See also Yu (2014).
- 78 Li (2016: 15–6). The author is referring to Xia Xuelan’s analysis, on which she builds. See also Yu (2014).
- 79 Li (2016: 16). See also Yu (2014).

- 80 Jankowiak and Moore (2017: 5).
- 81 Jankowiak and Moore (2017: 8–9). See also Jeffreys and Yu (2015).
- 82 Jankowiak and Moore (2017: 103). Emphasis added, satisfaction being a value of consumerism. See also de Kloet and Fung (2017), Tamney (2012: 115–6).
- 83 Jeffreys and Yu (2015: 47).
- 84 Rofel (2007: 124). For sake of brevity, I am leaving aside the growth of youth subcultures in China, which are similarly driven by expressive individualism and the principles of voluntary association. On this topic, see de Kloet and Fung (2017).
- 85 Rofel (2007: 12). See also Jeffreys and Yu (2015).
- 86 Rofel (2007: 3).
- 87 Rofel (2007: 165).
- 88 Ren (2013: 19).
- 89 Goossaert and Palmer (2012: 323). See Walsh (2020) for a detailed analysis.
- 90 Goossaert and Palmer (2012: 324).
- 91 Goossaert and Palmer (2012: 324).
- 92 Walsh (2020: 82).
- 93 Goossaert and Palmer (2012: 325).
- 94 Goossaert and Palmer (2012: 327).
- 95 Chau (2015: 970–1).
- 96 Palmer (2006: 159). See also Palmer (2005, 2010).
- 97 Palmer (2006: 171).
- 98 Palmer (2006: 147).
- 99 Palmer (2005: 78).
- 100 Palmer (2006: 148).
- 101 For detailed descriptions of these lineages, see Palmer (2005).
- 102 Palmer (2006: 151).
- 103 Chen (2003: 507).
- 104 Chen (2003: 507–8).
- 105 Palmer (2005: 113). Palmer borrows the term “converter” from sociologist of religion Danièle Hervieu-Léger. Chen (2003: 520) cites a Nanjing qigong teacher when he says that people ‘come to faith through illness’. This is of course true for Western countries as well.
- 106 Palmer (2005: Chapter 7, 2006: 155–6).
- 107 Palmer (2005: 185).
- 108 Palmer (2005: 223–4).
- 109 Palmer (2005: 251).
- 110 Palmer (2005: 231).
- 111 Palmer (2006: 148).
- 112 Palmer (2005: 233–4).
- 113 Palmer (2005: Chapter 11).
- 114 Palmer (2005: Chapter 12, 2010).
- 115 Palmer (2005: 337).
- 116 Palmer (2006: 165). On the Falun gong, see also Chen (2003).
- 117 Palmer (2005: 343–7).
- 118 Palmer (2005: 343).
- 119 Chen (2003: 513).
- 120 David Palmer (2003) argues that early twentieth century redemptive societies and the forms taken by the Reform Era qigong boom can be understood as pursuing the Chinese sectarian tradition. In another article (2011), he argues that there are similarities and perhaps some continuities between the two, but that they cannot be grouped under the same label since the contexts (the Nation-State and Global-Market) are significantly different.

- 121 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 289).
- 122 Fan and Chen (2015: 924). See also Dean and Zheng (2020). Scholars I have consulted evoke these numbers as being conservative. Adam Yuet Chau argues that all sorts of shrines and other less elaborated constructions can count as “temples” (personal conversation), making any sort of estimate off the mark by a margin.
- 123 Goossaert (2000: 100).
- 124 Chau (2006: 1).
- 125 Cooper (2013: 3).
- 126 Cooper (2013: 213). See also Dean (2003), Chau (2006), Goossaert and Palmer (2011), M. Yang (2020).
- 127 Chau (2006: 14).
- 128 Barbalet (2011: 336). Chinese investors from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Singapore by themselves make up 75% of total investments.
- 129 Cooper (2013: 210).
- 130 Cooper (2013: 210).
- 131 Dean (2003: 358).
- 132 Chau (2006: 5).
- 133 Chau (2006: 7).
- 134 Chau (2006: 12).
- 135 Chau (2015: 954).
- 136 Chan and Lang (2010: 133).
- 137 Dean (2003: 344).
- 138 Dean (2003: 344).
- 139 Chau (2006: 18).
- 140 M. Yang (2020: 4). See my review (Gauthier 2021) of this excellent book.
- 141 M. Yang (2020: 23).
- 142 M. Yang (2020: 53, 54).
- 143 M. Yang (2020: 54). As M. Yang observes (p. 55), these emic terminologies are problematic within a social scientific frame because of the Protestant slant they introduce through the connotations of “belief”. “Ritual actions” is closer to what is involved in Chinese popular religion.
- 144 M. Yang (2020: 54).
- 145 Chau (2006: 2). “Magical efficacy” translates as “symbolic efficacy”, a key anthropological concept. See Lévi-Strauss (1974).
- 146 Chau (2006: 2).
- 147 M. Yang (2020: 55).
- 148 Chau (2006: 147–68), Cooper (2013). *Honghuo* literally translate as red (*hong*) fire (*huo*), while *renao* means hot or heat (*re*) and stir up (*nao*). Both terms refer to something that is exciting and desirable (Chau 2006: 148–51, 2019). Chau relates this to Durkheim’s (1990) concept of effervescence as the core of religion.
- 149 Chau (2006: 167).
- 150 Gauthier (2014).
- 151 Chau (2006: 160–2). On the practice of burning mock paper money, see Blake (2011).
- 152 Reader (2014).
- 153 Mayfair Yang, quoted in Li (2015, back cover blurb).
- 154 Li (2015: 1–6).
- 155 Li (2015: 2–3). See also Palmer and Winiger (2019).
- 156 Li (2015: 9).
- 157 Li (2015: 208–10).
- 158 Li (2015: 194). Chau (2015: 962–4) notes similar trends of “spectacle-isation” and their critique across China.

- 159 Li (2015: 199).  
 160 Li (2015: 17).  
 161 M. Yang (2020: 22).  
 162 Li (2015: 182).  
 163 Quoted in Li (2015: 187).  
 164 Li (2015: 191).  
 165 Li (2015: 183).  
 166 M. Yang (2020: 23).  
 167 Fan and Chen (2016: 932).  
 168 Willis (2020).  
 169 Fan and Chen (2016: 940).  
 170 M. Yang (2020: 22–3). Li’s (2015) analysis goes in the same direction.  
 171 Li (2015: 184, 227).  
 172 M. Yang (2020: 52).  
 173 This evaluation is consensual among the authors consulted and referenced in this section. Cooper’s (2013) “total social fact” approach, inspired by Mauss, says it most bluntly: temple festivals and popular religion are *not only* religious, but they certainly are religious.  
 174 M. Yang (2020: 23).  
 175 Fan and Chen (2015: 947). Lagerwey (2010: 95) lists Chunjie, Qingming, Duanwu, Zhongjuan, and Zhongqiu as the five pan-Chinese pre-modern traditional festivals.  
 176 Lagerwey (2010: 95).  
 177 M. Yang (2020: 190).  
 178 M. Yang (2020: 195).  
 179 Ye Dabing, in a 1997 article, as reported by M. Yang (2020: 196).  
 180 For an example, see M. Yang (2020: 213–6). See also Johnson (2018), Willis (2020).  
 181 Bruun (2003: 3). See also Bruun (2008).  
 182 Bruun (2003: 120).  
 183 Bruun (2003: 117). This has been true since at least the late 1990s.  
 184 Bruun (2003: 118).  
 185 Bruun (2003: 151).  
 186 Bruun (2003: 151).  
 187 Bruun (2003: 203).  
 188 Bruun (2003: 200).  
 189 On the liberal tradition and the market, see Gauthier (2020: Chapter 3).  
 190 Bruun (2003: 201).  
 191 It is important here to recall that the resolution of cultural paradoxes is the function of religion in Claude Lévi-Strauss’s structuralism.  
 192 Chau (2006: 3).  
 193 L. Fan (2003: 456).  
 194 Dean (2003: 344).  
 195 L. Fan (2003), Fan, Whitehead and Whitehead (2005), Fan and Whitehead (2011).  
 196 L. Fan (2003: 454), Fan and Whitehead (2011: 15).  
 197 Fan and Whitehead (2011: 15).  
 198 Fan and Whitehead (2011: 17).  
 199 Fan and Whitehead (2011: 26).  
 200 Fan and Whitehead (2011: 26).  
 201 Fan and Whitehead (2011: 26).  
 202 Fan and Whitehead (2011: 19–20).  
 203 Fan and Whitehead (2011: 17).

- 204 Fan and Whitehead (2011: 20).  
 205 Fan and Whitehead (2011: 17).  
 206 See Fan and Whitehead (2011: 21).  
 207 I am choosing to leave Islam out of the picture in this chapter as I am limiting myself especially to Han-majority mainland China and minorities, such as the Tujia, above, who share religious forms that are part of Chinese traditional religion. The impact of Christianity within these populations makes it inescapable, contrary to Islam. The trends within Muslim populations, though, are similar those surveyed in the preceding chapter on Islam. What is regrettable though is how this option closes the door to an attempt to explain the recent and ongoing repression (there are UN reports that talk of a “genocide,” even if this term is contested by scholars) of the Muslim Uighurs in the western province of Xinjian.
- 208 F. Yang (2018: 5).  
 209 For details, see F. Yang (2018).  
 210 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 274).  
 211 Ashiwa (2000: 29).  
 212 Chau (2016: 969–70). See also Lai (2003).  
 213 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 275).  
 214 D. Yang (2013: 60).  
 215 D. Yang (2013: 60). See also. Palmer and Siegler (2017).  
 216 D. Yang (2013: 48).  
 217 I am choosing to leave aside minority Buddhist regions like the occupied territory of Tibet for reasons of space and coherence.
- 218 Ji (2013: 14).  
 219 Ji (2013: 20).  
 220 Weller (2012: 341).  
 221 See Ji (2016).  
 222 See Fisher (2010), Ji (2010).  
 223 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 299).  
 224 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 382).  
 225 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 380–7). For a good discussion on Catholicism in China and its rapports with the state and local communities, see Cao (2013), Harrison (2010).  
 226 For more detail on Catholics and Protestants, see F. Yang (2018). On Protestants, see Bays (2003).  
 227 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 301).  
 228 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 302).  
 229 Bays (2016). Pentecostals are believed to count for 60% to 80% of Protestants. See also Cao (2013), Inouye (2015).  
 230 Document 19, quoted in Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 382).  
 231 F. Yang (2018: 54–6), Bays (2016).  
 232 Cao (2013: 29).  
 233 Hunter and Chan (1993: 178), quoted in Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 383).  
 234 Goossaert and Palmer (2011: 302).  
 235 Inouye (2015: 885).  
 236 Inouye (2016: 910).  
 237 Cao (2013).  
 238 Cao (2013: 30–4).  
 239 Cao (2013), F. Yang (2018).  
 240 Tsai (2017) aims to show the differences between the nationalism of unregistered charismatic Protestants and the CCP, and argues that these differences account for the amount of antagonism that underlies their relationship.  
 241 R. Wang (2011: 34).

