

abstract The notion of secularization as an incompatibility between modernization and religion has had successive boundaries drawn around its validity ever since sociology first imported this word.

keywords cultural change ♦ modernization ♦ rationalism ♦ religion ♦ religious change ♦ secularization

Introduction

The concept of the secularizing society has undergone many different historical transformations. As a sociological idea, secularization is the process pertaining to modern societies whereby religious doctrines and organizations experience diminished social influence because of the expansion of rationalism, science and technology that accompanies the process of industrialization and urbanization. This is a complex process that entails many individual, social and political dimensions within religion (Tschannen, 1992). The societal secularization thesis owes a great deal to learned ideas regarding the progress of human reason. It was developed as a theoretical argument during the 19th century, and as a part of the thought regarding the passing of traditional society. It was this analysis of the process of modernization that in turn was the very origin of the discipline of classic sociology. The reflection on the decline of religion in modern society is essential to the development of European sociology and remained intrinsic to it until the second half of the 20th century. The concept of secularization was not as pronounced within American sociology due to the different model of modernization experienced by a country formed by successive migrations with diverse religious traditions. The need to accommodate the coexistence of many different religious creeds early on in the United States precluded the formation of a national church.

The first section in this article establishes the meaning of the term secularization within sociology

up to the second half of the 20th century. The second tries to explain the range of aspects that are covered by the term. A third section is dedicated to outlining the exceptions to the sociological rule of incompatibility between modernism and religion. In the final analysis, the case that created the rule, Western Europe, becomes the exception, as we see in the fourth section. Then, in the fifth, I consider some of the questions raised by the arrival of immigrant populations in Europe with their own religion, as well as the need to extend our purview to the whole planet in this globalized era. In the sixth section the idea of secularization within an analytic framework is presented. The article concludes with a critical review of the notion of religion.

The concept of secularization in sociology

The term secularization had a long history before appearing in sociology. Etymologically the word secularization comes from the Latin term *saeculum*, which was used by Augustine and the early church fathers as a synonym for the temporal world. It was later employed in the Middle Ages by canon law to indicate a monk abandoning the regimen of his order, who was thereby secularized by returning to the world. The word entered the legal-political sphere in 1648 through the Treaty of Westphalia, which prescribed

the transfer of certain religious institutions from the spiritual realm to the temporal one. The Enlightenment, in the 18th century, brought an awareness of the progressive disappearance of religion from society. And sociology, in the 19th century, developed this idea further by analysing the processes of modernization within European societies.

The Enlightenment, said Nisbet, 'was never capable of seeing religion as anything more than a plot of superstitions, madness and tyranny of the spirit; as a phenomenon that we might hope will disappear over time, given sufficient influence of education and the contemplation of the portents of science. For the "philosophes", religion and more particularly Christianity was much less something that had to be understood at its roots than something to be destroyed as soon as possible' (Nisbet, 1974: 158). And from the end of the 19th century to the middle of the 20th, almost all sociological thinkers expected religion to disappear by the end of the 21st century.

The emerging social sciences in the 19th century collaborated actively in the process of nation-state building of European secular societies. Sociologists' participation in this process is the reason why secularization was classified as an irreversible social process but never as an ideology or as a political project or movement. Certain anthropologists (Asad, 2003; Navaro-Yashin, 2002) appreciated 'that secularism is not a disenchanted political stand that consists of abstract principles and that the promotion of secularism is not an innocuous plea for public neutrality vis-à-vis the plurality of beliefs and world-views. Secularism is carried by social actors with specific interests who associate it with concrete lifestyles, emotionally identify with it, sacralize it in the image of the state and of the founding fathers, performatively display their adherence to it, and mobilize against religious movements through complex strategies' (Gorski and Altinordu, 2008: 73). As Beckford (2003) said, many early sociologists were involved in political and practical schemes to clarify, obstruct or assist the decline of religion's significance.