- 242 Sun (2013: 12).
- 243 Sun (2013: 12).
- 244 Sun (2013: 12).
- 245 Dessein (2017: 222).
- 246 Tamney (2012: 127–8).
- 247 Sun (2012: 317).
- 248 Sun (2012: 317–8).
- 249 Sun (2012: 321).
- 250 Sun (2012: 323).
- 251 Sun (2012: 324).
- 252 Sun (2012: 324–7).
- 253 Sun (2012: 324–5).
- 254 Billioud (2015: 798).
- 255 Tamney (2012: 102).
- 256 Tamney (2012: 108).
- 257 See R. Fan (2011).
- 258 See Willis (2020).
- 259 Tu (2012: 79). Weber (1964: 240–1) saw the rapport to “magic”, the inviolability of tradition, and the ethic of adapting to the world instead of wilfully and rationally transforming it (as is the case for Protestantism) to be Confucianism’s most dissuasive aspects with respect to the development of capitalism in pre-modern China. Weber’s analysis could not imagine what came later, that is the survival of Confucianism as a “pure” philosophy isolated from its institutional and ritual forms. Jochim (1992: 138) writes: ‘Weber’s *Religion of China*, first translated into Chinese in 1989[...], almost thirty years later than Weber’s *Protestant Ethic* [...] was for the most part ignored by Chinese scholars until the 1980s, when it became a lightning rod for Chinese scholars challenging views on Confucianism as obstructing economic development.’
- 260 Tu (2012: 79).
- 261 Tamney (2011: 109).
- 262 Tamney (2011: 109).
- 263 Kuo (1992: 303), quoted in Tamney (2011: 112–3).
- 264 Tamney (2011: 110).
- 265 Tamney (2011: 110). One trendy Confucian concept is *Tianxia*, translatable as “everything under Heaven”, which provides a representation of the spiritual and physical universe as a hierarchised whole governed by ‘an ideal, global, and eternal power’. See Ji (2008).
- 266 Barbalet (2011: 339).
- 267 Barbalet (2011: 352).
- 268 Quoted in Dessein (2017: 222).
- 269 Quoted in Dessein (2017: 223). Emphasis added. Note Xi’s historical reconstruction by which he turns the Four Olds’ basher-in-chief, Mao Zedong, into a closet Confucian.
- 270 Barbalet (2011: 351). Weller (2012: 348) similarly defines the harmony in question as the ‘coordination of difference’. In this sense, the harmonious society is closer to Hayek’s dynamic equilibrium than the standard neo-classical (and Milton Friedman’s) static equilibrium. See Gauthier (2020: Chapter 4).
- 271 Jochim (1992: 158), quoted in Tamney (2011: 111–2).
- 272 On the myths and realities of China’s social credit system, see Brussee (2022). I thank David Palmer for bringing this source to my attention.
- 273 Tu (2012: 96).

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## 7 Conclusion

The implicit assumptions of the secularisation paradigm, which understands religion as being basically a meso-level, differentiated, and institutionalised phenomenon among others, have blinding effects on our apprehension of religion today. It forwards a form of evolutionism by which the social sciences isolate the West from the rest of the world and imagine the churchled form of religion, which is a legacy of Western Christianity and Western history, as the standard for religion in modernity and the end of religious change. An aim of this book is to challenge these assumptions by showing that the “rest of the world” has not evolved somewhere behind on the arrow of time but in synch with the West, from which it has inherited, more or less willingly and more or less coercively, the modern ideal of a utopian society guaranteed by the workings of the nation-state, and later those of the free market. I have argued that the uncertainties exposed by the emergence of concepts like postmodernity and neo-Paganism regarding how we understand what has happened over the course of the last four decades can be significantly dissipated if we consider that the period in history ranging from the late nineteenth century to today can be fruitfully divided into two constellations: the Nation-State and Global-Market regimes. While I have concentrated on the heuristic potential of this model concerning religion, this framework is valid for global societies as a whole, with regional, national, and local variations. This is because Durkheim and Mauss’ proposition that *modern* societies, however heterogeneous, conflicting, and differentiated, are still *human* societies, and therefore integrated wholes, holds water.

The Global-Market regime has succeeded the Nation-State regime through the combined effects of the neoliberal and consumerist revolutions. The Nation-State regime was founded on a vertical organisation of society and governmentality based on differentiation, hierarchisation, compartmentalisation, and institutionalisation. The impact for “religion” was that the nation-state, in order to exert its regulating and foundational functions, had to funnel religion into the churchled model, on the *meso* level, and take on a religious dimension of its own. We have seen how radical this process was in the Muslim world, Eastern Europe, and China. Yet this tour d’horizon has also

shown how the church model of religion is not the end nor the essence of religion, but a historically contingent formation: historical, contextual, and therefore potentially finite. Neoliberalisation and consumerisation, which I have suggested to compound within the concept of marketisation, have acted to erode the pillars of Nation-State organisation. With its horizontal social imaginary of a spontaneous self-regulation, the free market—mythologised as the idea and ideal of the Market—thrives on fluxes, flexibility, and continuous adaptability. Neoliberal policies and the penetration of consumerism in our latest wave of economic and cultural globalisation have challenged the former Nation-State arrangements, acting to de-differentiate, de-institutionalise, de-compartmentalise, and globalise all dimensions (or spheres) of society, including religion. What these processes usher in are radically new forms of religion that thwart the interpretative and analytical potential of secularisation paradigm-entrenched approaches.

When we remain fixated on Western developments, the present situation looks undecidable. It appears to agree partly with diagnoses of secularisation, partly with de-secularisation, partly with disenchantment, and partly with reenchantment. The landscape seems fragmented, blurry, and fuzzy. Indistinguishable. Scholars are at a loss as to how to come to terms with the ever-growing field of “self-spiritualities” and charismatic forms of World religions. For most scholars, “spiritualities” are best cast as not-really-religious religious forms, since the standard remains church religion. This analytical haze dissipates, however, when we stick our necks out to consider what is happening elsewhere in the world. The case of China is paradigmatic. Religion in China has very obviously taken two very different pathways. We also see the same rise of New Age-like and charismatic religious forms, in addition to the formidable revival of popular and traditional religious forms that many Western sociologists would (dis)qualify as “magic.” My argument is that if we look at what is happening in the West from a Chinese perspective, most of this haze dissipates. The 1960s in the West *were not so much the pivot decade in the decline of “religion”* as much as *they were the pivot decade for the decline of Christianity and church religion and the rise of another form of religion that is personalised and unchurched*. If we look at things more broadly and over the course of many centuries, even millennia, it is obvious that religion has changed in the past, and radically so. Why should we take for granted that it cannot change again in other terms as decline and return of the church form? Why should church religion be the “End of History”? Why should a break with the church form be understood as the dissolution of religion into fuzzy ersatz?

What the cases presented in this book show, and the Chinese case particularly, is that changes that have affected religion over the course of the last few decades are extremely profound and indissociably tied to the triumph of the Market over the State and the rapid development of today’s globalised and financialised brand of capitalism. As I argued in *Religion, Modernity, Globalisation*, the social scientific study of religion, because of its

entrenchment in the assumptions of the secularisation paradigm and its consequential focus on political issues, has neglected studying economics and the actual functioning of markets and consumption. Once we retrieve economics from the hands of orthodox economists and their Rational Choice followers, new avenues appear that allow us to make the necessary side-steps to seize the measure and nature of the profound changes that have affected religion over the course of the last decades. Thinking outside the West encourages us to leave aside eternal debates on secularisation and its associated concepts (and obsessions) and think the world as it is: an ensemble of parts that are integrated into a global entity and a common history. Doing this significantly changes the ways we see things.

We have seen how religion has been marketized and lifestyled following neoliberal reforms, the erosion of the regulative powers for the state and the container function of the nation, and the astonishing penetration of the ethics of authenticity and expressive individualism that are coextensive to consumerism in unfathomable parts of the world. What also stands out, though, is *how instrumental religion has been in the acculturation and legitimation of pro-market reforms and consumerism*. The relation between marketisation and religion is therefore a two-way process. Whether in the Muslim world, China, or Eastern Europe, religion has been a major factor in how these countries have adopted capitalism while contesting Western morality and hegemony. Contesting Western-style modernity, conservative reactions have paradoxically acted to indigenise and acculturate the structure of the Global-Market regime, namely expressive individualism, utilitarianism, entrepreneurialism, and the search for authenticity. Over the course of most of the twentieth century, being modern signified constructing a modern nation-state and collectively setting out on the road to Progress with the help of Science and Reason. Religion, whatever its pre-modern form, was required to fit itself in this frame and participate in this Long March forward. This conception of modernity was that of the Enlightenment, especially in its French, republican expression. What the Global-Market regime ushers in is a radical change in the meaning of modernity and a renewed urgency in the need to be and become modern. This new meaning of modernity is Market-based and rings closer to the utilitarian and market-oriented conception of modernity of the US, liberal tradition. This underground shift opens novel avenues that are integral to the recomposition of religion in marketized and lifestyled forms. Whether in the Muslim world, Orthodox-majority Eastern Europe, or China, religion finds a new legitimation when coupled with this meaning of what it is to be modern.

### And Now What?

A good question is what comes next? Where will we be when we no longer are in the Global-Market regime? These questions lead me to briefly develop two points. The first is how we understand the concept of regime, and what

happens when we move from one to the other. I have remarked with a bit of a surprise that many scholars, perhaps the majority, understand the Nation-State and Global-Market regimes as configurations that overlap and can continue to do so for quite some time, perhaps indefinitely. For example, the situation in China, in which the political system of the party-state has endured in the Reform Era, is understood as a mix between the logics of both regimes. Even if the Global-Market regime is seen as dominant, the Nation-State regime continues in *sotto voce*, and can even be revived, for example with Xi Jinping's reactualisation of a political religion and the cult of his personality. If we unpack this way of looking at things, it means that the nation-state continues to be able to act like the Nation-State. This is certainly one way of seeing things, and there is interpretative potential in it. However, this is not what I imagined when I developed this framework.

I see these regimes as moments in history. To illustrate, the Nation-State and Global-Market regimes are a way to understand the shift from modernity to postmodernity. In the introduction, I noted how the concept of postmodernity is deceptive, as it tells us where we *were*, and that *something* has changed. We know that we are "post," but we are not sure *where we are* in a positive, affirmative sense. In contrast, Nation-State and Global-Market are two distinct social constellations that belong to two distinct historical periods and tell us exactly what is going on and what makes the world turn: from the late nineteenth century to the 1970s–1990s, the nation-state was more than the nation-state and had extraordinary powers both as a social imaginary and a regulating institution and then, following the neoliberal revolution and that of consumerism, these powers were transferred from the State to the Market. Meanwhile, the Nation, which had been the "natural" container for collective identities and the backdrop for analysing any social dimension and any social fact within an inter-national world order, started to erode from top and bottom at once, in favour of a globalised world and lifestyled, particularistic identities. Seeing these regimes as historic formations that are sequenced does not mean that the world has switched from one to the other overnight. Whether it is between the Nation-State and Global-Market regimes, or between whatever laid before and the Nation-State regime, there is necessarily a transition phase. There is overlap between configurations, yet I believe there is also a *tipping point* when one emerging social structure becomes dominant and overtakes the former one and becomes established, becoming the grammar for the expression of the whole and the parts. This tipping point can vary from country to country, region to region, but the dynamics, as we have seen, are transnational while nationally path-dependent. Looking at the Muslim world showed us that Global-Market logics were well installed in a country like Turkey in the late 1980s, while one had to wait for the turn of the millennium to see these dynamics become dominant in Yemen and Kirghizstan. At the same time, the legacies of the former regime remain, and the new regime is always acculturated within the local institutional landscape and cultural particularities. However, these relative discrepancies and national or regional variations are differences within a common structure. The world is one.

Understanding changes in regimes in terms of historical sequences is coherent with the total social fact perspective. Remember that for Mauss, societies are wholes in which everything is potentially connected, even if they are traversed by conflicting worldviews. Every detail, every social fact, however meaningless or superficial at first glance, belongs to a system. “Social spheres” are not autonomous. They have their coherence, but they are constitutively tied to all the other spheres and society as a whole. We have seen this throughout this book: religious changes are intimately bound with the overarching social structures and share characteristics with other social dimensions. Religion was not the only thing to have been differentiated, institutionalised, and regulated by the state in the Nation-State era. Many other social dimensions were as well. The same is true in the Global-Market regime. It is society as a whole and all of its parts that have been marketised to a significant extent. Changes in regimes therefore involve fundamental changes in the social *ecology*. I mean by this concept the integral of the relationships between social dimensions and the relationships of this whole to its exterior and its physical environment. Seeing things in this way means there is a historical point beyond which the Nation-State becomes the nation-state. Populist movements and authoritarian leaders may pledge to ‘Make America (or Argentina, or Switzerland, or France, or Great Britain, or Russia, or Hungary, or China, or Turkey...) Great Again,’ the times have changed, and there is no going back. As I have tried to show and make clear again and again, shifting from the Nation-State to the Global-Market does not mean that the nation and the state no longer play an important role, on the contrary, but their powers, both as mobilising social imaginaries and effective institutions, are significantly different today than they were in the first three-quarters of the twentieth century.

The second point is one that has had me thinking a lot in the last few years. Are we still in the Global-Market regime, or are we already in a new sequence with a coherence of its own? For it is true that we see things with much more clarity when we are no longer in their grip and we no longer share their implicit assumptions. Does this mean that if we are able to identify the Global-Market regime this means that we must have left it? I was asked this question in relation to the rise of nationalist populist movements and authoritarianism. Does this phenomenon indicate a post-neoliberalism? This book has provided plenty of grounds to argue that this rise is not an “after neoliberalism” as much as one of its main effects and features. Whether Islamic fundamentalism, the Russian Orthodox Church’s benediction of Vladimir Putin’s Holy (Civilisational) War with Ukraine (and the West), or Xi Jinping’s stronghold on China, their common trait is that they are responses to a fluxing world driven first and foremost by economic globalisation. At the same time, there are signs that we might be in the process of moving towards a new regime, hinged upon a fourth type of capitalism (after the Industrial Revolution, Taylor-Fordism, and neoliberal-financial).<sup>1</sup> Since the late nineteenth century, Great Britain has been the main promoter of free trade and economic globalisation for all but three or four years of protectionism.

In this respect, the Brexit saga definitely means something. At the same time, it is difficult to imagine the world ceasing to be globalised. However, other calls for a return to the nation, including during the COVID pandemic, tell us that we might be reaching a tipping point of some sort. Similarly, the limits of the present brand of financialised, neoliberal capitalism, are becoming obvious. The levels of inequality are vertiginous, and the left-behinds are making their voices heard, from the Yellow Jacquets in France to the peasants of India. Meanwhile, the environmental catastrophe produced by this brand of capitalism are reaching extremes, with global warming, mass extinctions, and plastic pollution being just a few of the more pressing issues. For all of these reasons, the relative stability that characterises a regime is being severely challenged. At the moment of writing this (January 2024), the world looks anything but stable. The Global-Market regime will not last forever. The only prediction I would make at this point is that the next regime—if there is indeed a new global one as there has been over the last century and some—will not be articulated from a Western idea and ideal like the Nation-State and the Market, but the result of global dynamics that are not yet clear.

### **As a Way to Epilogue, or “Meanwhile, Back in the Jungle”**

This book has shown how a perspective that does not start by cutting the West off from “the Rest” is not only fruitful but essential if we want to understand the world we live in and the place, nature, and dynamics of religion within it. Throughout the cases presented in this book, I have argued that we all live in the same history and the same world.

But do we really?

The Muslim world, Eastern Europe, and China all have in common to be complex societies in which there existed, prior to the adoption and pursuit of High Modern Ideals and the project of creating a New Society and a New Man, some sort of state or proto-state that were parts of empires. From these foundations, the construction of modern nation-states was greatly eased, and therefore the institutionalisation of the Nation-State regime. The situation was different in other parts of the world, where the indigenous political structures were less state-like and where even the colonial states were inchoative, as in Sub-Saharan Africa. How did the Nation-State regime play out there? And how do these different arrangements influence in turn the shift to the Global-Market regime and its institutionalisation?

To provide the beginning of an answer to these questions, I suggest we take a final trip to the jungles of Papua New Guinea to visit the Baruya. The Baruya were only “discovered” in 1951 by an Australian military expedition, and were colonised in 1960, in the sense that

they definitely lost the sovereignty over themselves and their territory, and that their future would henceforth no longer depend solely on themselves and their neighbouring tribes, friends or foes, but by

decisions taken by power centres that were formerly totally unknown: state, missions, plantations, etc., all in the hands of “Europeans”, “*Waitmen*”, “Whites.”<sup>2</sup>

The world-renowned French anthropologist Maurice Godelier, a student of Claude Lévi-Strauss and one of his best commentators and critics, arrived in Papua New Guinea in 1967 and trekked out to the land of the Baruya through forests and mountains, helped by Christian missionaries along the way. The Baruya formed a small isolated tribe of about 1,500 people at the time, their territory stretching between two high valleys set at 1,600 and 2,300 meters of altitude. They earned their livelihood from forest horticulture and hunting, and their social structure was simple (clan with two lineages). Their religious life revolved around elaborate initiation rituals with virtually no reference to transcendence.<sup>3</sup> Male and female shamans otherwise dealt with the spirits of nature and the dead, and treated illnesses. Like many indigenous people, the Baruya were largely egalitarian, and their “chiefs” were devoid of coercive power.

Things changed at a fast pace after the inauguration of an airstrip in 1960. American Lutheran missionaries opened a school in 1964, and various missionary groups set foot in the valley (Seventh Day Adventists, German Lutherans, and the conservative revivalists of the New Tribes Mission). Some of them left after a few years for lack of success. By 1975, Godelier estimates that only two or three Baruya had converted to Christianity. Things changed during the 1980s, when an American Pentecostal Church, the Church of Christ, established itself in New Guinea, converting a number of natives on the coast who started setting up churches further and further inland. Like other surrounding tribes, the Baruya took to building *haus lotus* in each of their villages: small wooden buildings with a thatched roof that served as churches. The rate of conversions started to accelerate. In 1988, a group of Baruya converts approached Godelier to ask him if he could help translate their Baruya names into Christian names drawn from the Bible (Mary, Paul, Jacob, etc.). This had the consequence of cutting these people from their lineages and history, which was contained in their names. Asked why they wished to do such a thing, the answer that came was: ‘To be modern.’ ‘And what does it mean to be modern?’ the anthropologist asked. ‘To be modern, a young man answered, is simple. *Behainim Djisa, makim bisnis*: Follow Jesus, make business.’<sup>4</sup> Godelier writes:

And so, in this valley lost in the mountains of inner New Guinea, I came to hear this same aspiration being expressed, this same desire, individual and collective, that since a few decades we [anthropologists] had already been hearing in Brazil, in Latin America, then later in Africa, from the Democratic Republic of Congo to the tip of South Africa: “Follow Jesus and make business.” Everywhere, we found the same slogans, and at each time these slogans signalled the arrival, and

then the proliferation, of protestant sects coming from the United States for the most part—Pentecostals, Evangelicals, Revivalists, etc.—, which together progressively replaced the other Christian Churches who had occupied the territory [...] before them.<sup>5</sup>

Since then, five churches have been implanted in the Wonenara valley: four Pentecostal and one Adventist. They attract mostly women and men under forty. The Pentecostals have understood that insisting on the notion of sin is bound to failure, for the concept is foreign and inassimilable. The idea of an afterlife is an oddity, as is the idea of a God situated somewhere unattainable, like what the mainline Christian denominations preach. The Baruya remain pragmatic in their adhesion and are prone to move from church to church. They explain that they are looking for the church that will provide ‘the best life here on earth.’<sup>6</sup> By doing business, the Baruya do not necessarily mean making profits and maximising their utility, but simply making a bit of money they can use to purchase things that have become essential since they have been torn away from their traditional means of sustenance: ‘rice, machetes, kitchen utensils made in China, etc.’<sup>7</sup> Their livelihood has become centred around the coffee plantations that were introduced over the last decades (after other attempts initiated by the Whites and which failed), which they export. They also need money to pay for their children’s education. Money also allows them to better deal with the gradual loss of their gift-based economy and the progressive monetarisation of social relations and work.