The most important sociologists of the 19th and early 20th centuries prophesized the future decline of religious institutions, but also foresaw a conceptual and very important analytical device for us to understand the changes in the role that religion plays in society. For Marx and Engels religion obscured the perception of the social world; it was a means used by the dominant class to legitimate its power and prevent the rebellion of the dominated classes. Religion would soon come to an end if the working class took over political power; its place would be taken by dialectic materialism, as a scientific and progressive alternative to the religious world view

(Hervieu-Léger and Willaime, 2001: 10–11). Durkheim believed that the primary form of the common spirit which keeps society together as a united whole can be found in religion. Society is 'a set of ideas, of beliefs, of feelings of all kinds which are developed by individuals' (Durkheim, 1967: 79). Studying religion therefore means going back to the sources of the social tie to be able to consider better the possible re-establishing of this tie in what has become a lay society (Hervieu-Léger and Willaime, 2001: 155). In his great work on religion, *Les Formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse*, published in 1912, Durkheim (2007) studied the totemic religions of Australia, but his quest went beyond this. He wanted to discover how this moral unity was built up in a lay society such as in France, which had just passed the 1905 law which definitively institutionalized the separation between Church and State and so in this work he often mentions the new moral unity which is the Nation. Weber, in his 1920 introduction to his essays on the sociology of religion, enquires into the concatenation of circumstances leading to certain phenomena appearing in the West which directed an evolutionary movement on a global scale. The rationalization of the social behaviour came about in the West in a wide range of spheres including science, art, economics, law, the State ... (Weber, 1988: 1). For Weber, religion had a complex relationship with rationalization. Religion could lead to rational or irrational behaviours, depending on the social context. The 'intramundane asceticism' of Calvinist Puritanism became the impetus for the rationalization of the economy and of life. The elimination of the magic character of the world was not taken so far by Catholic piety as it was by Puritan religiosity (Weber, 1988: Ch. I). Instrumental rationality, calculation or the foreseeing of consequences are all elements of behaviour incompatible with a magical world view. But for Weber, as we have already seen, the change which came about in the West was to have consequences for the whole world, as it meant the beginning of a universal evolutionary change (Hervieu-Léger and Willaime, 2001: 89–108; Ritzer, 1992: 7; Turner, 1996). The affirmation of this evolutionary sense of western capitalism and of its universal character is suffering at present the most severe attacks, as we shall see, from social science, even reaching the point where the idea of secularization is considered as part of an ideology and specific political project of that time.

In the 1970s, Bell warned us that a simple and linear notion of secularization could no longer be admitted as an inexorable quantitative disappearance of religious beliefs, but that we should consider instead secularization to be something complex and multiple and not necessarily universal (Bell, 1977).

The time had come to discuss the assumption that the relationship between modernism and religion is necessarily conflictual. Some, at one extreme, advocated that the thesis of secularization should be abandoned definitively (Stark, 1999); for others, at the other extreme, it remained valid although in need of some revision. And in the middle, there were more and more proponents of a review of religion's relationship with its social environment: 'modern religion is resilient and subject to cultural influences; it does not merely survive or decline, but adapts to its environment in complex ways' (Wuthnow, 1988: 475).

Dimensions of secularization

The term secularization was used within sociology with a variety of meanings relating to the demise of religion, all of which were more or less accurate. Shiner (1967) outlined six perspectives that sociologists gave to the idea of secularization. The first is that of secularization as 'decline in religion': previously accepted religious symbols, doctrines and institutions lose prestige and influence. There is quantitative decline in the beliefs and practices of social actors. The second type is secularization as compliance with this world: a process whereby formerly religious matters are shifted progressively from the supernatural realm to the mundane one. In this regard, it is interesting to highlight that, within Western European history the Protestant Reformation represented a growing interest in the world reflected in religion itself. Meanwhile, within Catholicism, to become worldly it was necessary to rebel against the Catholic religion and the Catholic hierarchy. In the first instance, the religious person becomes secularized. In the latter case, the individual, in order to embrace the world, has to abandon religion (Berger, 2001; Martin, 1979; Weber, 1988). The desacralization or disenchantment (in Weber's sense) of the world is the third type: the irreversible process of rationalization will lead to a vision of the world in terms of explanatory causal models. The culmination of this process would be a totally rational society in which supernatural and mystical phenomena would not play any part. The fourth type refers to secularization as the compartmentalization of religious understanding within society, establishing religion as an autonomous reality and consequently relegating it to the private sphere. The culmination of this process would be religion as the individual's purely personal experience, and one without any influence on social institutions or corporate action, and a society in which religion would not transcend its circle of believers. This type of

secularization reaches its fullest expression in relation to the theory of modernization as progressive differentiation of societal functions. The fifth type is secularization as a means of transposing determined religious institutional forms into the worldly realm. In this regard, we can talk about transposing Protestant ethics into the spirit of capitalism, the vision of Marxist revolution as a transposition of Judeo-Christian eschatology, or the consideration of psychoanalysis as a secularization of confession. As a final type, we have the use of secularization as a synonym for modernization.