As elsewhere, integration and participation in the bounties of the global market come with the desire to leave aside their traditions.

Everything happens as if, in many parts of the world that were colonised by the West and where were founded, more or less recently, nation-states built by the European colonial powers, the aspirations of “modernity” of the individuals and the masses preferably adopt a double dimension, hold a double content, *both economic and religious*. In contrast, references to the state, or to democracy, are barely mentioned, even absent.<sup>8</sup>

The state is not absent from the lives of the indigenous peoples of Papua New Guinea, but few have a daily relation to it. The lateness of the “discovery” and colonisation of most parts of the country has heavily impeded the construction of infrastructures (communication, transport, services, taxation) and political structures that are necessary for the constitution of a modern nation-state. This material explanation requires a culturalist addition, since tribal polities in most of the country correspond to what anthropologist Pierre Clastres called “societies against the state.” Like the Baruya, most indigenous peoples in Papua New Guinea are not only without a state, but they are also constitutively equalitarian and made to defuse the emergence of a coercive power centre and social hierarchies.<sup>9</sup> The idea of the state

remains something abstract, apart from the personal advantages one can find in occupying one of the state's functions. It is different for "business," which is more concrete and affects daily life. In a sense, then, the Baruya have made the step directly from the neolithic to the Global-Market regime, bypassing the Nation-State regime altogether and its compartmentalisation of society as well as its verticalisation of religion and politics.

The facility with which Pentecostalism has become implanted in tribal societies in Papua New Guinea and elsewhere on the planet, including in Africa, where state-building is largely an unfinished project, is food for thought. Pentecostalism presents an inner-worldly form of religion and an immanent type of transcendence, like tribal religion. This is arguably a reason why it is so easy for societies with tribal religions to "modernise" by shifting to Pentecostalism, while mainline denominations, with their idea of a vertical transcendence, the differentiation of religion and the ideas of sin and the afterlife, the afterlife, have had so little success with the Baruya as well as many other indigenous peoples. In my opinion, this supports the idea hinted at in the introduction according to which the Pentecostal explosion under Global-Market conditions amounts to a radical change within Christianity, something like a new Reformation.

To conclude, this book has shown how the Nation-State to Global-Market framework can help us deepen our understanding of the recent shifts in religious structure, whether in complex or tribal societies. For well over a millennium, religion in the West was structured vertically, pillared on a radical form of transcendence and an ontological dualism (a divide between Augustine's Terrestrial and Celestial Cities, the body and the soul). This vertical structure was perpetuated in the Nation-State regime, as the modern Westphalian state corresponds to a top-down type of regulation and imaginary (the State). The Market, on the other hand, corresponds to a horizontal mode of regulation and imaginary. The automatic and spontaneous operation of the Market heralded by neoclassical theory promotes an immanent imaginary in which the market itself and the Laws of Nature on which it is founded act as a form of immanent transcendence. As we have seen throughout this book, the Global-Market regime produces a radical shift in the metaphysical foundations of human societies and thereby favours cosmological rather than transcendent-vertical religiosities, forcing the latter to immanentise, as we have seen in the case of Orthodox Christianity. This shift also seriously affects politics and the foundations of the nation-state, producing nostalgic reaffirmations of both the omnipotent state (authoritarianism) and the safe haven of the homogenous nation (neo-fascist nationalism).

A total social fact approach, which understands religion as an integral part of a social whole rather than as an autonomous and differentiated system among others, opens heuristic avenues for thinking about the complexities of the world of today and answering some of its challenges. There is a lot of work yet to be done.

## Notes

- 1 These are the historical stages of capitalism and its corresponding “spirit” suggested by Boltanski and Chiapello (1999).
- 2 Godelier (2017: 14, my translation).
- 3 If the Baruya were not “savages,” many sociologists would probably call these rituals “secular” rather than “religious.” For descriptions, see Godelier (2017).
- 4 Godelier (2017: 122–3, my translation). This expression serves as the title of Godelier’s book in French (*Suivre Jésus et faire du business*).
- 5 Godelier (2017: 123, my translation).
- 6 Godelier (2017: 128–30, my translation).
- 7 Godelier (2017: 123).
- 8 Godelier (2017: 124, my translation. Emphasis added).
- 9 Clastres (1974).

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# Index

Note: *Italic* page numbers refer to figures and page numbers followed by “n” denote endnotes.

- al-Adnani, Abu Muhamad 86
- al-Afghani, Jamal-al-Din 62
- Agadjanian, Alexander 151, 155, 165, 172, 176
- al-ahkām al-khamsa* 114
- Albania 69, 156
- a l'Européenne* 63
- Algeria 74, 78, 82, 88, 141n113
- al-Halal wal-Haram fil Islam* (Al-Qaradawi) 116
- al-Qaeda 39–40, 84–8, 92
- alternative spiritualities 41, 180, 181, 184
- Amghar, Samir 125
- Anatolian Sufi thoughts and practices 69
- Anderson, Benedict 4
- anti-capitalists 181, 266
- anti-Confucian campaign 288
- anti-countercultural 90
- anti-imperialists 181, 242
- anti-religion campaigns 206
- anti-rightist campaigns 230
- The Anti-Social Apostolate. Theology and Neoliberalism in Post-Communist Romania* (Racu) 174
- anti-superstition campaigns 220, 288
- Antonyan, Yulia 179
- apolitical Islamist movements 61
- archaic shamanic cultural system 208–9
- Argentina 300, 325
- Arjomand, Saïd Amir 63
- Armenia 156, 160, 165, 166, 171, 179, 192n39
- Association of Economic Entrepreneurship and Business Ethics (IGIAD) 69, 79
- Association of Independent Industrialists and Businessmen (MÜSIAD) 69, 79, 133
- Association of Turkish Industrialists and Businessmen (TÜSIAD) 69
- AT Kearney 113, 133
- Atlas of Religion in China* (Yang) 307
- Atran, Scott 87, 89
- “audio tape Islam” 75
- Australia 36, 54, 111
- authenticity: and consumerism 175–8; ethics of 175–8
- authentic lifestyle 40, 91
- authoritarianism 58, 152; authority-asserting 167; and ethnic nationalism 37; and illiberalism 167–71; rise of 25, 167–8; state 264, 329
- Azerbaijan 69
- Baathist movement 61
- al-Baghdadi, Abu Bakr 85
- Bakker, Jim 32, 76
- Bangladesh 54, 66
- al-Banna, Hasan 62, 86
- Barbalet, Jack 304
- Batanova, Polina 177
- Bauman, Zygmunt 11; *Modernity and the Holocaust* 44n18
- Bayat, Asef 67–8, 107
- bazaar economies 66
- Becker, Gary 23
- Beijing Consensus 304
- Beijing Summer Olympics 300
- Being Modern in China* (Willis) 267
- Beiyang regime 226

- Belarus 153, 158, 160, 162, 163, 165, 180  
 belief customs 281  
 Bell, Emma 182–3  
 Belarus 153, 158, 160, 162, 163, 165, 180  
 Bellah, Robert 238  
 Belt and Road initiative 259  
 Belyaev, Demyan 177  
 Bentham, Jeremy 11  
 Bergeaud-Blackler, Florence 114, 118, 120, 124, 135  
 Berger, Peter L.: *The Desecularization of the World* 1  
 Beyer, Peter 16, 187  
 Binark, Mutlu 109  
 body cultivation 272, 274–5, 296  
 Bohle, Dorothee 160, 164  
 Boko Haram 84, 87  
 Bolsonaro, Jair 37  
 Boltanski, Luc 22, 182  
 Bonelli, Laurent 90  
*Book of Rites* (Confucius) 258  
 Borowik, Irena 180  
 boxed up religion 16–19  
 Boxer rebellion 210  
 Brazil 14, 30, 32, 37, 327  
 breathing method 231  
 British Treasury Islamic bonds 133  
 Brussels Halal Week 124  
 Bruun, Ole 289  
 Buddhism 208, 210, 214, 216, 218–20, 223, 294–7  
 Buddhist monasteries 157, 209, 296  
 Buddhist Shaolin tradition 222  
 Bulgaria 69, 153–7, 160, 162, 163, 184, 197n187  
 burkas 108–10  
 Burma 14  
  
 Caldwell, Melissa L. 179  
 Cameron, David 132–3  
 Cambodia 14  
 Canada 36, 122, 138n7  
 canonical texts 219  
 Cao, Nanlai 299  
 capitalism: global-oriented 71; Islamic 75, 80; Keynesian-Islamic 131; neoliberal 115, 291, 326; Taylorist-Fordist 20–1  
 Carrié, Fabien 90  
 Casanova, José 63, 187  
 Castaneda, Carlos 157, 176  
  
*Catholic, Protestant, Jew* (Herberg) 240  
 Catholic Church 174, 191, 230, 240, 281  
 Cerantonio, Musa 84  
 Cesari, Jocelyne 55–7, 60; *We God's People* 55  
 Chang Kai Check 217  
 charismatic Christianity 30–3, 185; conservative 32; evangelical 31–2; rise of 30–2  
 Charles III (King of the United Kingdom) 133  
 Chase Manhattan Bank 75  
 Chau, Adam Yuet 271, 277, 279, 282  
 Cheikh Shaarawi 75  
 Chen, Nancy N. 273  
 Chen Yingning 224  
 Chiapello, Ève 22, 182  
 China: Belt and Road initiative 259; Chinese Jerusalem 297; under communist rule 228–33; and India 205; Japanese invasion and occupation 206, 226–7, 242; new civil religion 302–6; post-Mao 270; Reform Era China 271, 285, 294; religion on Christian mould 216–20; Republican China 227; Tiananmen Square protests (1989) 257; traditional religion in 207–9  
*China: A Religious State* (Lagerwey) 245n31  
 China Internet Network Information Center 308n5  
 Chinese Catholic church 230  
 Chinese civilisation 232, 274  
 Chinese Communist Party (CCP) 2, 42, 206, 224, 227–33, 241–3, 254, 258, 261–2, 265, 286, 297, 299–300, 306; authoritarian rule of 261–2; official religious policy 270–1  
 Chinese cosmology 221, 244n19, 293  
 “Chinese Dream” (*zhongguo meng*) 2, 43, 259  
 Chinese essence 224, 232  
 Chinese medicine 220–2, 231–2, 272–4, 286  
 Chinese modernity 227  
 Chinese nationalism 215, 304  
 Chinese neoliberalism 260, 262  
 Chinese New Year 287  
 Chinese Revolutions I 205–44; China under communist rule 228–33;

- Chinese religion on Christian mould 216–20; civil religion 237–42; continuity more than novelty 233–7; Indigenising call for reform 211–12; invention of religion 212–14; Mao cult 233–7; political religion 237–42; political ritual 237–42; Qing and modernity 209–11; redemptive societies 224–7; secularity 220–4; superstition 214–16; traditional religion 207–9
- Chinese Revolutions II 254–308; Buddhism 294–7; CCP's official religious policy 270–1; consumerism 266–70; Daoism 294–7; Document 19 270–1; fengshui revival 289–91; Jesus, God, and Holy Spirit 297–9; marketisation of *Zongjiao* 294–7; neoliberalism 260–5; new civil religion 302–6; new era of reform 256–60; *nuo* religion 283–5; qigong fever 271–7; religion as culture/ culture as religion 285–7; religious change 270–80; revenge of Confucius 299–302; Shenzhen 291–4; superstition 280–1; sweeping tombs and national holidays 287–9; temple festivals 277–80
- Chinese socialism 257
- Chinese urban elites 243
- choice: Muslim fashions 110–12; and normativity 110–12
- Choudary, Anjem 84
- Christianity: charismatic 30–3, 185; Orthodox 18, 152, 177, 184–6, 197n198; post-Reformation 16, 37–8, 212; post-Reformation Western 44n45; Western 7, 16, 210, 216–18, 223, 321
- Christian mission model 218, 226
- Christian model 17, 214, 217–20
- civilisational essence 274, 283
- civil religion 237–42
- Codex Alimentarius* 123–4
- coextensive hyper-mediatization 27
- Cold War 40, 151, 156, 186
- collective eschatology 235
- communication sub-system 17
- communism 150–91
- communist experience 156–8
- communist rule 156, 158, 173, 187
- Confucian businessmen/women 301
- Confucian Chinese tradition 300
- Confucianism 18, 206, 208–10, 213–15, 219, 223, 225, 227, 255, 283, 285, 287, 300, 302–5
- Confucian welfare state 264
- Confucius 2, 42, 219, 239, 255, 259, 299–302; *Book of Rites* 258; revenge of 299–302; temple 232
- Confucius Peace Prize 300
- conservative cultural war 32
- conservative Orthodoxy 151
- consumer culture 21, 27, 67, 108, 111, 131, 207, 268, 285, 287
- consumerism 19–22; with Chinese characteristics 266–70; and ethics of authenticity 175–8; -formatted religiosity 83; marketisation as 24–8
- consumer revolution 20, 21, 25, 28, 32, 38, 66, 69
- consumer society 21, 25, 79, 164, 258, 267–8, 276
- corporate Islam 129
- countercultural movement 21, 28, 181
- countercultural New Age 183, 189
- countercultural religious revolution 28–30
- countercultural revolution 91
- Covey, Stephen: *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* 73
- COVID pandemic 259, 326
- Croatia 159, 162
- culture/cultural: enterprises 265; institutions 265; liberalism 169; programme 18, 136, 211, 305; as religion 285–7; religion as 285–7; structure 34, 72; treasures 220; Western counterculture 62
- Cultural Revolution 21, 30, 232, 235, 238, 239, 241, 254, 257, 262, 271, 272, 277, 278, 287, 294, 296, 299, 305
- customary beliefs 281
- cyberspace 86, 89, 113
- Czech Republic 159, 162, 164
- Dalen, Robin van 120
- Daode xueshe (Moral Studies Society) 225
- Daoism 208–10, 294–7
- Daoist self-cultivation methods 227
- Daoyuan (School of the Tao) 225
- Da'waat-e Islami 82–3
- deep-frozen religious developments 156, 219

- Deng Xiaoping 3, 21, 256–7, 264, 265, 270, 291, 302
- Der-Ruey Yang 296
- The Desecularization of the World* (Berger) 1
- “Development First” model 258
- digital Islam 75
- d’Iribarne, Philippe 129–30
- discrete movement 69
- Dochuk, Darren 30
- Document 19 270–1
- Douglas, Mary: *The World of Goods* 24
- Duara, Prasenjit 224
- Durkheim, Émile 6–7, 9
- East Asian welfare model 264
- Eastern Europe: national-statisation of religion in 153–6; neoliberalism 158–61; Orthodox-majority (see Orthodox-majority Eastern Europe)
- Eastern-Orthodoxy 151
- Ebrey, Patricia 209
- economic globalisation 22, 40, 57, 72, 77, 122, 125, 129, 304, 325
- economic liberalism 33, 71, 74, 130, 150, 169
- economics-in-command 257
- Egypt 16, 37, 55, 58, 62, 66, 67, 75, 77, 78, 79, 81, 92, 94n56, 94n74, 97n163, 109, 118, 139n22, 141n113
- Eisenstadt, Shmuel N. 13–14
- El Difraoui, Abdelasiem 85, 87
- enchanted materialism 266
- epistemological system 135
- epistemology 5, 38
- ethical rationalisation 185
- ethics of authenticity 20, 22, 26–8, 30, 34, 41–2, 67–8, 73, 78, 91, 119, 125, 128, 130, 136–7, 175–8, 269, 292–3, 301, 323
- ethnic nationalism 5, 36, 37, 304
- European Commission 123
- European Union 159, 161, 180
- Europe-oriented Kemalism 71
- exceptional functions 274
- expressive individualism 19–22
- expressive revolution 21, 28
- Faith-Based Initiatives (FBIs) 173
- Falun gong movement 271
- Falwell, Jerry 32
- Fan, Lizhu 241, 291, 293
- fengshui revival 289–91
- Feuchtwang, Stephen 237, 239
- feudal secret societies (*fengjian huidaomen*) 229
- Fidolini, Vulca 126
- finance see Islamic finance
- Fischer, Johan 126
- Flora, Gavril 165
- Folk Belief Custom 286
- folk cultural traditions 291
- Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) 123
- Ford, Henry 20–1
- Foreign Policy* 76
- Foucault, Michel 24, 126
- France 16, 21, 37, 44n21, 47n102, 55, 82, 90, 112, 115, 118, 119, 121, 126, 138n4, 139n40, 156, 170, 240, 266, 283, 300, 310n63, 325, 326
- freedom to religion 240
- Free Economic Zones 279
- Free to Choose* (Friedman) 25, 193n54
- French Muslims 112
- French Physiocrats 304
- Friedman, Milton 21, 23, 159, 171, 263, 290; *Free to Choose* 25, 193n54
- Friedman, Rose: *Free to Choose* 25
- Gaddafi, Muammar 87
- Garibaldi 16
- Geertz, Clifford 4, 130
- General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) 122
- Georgia 160, 161, 193n70
- Gerges, Fawaz 85, 88
- Germany 16, 113, 249n222
- Gerth, Karl 266
- The Gift* (Mauss) 43n11
- Giscard-d’Estaing, Valéry 21
- Global Islamic Economy Summit of Dubai 124
- Globalization* (Robertson) 187
- Globalization and Orthodox Christianity* (Roudometof) 186
- Global Jihad 85–6, 89–90
- Global-Market 150–91; era 108, 178, 282; model of religion 190; and nation-state 3–6; theory 5
- Global-Market regime 8–10, 26–8, 32, 33, 35–7, 40–3, 75, 78, 82, 84, 85, 107–8, 121–2, 135, 137, 151–2, 170, 177, 188, 255, 260, 266, 267, 271, 279, 281–2, 285, 321, 323–6, 329; religion in 32–7

- global McDonaldisation 89  
 global-oriented capitalism 71  
 Global South 22, 28  
 global world system 23  
 God 297–9  
 Godelier, Maurice 327  
 Gog, Sorin 174, 180–1, 188, 190–1  
 Göle, Nilufer 110  
 Goossaert, Vincent 19, 208; *The Religious Question in China* 308  
 Grabbe, Heather 168  
 Graham, Billy 30–2, 76  
 Great Leap Forward 230  
 Great Mosque of Paris 120  
 Greece 154, 195n120  
 Greskovits, Béla 160, 164  
 Gugler, Thomas 82–3  
 Gu Hansen 272  
 Gülen, Fethullah 69–70  
 Gülen Movement 39, 69–72, 78, 81  
 Guo Lin 272  
 Gymnastiar, Abdullah 77  
  