Bellah (1964) constructs an evolutionary typology that underscores the importance of a series of aspects that are implicit in the notion of religion and religious change as envisaged by European sociology. This typology is sustained by the notion of the progressive functional differentiation of society in general, particularly along the lines of developing symbolic differentiation, based on Voegelin's (1956) fundamental idea that society evolves from compactly symbolized forms into differentiated forms. Bellah distinguishes five fundamental historical types. The first two are primitive and archaic religions, corresponding to barely differentiated forms of society. In the primitive type there is no differentiated religious organization: Church and Society are one and the same; while in the archaic type the religious organization is amalgamated with other social structures. Cosmological monism occurs in both the primitive and archaic types. The rupture of this monism, through the discovery of a field of religious reality, is precisely the main characteristic of historic religion, the third type. This represents the appearance of rejection of this world, of the mundane, while characterizing religious action as something that is requisite to the individual's salvation. This differentiated religious organization is distinguished from the political organization and hierarchy, and also implies that the problem of legitimizing political power has entered a new phase: there is now the possibility that political acts can be judged in religious terms. Early modern religion is the fourth type. The advent of religious modernism derives from the Protestant Reformation, whose fundamental characteristic was the collapsing of the hierarchical structuring of the two worlds. We should not search for salvation in withdrawal from this world but instead at the centre of worldly activities. The fifth and final type, modern religion, is generically characterized by Bellah as the collapse of dualism, so crucial to historical religions. But this would not mean the return to archaic or primitive monism. Bellah characterizes as profoundly intellectual the quest for understanding modern religious symbolization. Kant is at the core of this reflection having posited that there are not

merely two dichotomous religious and secular realms, but rather as many worlds as there are ways of apprehending them. At the level of mass religion, it is not clear whether individuals actually require cognitive harmony, i.e. internal consistency in their beliefs.

The evolutionary nature of this typology should serve as a cautionary note. It is perhaps more valuable for understanding the historical development of religion within the Occident than such processes within non-western societies; nonetheless, all types have intrinsic analytical interest. Furthermore, as we know, even within western contexts, the institutionalization and meaning of religion changes over time. In particular, the separation of religion from other institutions has been the result of a historical process. When we examine non-western societies, it might be that their religion is not segregated from such other institutions as culture, knowledge and politics. In the present western societies, when individuals and institutions from diverse religious backgrounds come into contact there is the strong possibility of misunderstanding and tension. In France, for example, when a young immigrant wears her Islamic veil, as far as the French are concerned she is displaying a religious symbol. Nevertheless, to forbid her dress is, for her community, the proscription of an undifferentiated symbol that is simultaneously religious, cultural, family-based and political. At the heart of the matter is the danger of employing the category of religion ethnocentrically, as we shall see in the final section.

Successive exceptions to the *rule of secularization*

The sociological thesis of the contradiction between modernism and religion has undergone a series of historical periods, each of which comes up with an exception to the rule until contemporary times, when secularization became the exception and the survival of religion became the rule. A first exception to the idea of the contradiction between modernity and religion which dominated classical sociological thought was highlighted by de Tocqueville in *De la démocratie en Amérique* (1835–40). When faced with the thesis that religion and modernism are incompatible, he always invoked as the exception the case of the United States (de Tocqueville, 1981). Its religiosity was one aspect of so-called American exceptionalism (Ross, 1984; Tyrrell, 1991). The US, despite being an industrialized, urbanized, rationalized society, is also characterized by its 'periodical mass or public renewals of the religious life and, stemming from Puritanism, ... the diffusion of reli-

gious elements to other social contexts. ... The three major religious orientations – Protestantism, Catholicism, and Judaism – not only fill an important niche as providers of social identity but also have found in the United States an exceptional historical setting' (Tiryakian, 1993: 40).

The economic development of some Asian Pacific countries (Japan, Korea, Singapore, etc.) has provided good reason to rethink the relationships between religion and modernism. These countries, which currently have such powerful economies, have become westernized, although it is no less true that despite this they are not western. For example, Dore has demonstrated substantial differences between Japan and the West, differences which themselves account for the Japanese economic miracle, and in so doing he demonstrated that individualism is not a necessary condition for modernism (Dore, 1992). All of these countries have incorporated their traditions into modernism. This leads us to conclude that the value of the classic secularization theory was not so much in its ability to describe all reality but its utility in the analysis of certain historical societies.