 Haenni, Patrick 57, 73–5, 79, 106, 129, 135; *L'islam de marché* 39, 72  
 Haidara, Cherif 77  
 halal: *Codex Alimentarius* 124; global halal market/industry 2, 40, 57, 122–7; halal-certified meat 113, 115, 118–21; invention of 112–27; norms 121, 125–6; and WTO regulations 124  
 Halal Expo 124  
 halalisation 40, 135; of Islam 112; of the world 121–7  
 Han Dequiang 269  
 Han dynasty 209, 224  
*baramisation* 124  
 Hare Krishna 176  
 Harmonious Society (*hexie shehui*) 258, 300, 306  
 Harner, Michael 177  
 Harvey, David 257, 261  
 Hayek, Friedrich 21, 171, 261  
 Hendrick, Joshua D. 66, 70, 72, 74  
 Hentsch, Thierry 55  
 Herberg, Will: *Catholic, Protestant, Jew* 240  
 Herrera, Linda 67  
 heterodox cults 224  
 heterodox religiosities 178  
 High Modern Idealism/Ideals 3, 14–15, 18, 20, 39, 41, 58, 92, 234–5, 243, 326  
 High-Modern Western ideals 211  
 Hinduism 123, 190, 238  
 Hirak movement 88  
 Hobbes, Thomas: *Leviathan* 11  
 Hobsbawm, Eric 13, 114, 166  
 Holy Spirit 297–9  
 Holy War 2, 91  
*homo economicus* 24, 80  
*homo Islamicus* 80  
*homo traditionalis* 80  
 Hongbao, Zhang 275  
*Honghuo* 282, 299, 312n148  
 Hroch, Miroslav 166  
 Hu Jintao 258, 264, 300  
*hukou* and *danwei* systems 229, 258, 269  
 Human Potential Movement 34  
 Hundred Days Reform Movement 211  
 Hungary 30, 37, 159, 162, 168, 171, 193n73, 325  
  
 idealism 13–16  
 Ignatieff, Michael 169–71  
 illiberalism: and authoritarianism 167–71; and populism 167–71  
 Imperial Britain 36  
 India 14, 113, 230; anti-religion campaigns in 206; Beatles' famous trips to 30; and China 205; Hindu ultra-nationalists in 32; and Narendra Modi 37; peasants of 326; religious developments in 219  
 Indigenising call for reform 211–12  
 indigenization 154  
 indigenized versions of colonialism 58  
 individualism, expressive 19–22  
 individual moral asceticism 235  
 Indonesia 4, 14, 19, 21, 39, 45n52, 46n95, 54, 56, 70, 72, 77, 81, 92, 109, 121, 129, 139n22, 140n83, 141n113, 142n121, 211, 219, 245n39, 261  
 industrial lineage 275  
 industrial production 15, 22, 117  
 Inouye, Melissa Wei-Tsing 298  
 Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) 284–6, 289  
 International Halal Expo of Meknes 124  
 International Monetary Fund (IMF) 22–3, 65, 159, 167, 262, 264  
*International New York Times* 87, 88  
 Internet revolution 255  
 invented tradition 114, 123, 232, 277

- inventing: of halal 112–27; of religion 212–14; secularity 220–4  
 invisible religion 29  
 Iqtidar, Humeira 79  
 Iran 37, 59, 60, 63, 97n163, 109, 118, 131, 139n22, 141n113  
 Iranian Islamist revolution 118  
 Iranian Revolution 75, 92  
 Iran-Iraqi war (1980–1988) 85  
 Iraqi Sunni community 85  
 Isherwood, Baron: *The World of Goods* 24  
 Islam: audio tape 75; corporate 129; digital 75; halalisation of 112; Market Islam (*see* Market Islam); in Muslim-majority countries 57–65; national-statisation of 57–65, 92; neoliberalisation 128–31; radical 89, 92  
*Islam for Dummies* 98n205  
 Islamic: capitalism 75, 80; culture 130; free market 80; insurance 40, 107, 131; management 127–34; marketing 127–34; movements 39, 60, 79, 82, 84; non-movements 107–12; normative space 118; principles 68, 77, 80; revivalism 78, 130, 220; revolution 63, 81; social movements 60, 78–9  
*Islamic Branding and Marketing* (Temporal) 141n110  
 Islamic Faith-Based Development Organisations (FBDOs) 77  
 Islamic finance 40, 57, 107, 127–34, 136; development of 133; hopes and limits of 131–4; importance and meaning of 133; principles 133  
 Islamic Food and Nutrition Council of America (IFANCA) 116  
 Islamic Law 63, 86, 123  
 Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) 40, 84–92, 97n183  
 Islamic theology 75  
 Islamisation: lifestylisation of 66–9; and media deregulation 66–9; neoliberal management 128–31  
 Islamism: marketisation of 78–81; Muslim modernist 117; neo-Islamism 3, 71; post-Islamism 2; from state focus to lifestyle 54–92  
 Islamist fundamentalist 124  
 Islamist movements 61–2, 65, 81, 82, 92, 106, 107  
 Islamist Republic of Iran 118  
 Islamist revolution 63, 118  
 Islamists *vs.* Secularists 60–3  
 Italy 16, 36, 126, 168  
  
 Jabhat al-Nusra 84  
 Jack Ma 260  
 Jamaat-e-Islami 63, 79  
 Jankowiak, William R. 269  
 Japan 14, 179, 211, 212, 215, 221, 243, 264, 283, 303  
 Japanese invasion and occupation 206, 226–7, 242  
 Jesus 297–9  
 Jiang Weiqiao 224  
 Jiang Zemin 257, 258, 271  
 Jibril, Ahmad Musa 84  
 Jihadism 39, 57, 84  
 Jihadism 2.0 84–91; Jihadism as absolute lifestyle 88–91; paradoxes of ISIS 86–8  
 jihadist movements 84, 85, 89  
 Jingshi puji fojiaohui (Buddhist Association for Universal Salvation) 225  
 Jiushi xinjiaohui (New Religion to Save the World) 225  
 Johnson, Ian 214  
 Jones, Carla 111, 136, 137  
 Jordan 16, 58, 117, 141n113, 247n135  
*Journal for Islamic Marketing* 141n110  
 Justice and Prosperity Party (AKP) 71, 81  
  
 Kang Xiaoguang 305  
 Kang Youwei 211, 227  
 Kazakhstan 66, 69, 126  
 Kazakhstan International Halal Expo 124  
 Kemal Ataturk, Mustafa 39, 59, 92  
 Kemalism: death of 65–9; Market Islam 65–9; and neoliberalism 65–9  
 Kemalist economic developmentalism 65  
 Kemalist secularism 65  
 Kepel, Gilles 134–5  
 Keynesian compromise 15, 21  
 Keynesian-Islamic capitalism 131  
 Khaled, Amr 68, 75–8  
 Khomeini, Ayatollah 115  
 Khomeini, Ruhollah 63  
 Khosrokar, Farhad 90  
 Kiliçbay, Baris 109  
 Kirill, Patriarch 2  
 Korean cultural heritage 286

- Krämer, Gudrun 63–4  
*Kulturkampf* (cultural struggle) 76  
 Kyrgyzstan 69, 126
- Lagerwey, John 210, 222; *China: A Religious State* 245n31
- Laos 14
- Latour, Bruno 13; *We Have Never Been Modern* 19
- Lefort, Claude 6
- Lehne, Stefan 168
- Lemieux, Raymond 240
- Leviathan* (Hobbes) 11
- Lévi-Strauss, Claude 327
- Lewis, Reina 110–11
- Li, Hongmei 267
- Li, Lan 283–4
- libertarian model 115
- Li Changchun 286
- lifestylisation of Islamisation 66–9
- Li Hongzhi 275–6
- Lin Biao 236
- Lindquist, Galina 178–9
- L'islam de marché* (Haenni) 39, 72
- Lithuania 158, 160
- local martial arts associations 222
- Long March (1934–1935) 231, 323
- Luckmann, Thomas 29
- Lytard, François 2
- Madsen, Richard 237
- magic: and marketisation 178–80; rise of 178–80
- Malaysia 14, 54, 66, 94n56, 113, 121–3, 129, 131, 132, 134, 137, 139n22, 140n78, 141n113, 279
- Mali 66, 77
- management: Islamic 127–34; Islamising neoliberal 128–31
- Manichean theology 89
- Mao cult 233–7
- Mao Zedong 3, 42, 207, 229, 236, 241, 254, 257, 302; -led Communists 156, 254; Maoist period 207, 271; social protection system 263
- market: economies 66; rationality 70
- market-driven globalisation 38
- Marketing Theory* 127
- marketisation: as consumerisation 24–8; of Islamism 78–81; as neoliberalisation 24–8; and rise of magic 178–80; of *Zongjiao* 294–7
- Market Islam 92, 106, 129, 306; Gülen Movement 69–71; invention of halal 112–27; Islamic finance 127–34; Islamic management 127–34; Islamic marketing 127–34; Jihadism 2.0 84–91; as lifestylisation of Islam 136; marketisation of Islamism 78–81; Muslim fashions as Islamic non-movements 107–12; national-statisation of Islam in Muslim-majority countries 57–65; neoliberalism and Kemalism 65–9; new mediatised religious authorities 75–8; rise of 54–92, 106–37; transnational spiritual movements 81–3
- Market romanticism 269
- Martin, David: *Pentecostalism: The World Their Parish* 34
- Marx, Karl 150
- Marx-inspired communism 150
- Marxism 150, 192n36, 237–8
- Marxist: critique of the alienation of capitalism 21; dogma 284; economics 304; philosophy 231; proletariat and working class 228
- Maududi, Abul A'la 115
- Mauss, Marcel 6, 8, 179; *The Gift* 43n11
- Ma Wanfu 219–20
- Mawdudi, Abu A'la 63
- May Fourth Movement 222, 228, 234, 247n108
- McCants, William 85
- media deregulation and lifestylisation of Islamisation 66–9
- mediatization theory 268
- Medieval Crusades 55, 84
- mega-church model 33
- mega-church movement 32
- Meloni, Giorgia 168
- meritocracy 15, 265
- method/methods/methodology 2, 5, 29, 31, 38, 39, 43, 46n90, 128, 139n38, 227, 231, 245n49, 272–4
- Mexico 122
- Milovanovic, Aleksandra Djuric 154
- Ming dynasty 259, 283, 285–6
- modern cultural programme 13, 41, 155, 211, 305
- modern era of globalisation 186
- modern idealism 13–16
- modernist Islam 92, 117

- modernity 209–11; Chinese 227;  
 Nation-State 19; Western 7, 14, 18,  
 56, 119, 207, 296  
*Modernity and the Holocaust* (Bauman)  
 44n18  
 modern nation-state 12, 33, 42, 74, 87,  
 92, 154, 207, 228, 241, 323, 326,  
 328  
 Modi, Narendra 37  
 Moldavia 69, 158, 160–3, 165  
 Mont Pelerin Society 171  
 Moore, Robert L. 269  
 moral ideals 9, 11  
 Morocco 54, 81, 82, 109, 124, 131  
 Moscow International Halal Exhibition  
 124  
 Moscow Patriarchate 154–5, 158  
*mudarabah* 132  
 Muhathir bin Mohamad 121  
 multi-level complex, religion as 6–8  
 multiple modernities 14  
*musharakah* 132  
 Muslim Association for Progress 219  
 Muslim-born jihadists 89  
 Muslim fashions 40, 57, 107, 110;  
 burkas 108–10; between choice  
 and normativity 110–12; as Islamic  
 non-movements 107–12; trendsetters  
 108–10; veil fashions 108–10  
 Muslim-majority: countries 57–65;  
 societies 60, 67; states 54  
 Muslim market 113, 127, 132  
 Muslim modernist Islamism 117  
 Muslim Modernist movement 79, 92  
 Muslim veil fashions 108–10  
  
 Na Chen 241  
 Nasr, Vali 58  
 nation 3, 4, 8–10, 12, 13, 15–17, 19,  
 23–6, 36, 41, 44n20, 54, 58, 61, 78,  
 84, 85, 87, 88, 128, 150, 153–8, 165,  
 166, 168, 171, 189, 190, 212, 216,  
 220, 232–5, 238, 243, 244, 259, 261,  
 275, 281, 284, 286, 305, 323–6, 329  
 national disasters 259  
 national economy 15, 167  
 national humiliations 259  
 nationalisation 63–5  
 nationalism: Chinese 215, 304; ethnic 5,  
 36, 37, 304; rise of 161–7  
 national medicine 221–2  
 national pains 259  
 national revitalisation 259  
 national shames 259  
  
 National-Socialist Germany 249n222  
 national-statisation: of Islam in  
 Muslim-majority countries 57–65; of  
 religion in Eastern Europe 153–6  
 nation-state 4, 8–11, 15, 17–20, 21,  
 23–4, 26–9, 33, 36–9, 41–3, 45n48,  
 56, 60, 61, 64, 67, 74, 75, 81–3, 92,  
 108–9, 112, 125, 126, 130, 131, 136,  
 150, 151, 153, 155, 157–8, 170,  
 172, 188, 234, 242–4, 255, 267, 276,  
 277, 282, 305, 306, 321–6, 329; and  
 global-market 3–6; Islam 92; model  
 of religion 189; modernity 19; period  
 85, 131, 269; rise of 10–13; three-  
 directional dissection of traditional  
 Chinese religion 214  
 Nedostup, Rebecca 227, 233–4  
 negative structuration 189  
 neo-classical economics 22  
 neo-Confucianism 304  
 neo-Indianism 2, 196n168  
 neo-Islamism 3, 71  
 neoliberal capitalism 115, 291, 326  
 neoliberal discourse 262  
 neoliberalisation 24–8, 40, 57, 76,  
 81, 107, 167, 186, 260–1, 264–5;  
 Islam 128–31; Islamising neoliberal  
 management 128–31; marketisation  
 as 24–8  
 neoliberalism: Chinese 260, 262; with  
 Chinese characteristics 260–5; and  
 death of Kemalism 65–9; defining  
 22–4; Eastern European 158–61;  
 Market Islam 65–9  
 neoliberal management 128–31  
 neoliberal revolution 21, 22, 25, 170,  
 268  
 neoliberal school 21  
 neoliberal subjectivities: creating 180–6;  
 New Age explosion 180–4; Orthodox  
 Christianity 184–6; Pentecostalism  
 184–6  
 neoliberal theologies 174–5  
 neo-Nebula 29, 196n168  
 neo-Paganism 2, 176, 196n168,  
 196n176  
 neo-Shamanic movement 176  
 neo-Shamanism 2, 30, 196n168  
 Nestlé 124  
 New Age-derived therapeutic techniques  
 73  
 New Age explosion 180–4  
 New Age movement 28–9  
 New Age Muslim 128

- New Age-related movement 176  
 New Age-related networks 178  
 New Age-related religiosities 181  
 New Age-related 'spiritualities' 181  
 New Age religiosity 177  
 New Age spiritualities 184  
 New Age variants 190  
 New Economic Policy (NEP) 121  
 New Life Movement 248n182  
 new mediatised religious authorities 75–8  
 New Silk Roads project 259  
 new spirit 22, 182  
 new spiritualities 29  
*Newsweek* 76  
 new symbolic order 266, 281  
 Nobel Peace Prize 300  
 "Nobel Prize in Economics" 21  
 non-movements 40, 106–27  
 non-Western societies 27, 107  
 normativity: and choice 110–12;  
     Muslim fashions 110–12  
 North American Free Trade Agreement  
     (NAFTA) 122  
*nuo* religion 283–5  
 Nursi, Saïd 69
- occidentalism 303  
 Ogilvy Noor 127  
 Opium Wars 206, 207, 217  
 Oprah Winfrey 29, 76  
 Orban, Viktor 168  
 Orthodox Christianity 18, 152, 177,  
     184–6, 197n198  
 Orthodox Churches 191  
 Orthodox-majority Eastern Europe:  
     changing Orthodoxies 172–4;  
     communist experience 156–8;  
     consumerism and ethics of  
     authenticity 175–8; Eastern European  
     neoliberalism 158–61; marketisation  
     and magic 178–80; nationalism,  
     rise of 161–7; national-statisation  
     of religion 153–6; neoliberal  
     subjectivities 180–6; neoliberal  
     theologies 174–5; New Age explosion  
     180–4; Orthodox Christianity 184–6;  
     Pentecostalism 184–6; populism/  
     authoritarianism and illiberalism  
     167–71; religion in 150–91;  
     remedying self-imposed blindness  
     151–3; return to Orthodoxy 161–7  
 Orthodoxy: changing 172–4;  
     conservative 151; and national  
     identity 163; return to 161–7
- Ottoman Empire 55, 58, 155  
 Ownby, David 224, 226  
 Özal, Turgut 65, 71
- Pacific Countries Social and Economic  
     Solidarity Association (PASAD) 69  
 Pakistan 54, 59, 63, 66, 79, 82, 92, 113,  
     131, 141n113  
 Palmer, David A. 19, 208, 272, 274,  
     275; *The Religious Question in  
     China* 308  
 Paris Great Mosque 120  
 passive revolution 71  
 Peace of Westphalia 12, 17  
 Pentecostalism 184–6; second-wave 32  
*Pentecostalism: The World Their Parish*  
     (Martin) 34  
 People's Republic of China (PRC) *see*  
     China  
 personal choice 22, 27, 109, 261, 292  
 Philippines 30, 31  
 philosophical system 216  
 pietistic movements 124  
*Pilgrims in the Marketplace* (Reader) 180  
 Pinochet, Augusto 171  
 plausibility structure 24  
 Poland 69, 154, 157, 159, 160, 162,  
     164, 171, 193n73, 194n95, 281  
 Polanyi, Karl 12, 159, 262  
 political Islam 61, 92, 135  
 political liberalism 168, 169  
 political religions 1, 7, 237–42  
 political religiosity 235, 238  
 political ritual 237–42  
 politics-in-command 257  
 popular beliefs (*minjian xinyan*) 281  
 popular Romanian culture 180, 181  
 populism 167–71  
 positive structuration 189  
 positivist social scientists 5  
 Postcolonial theory 242  
 post-Islamism 2  
 post-Islamist Jihadism 84  
 post-Islamist movements 81  
 post-Keynesianism 2  
 post-Maoist ideology 262  
 postmodernity 3, 4, 321, 324  
 post-Reformation Christianity 16, 37–8,  
     212  
 post-Reformation Western Christianity  
     44n45  
 post-Reformation Western Christian  
     model of religion 282  
 post-Stalinist Soviet Union 231

- Post-War America 36  
 “Prize of Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel” 21  
 pro-capitalists 32, 182  
 pro-democracy movement 257  
 Prophet Muhammad 36, 54, 59, 76  
 protected communities 153  
*The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (Weber) 45n66  
 Pure Martial Association 223  
 Putin, Vladimir 2, 154, 168, 325
- Al-Qaradawi, Yusuf 116–17  
 qigong fever 231–2, 255, 271–3  
 Qing dynasty 207, 209–11, 218, 221, 238, 242, 285  
 Qutb, Sayyid 115
- Racu, Alexandru 167; *The Anti-Social Apostolate, Theology and Neoliberalism in Post-Communist Romania* 174  
 Radic, Radmila 154  
 radical Islam 89, 92  
 radical reforms 218  
 radical transformation 1, 13, 181  
 Ramadan 117, 126  
*Rassemblement National (Front National)* 170  
 Rational Choice theory 307  
 rational-legal authority 17  
 reactionary secret societies 271  
 Reader, Ian 179, 283; *Pilgrims in the Marketplace* 179–80  
 Reagan, Ronald 21, 65  
 redemptive societies 224–7  
*Reenchanted Modernity* (Yang) 280  
 Reform Era 206–7, 255, 277–9, 283, 287  
 Reform Era China 271, 285, 294  
 Regenstein, Joe 116  
 re-Islamization 82  
 religion: boxed up religion 16–19;  
   Chinese 216–20; civil 237–42;  
   countercultural religious revolution 28–30; as culture 285–7; culture as 285–7; in Global-Market regime 32–7; good (for business) 280–1; invention of 212–14; invisible religion 29; as multi-level complex 6–8; *nuo* religion 283–5; in Orthodox-majority Eastern Europe 150–91; on parts and wholes 8–10; political 237–42; secularities 240; services 122; structure 190, 329; superstitions 280–1; traditional 207–9  
*Religion, Politics and Nation Building in Post-Communist Countries* 191n8  
*The Religion of China* (Weber) 315n259  
 Religious Affairs Bureau (RAB) 229, 230, 275, 280, 287  
 Religious Conservative 128  
*The Religious Question in China* (Palmer and Goossaert) 308  
 Ren, Hai 269  
 Republican China 227  
 Republican Era 206, 232  
 Republican forces of the Kuomintang (KMT) 206, 227, 228, 231, 234, 235, 238, 241–3, 254, 300  
 Republican period 219, 222, 234  
 Reza Shah Pahlavi 59  
 Rida, Muhammad Rashid 62, 116  
 rituals, political 237–42  
 Robertson, Pat 32  
 Robertson, Roland 10; *Globalization* 187  
 Rodinson, Maxime 79  
 Rofel, Lisa 269  
 Roma communities 184, 185  
 Roma culture 185  
 Romania 153, 154, 156–8, 160–5, 167, 173–5, 180, 181, 184, 185, 188, 191, 192n39, 193n58, 195n140, 196n172, 197n187  
 Romanian Orthodox Church (RoOC) 174–5  
 Rosanvallon, Pierre 169  
 Roudometof, Victor 151, 155, 165, 176, 187; *Globalization and Orthodox Christianity* 186  
 Rousseau, Jean-Jacques 20, 240  
 Roy, Olivier 68, 134  
 Rudnycky, Daromir 72, 74, 129, 133, 135  
 Rule of Law 64  
*The Rules for Students and Children* 301  
 Russia 14, 30, 32, 33, 36, 37, 69, 151, 153, 154, 157, 158, 160, 162, 163, 165, 171, 177–80, 188, 192n41, 194n106, 195n143, 211, 228, 264, 265, 304, 307, 325  
 Russian invasion of Ukraine 151  
 Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) 2, 154, 172–3

- sacred canopy 7, 190, 241  
 Said, Edward 55  
 Salafism 36, 75–6, 83  
 Sandikci, Özlem 127  
 Saudi Arabia 54, 78, 141n113  
 Sava, Saint 173  
 scientific orientation 231  
 Scott, James C. 13; *Seeing Like a State* 14  
 second-generation immigrants 89  
 second revolution 42, 206, 265  
 Second Vatican Council 174  
 second-wave Pentecostalism 32  
*The Secrets of Efficient Management from the Life of the Prophet* 73  
 secularisation 63–5  
 secularisation theories 3, 45n48  
 secularists vs. Islamists 60–3  
 secularity 220–4  
*Seeing Like a State* (Scott) 14  
 self-colonization 243  
 self-imposed blindness 151–3  
 Seniguer, Haouès 81  
 Serbia 153, 154, 156, 161–3  
 Serbian Orthodox Church 173  
*The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* (Covey) 73  
 1789 Revolution 44n43, 240  
 sexual revolution 269  
 Shang dynasty 209  
 Shankar, Ravi 30  
 Shenzhen 291–4  
 Shirazi, Faegheh 134–5  
 Shleifer, Andrei 160  
 Siege of Vienna (1683) 55  
 Simionca, Anca 180  
 Simons, Greg 152  
 Singapore 264, 279, 303, 304, 308  
 Sloane-White, Patricia 129  
 Slovakia 159  
 Slovenia 160  
 Smart, Ninian 238  
 Smith, Adam 11, 304  
 So, Alvin Y. 265  
 social configurations 27  
 social imaginary 16, 26, 37, 225, 290, 322, 324  
 social pathologies 241  
 Societal Conformist 128  
 society/ies: consumer 21, 25, 79, 164, 258, 267–8, 276; feudal secret 229; Muslim-majority 60, 67; non-Western 27, 107; redemptive 224–7  
 Somalia 113  
 Song dynasty 209  
 South Korea 31, 264, 286, 303, 308  
 Soviet Union 23, 79, 150, 156–8, 238, 264, 271; *see also* Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR)  
 Spain 16, 36, 55, 82, 166, 193n58, 304  
 Special Economic Zones (SEZ) 258  
 Spickard, James 5  
 spiritualised Islamic movements 39  
 spiritualist movements 62  
 “spiritual-not-religious” religiosities 292  
 “spiritual-not-religious” trends 76  
 spiritual pollution 271  
 spiritual sustenance 233  
*The Spiritual Turn* (Watts) 33–4  
 spontaneous order 262  
 Springtime of Nations 158  
 Sri Lanka 14  
 state 4, 8, 9, 11–19, 21–6, 35, 36, 40–2, 44n20, 54, 56, 58–66, 68–73, 76, 78, 79, 81, 84, 85–8, 92, 120–2, 124, 129, 131, 132, 137, 150–2, 154–61, 165–7, 169–71, 173–5, 186, 188, 190, 209–13, 215–18, 220–2, 224, 225, 228–30, 232, 234, 238–44, 255–8, 260–5, 267, 269–78, 280–8, 290, 292, 295, 296, 298, 299, 301–7, 323–9  
 State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA) 271, 287  
 state authoritarianism 264, 329  
 state-owned enterprises (SOE) 264  
 statisation 63–5  
 Sudan 131  
 Sufism-inspired books 70  
 Sultanbeyli 81  
 Summer Olympic Games 258  
 Sun, Anna 301  
 Sunni Da’wat-e Islami 82  
 Sunni Islam 59, 76  
 Sunni Muslim Brotherhood 18  
 Sun Yat-sen 220, 305  
 Sun Zhongshan 305  
 superstitions 214–16; boom 271; and business 280–1; and religion 280–1  
 Sweden 196n170  
 Swedish Bank 21  
 sweeping tombs and national holidays 287–9  
 Sweeping Tombs Day (*qingming jie*) 301  
 Switzerland 161, 195n130, 325  
 symphonia principle 156–7  
 Szilagyi, Georgina 165

- Tablighi-like movements 82  
 Taiwan 224, 279, 280, 302, 303, 308  
 Taiwan World International Halal Expo 124  
 Tajikistan 69  
 Tang Dynasty 231, 259  
 Taoism (“Three Teachings”) 208, 214, 216, 219, 220, 223, 225  
 Taoist texts 227  
 Tarlo, Emma 108, 111, 182  
 Tarot, Camille 9  
 Taylor, Charles 20, 26, 27  
 Taylor, Scott 182–3  
 Taylorist-Fordist capitalism 20–1  
 television Islam 75  
 Temple Festivals 277–80  
 Temporal, Paul: *Islamic Branding and Marketing* 141n110  
 Teocist (Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church) 173  
 terrorism 58, 90  
 Thatcher, Margaret 21, 65, 258  
 “third wave” of lone wolves 84  
 Thirty Years’ War 12  
 Tiananmen Square protests (1989) 257  
 Tiande shengjiao (Sagely Teachings of Heavenly Virtue) 225  
*Time* magazine 76  
 Tongshanshe (Fellowship of Goodness) 225  
 Total Quality Management (TQM) 130  
 “total social fact” approach 6, 9, 38–9, 43n11  
 traditional medicine 3, 221–3, 231, 244  
 traditional religion 207–9  
 traditional Sufi orders (*tarikats*) 69  
 transnational spiritual movements 81–3  
 Treisman, Daniel 160  
 Trif, Aurora 153  
 Tripp, Charles 131, 134  
 Truman, Harry 31  
 Trump, Donald 32, 74, 168  
 Tunisia 81, 82, 88, 138n16  
 Turkey 16, 37, 39, 56, 59, 60, 63–66, 68–71, 79, 81, 92, 94n56, 106, 109, 114, 121, 123, 124, 126, 132, 139n22, 141n113, 324, 325  
 Turkish Businessmen and Industrialists Confederation (TUSKON) 69  
 Uganda National Farmers Federation 310n51  
 Ukraine 2, 69, 151, 154, 157, 158, 160, 162, 163, 166, 180, 192n23, 325  
 Ukrainian national identity 155  
 Union of Orthodox Entrepreneurs (UOE) 175  
 Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) 257, 261; *see also* Soviet Union  
 United Arab Emirates 141n113  
 United Nation (UN) 16, 87, 123, 158; Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) 123; World Health Organisation (WHO) 123  
 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) 285–6  
 United States 13, 85, 117, 240, 255, 328  
 unprecedented politicisation of Islam 60  
 Usunier, Jean-Claude 122  
 Uzbekistan 69, 126  
 Vatican-bound branches 297  
 Vatican model 210  
 Veer, Peter van der 13, 136, 205, 207, 256  
 vernacularization 154  
 Vietnam 14, 303, 308  
 virtocracy 265  
 Waarden, Frans van 120  
 Wallerstein, Immanuel 187  
 Walsh, Michael 238  
 Wanguo daodehui (World Ethical Society) 225  
 Warlord period 242  
 Washington, George 226  
 Washington Consensus 23  
 Watts, Galen 34; *The Spiritual Turn* 33–4  
 Weber, Max 73, 79, 303; *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* 45n66; *The Religion of China* 315n259  
*We God’s People* (Cesari) 55  
*We Have Never Been Modern* (Latour) 19  
 Welfare state model 21  
 Weller, Robert 19  
 Westerlund, David 152  
 Western: -centric secularisation theories 10; Christianity 7, 16, 210, 216–18, 223, 321; Christian missions 211; counterculture 62; economic globalisation 77; -inspired education system 212; modernity 7, 14, 18, 56, 119, 207, 296

- Western European Westphalian model 154
- Western High Modern Ideals 3
- Western-style democracy 150
- Western-style educational system 221
- western-style medical institutions 231
- Whitehead, James D. 291, 293
- Willis, Paul 266; *Being Modern in China* 267
- Wilsonian-Leninist ideology and programme 166
- World Bank 22, 264
- World Halal Forum 124
- World Health Organisation (WHO) 123
- World Islamic Economic Forum 124
- World Islamic Forum 132
- The World of Goods* (Douglas and Isherwood) 24
- World Religions 6, 17, 55, 219, 243, 278, 322
- World System Theory 187
- World Trade Organisation (WTO) 22, 122, 124, 167, 258, 264, 286
- World War I 4, 14, 58
- World War II 4, 20, 22, 36, 156, 186, 215
- Wushanshe (Society of Awakening to Goodness) 225
- Xiantian dao (Way of Anterior Heaven) 225
- Xi Jinping 37, 43, 258, 259, 264, 265, 300, 305, 306, 324, 325
- Yang, Fenggang: *Atlas of Religion in China* 307
- Yang, Mayfair Mei-hui 14, 242, 280, 285–7; *Reenchanting Modernity* 280
- Yavuz, Hakan 59–60, 68, 78, 79
- Yelensky, Victor 165
- Yin-wah Chu 265
- Yixin tandao longhua shengjiaohui (Holy Dragon Flower Assembly of the Heavenly Way of the One Heart) 225
- Yoshiko Ashiwa 295
- Yugoslavia 36, 156, 158
- Zailijiao (Teaching of the Abiding Principle) 225
- Zanetti, Aheda 111
- Zangmigong 275
- Zawadzki, Paul 171
- Zhao Ziyang 263
- Zheng Jongnian 261
- Zhengkong Cishanhui (True Emptiness Charity Society) 225
- Zhonggong 275
- Zhongguo sanjiao (General Association of the Sagely Way of the Three Teachings) 225
- Zhou dynasty 209, 283
- Zhou Enlai 230
- Zhu Rongji 305
- zongjiao* model 213, 218, 225, 227, 260; marketisation of 294–7
- Zuo, Jiping 235, 237, 302