Considering the cases of the aforementioned countries, as well as those of the two large contemporary Asian economies, India and China, we can identify one of the key factors for rethinking the theory of secularization in our times: to reassess, at the same time, the theory of modernization. The most recent reviews converge upon the conclusion, posited in detail by Eisenstadt (1998, 2000, 2001), that there are many paths to modernity. The 'modern patterns, different in many radical ways from the "original" European ones, crystallized not only in non-Western societies, ... but also – indeed first of all – within the framework of the Western expansion in societies in which seemingly purely Western institutional frameworks developed – in the Americas' (Eisenstadt, 2001: 4–5).

Europe: the rule which becomes the exception

There is currently a convergence (Berger, 1992; Davie, 2001; Hervieu-Léger, 1996, 2001; Martin, 1996) towards the consideration of Europe 'as the only geographic and cultural area (maybe alongside Canada) in which the typical ideal schema of secularization as the expulsion of religion can be applied, as opposed to the other continents, including the United States' (Hervieu-Léger, 2001: 7). Paradoxically, Peter L Berger (1967), one of the most relevant contemporary theoreticians of secularization, recently produced the following diagnosis of the situation of religion in our world in general and

in Europe in particular: 'The current world is massively religious; it is anything but the secularized world which had been announced by so many modernity analysts. There are two exceptions to this proposal. ... The first apparent exception is Western Europe, where the old theory of secularization seems to still be applicable. ... The other exception is much less ambiguous: there is an international sub-culture of people who have received Western-style higher education, particularly in humanities and social sciences, which is actually secularized' (Berger, 2001: 24–6).

Grace Davie, based on surveys from 1986 and 1990 by the EVSSG (European Values Systems Study Group), proposes as a general trend in Europe the progressive weakening of religious practice, institutional adhesion and acceptance of traditional religious beliefs. However, she then adds that the clearest difference that occurs within Europe is the separation of the Catholic countries in the South, which are more religious (with the exception of France) from the Protestant countries in the North, which are less religious (with the exceptions of the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland) (Davie, 2001: 108–9). This means that while there is discernible secularization in both regions, it was earlier and stronger in the North than in the South (with the aforementioned exceptions).

Catholic countries in the South of Europe have formed a zone of greater resistance to religious and political modernization, with both dimensions being broadly connected. Furthermore, analysis of countries in this area has led to interesting theoretical formulations: *religious culture* (Hervieu-Léger, 2003), *implicit religion* (Nesti, 1990), *religious ground base* (Bellah, 1980) and *diffuse religion* (Cipriani, 1989). The case of France is special: in classifications, it is sometimes included among countries with a Catholic tradition (Davie, 1996) while at others it is considered as the uniquely laical country *par excellence* (Stoetzel, 1983).

Other religions, other countries

The rapid development process that occurred in a series of non-western countries employing certain elements of their traditional culture as a productive resource led some sociologists to examine the possibility that there are different ways to modernize. The pragmatic theory of multiple modernization processes represents a rupture with the idea that a religious crisis is requisite to the attainment of modernity. Nowadays, the increasingly relevant evidence that we are living in a globalized world and the progressive development of sociological analysis in more and

more places throughout the world mean that sociology is raising the question of relationships between modernity and religion in relation to other non-Christian religions as well as non-western societies.

We find issues raised as a consequence of the latest waves of immigration, particularly Muslim, reaching Western Europe countries. Over the last few years, particularly following the attacks on 11 September 2001, which shook the world, much literature has been produced on Islamic fundamentalism. Some have even gone so far as to suggest possible incompatibility between Islam and the democratic organization of society. Particularly within political science, there has been an attempt to specify the conditions that a religion and a political organization must meet in order to produce the 'twin tolerations' – that is 'the minimal boundaries of freedom of action that must somehow be crafted for political institutions vis-à-vis religious authorities, and for religious individuals and groups vis-à-vis political institutions' (Stepan, 2000: 37). Casanova has compared 'the contemporary global discourse on Islam as a fundamentalist and undemocratic religion' with 'the old discourse on Catholicism that predominated in Anglo-Protestant societies, particularly in the United States' (Casanova, 2005: 89).

Muslim emigration to Europe has had serious consequences. Some religious demands have provoked political conflict (Göle, 2006). Some cultural practices relating to sexual discrimination, ablation, the veil and arranged marriages have been widely discussed (Benhabib, 2002; Scott, 2007; Shweder et al., 2002). The issue of the Muslim veil in France and in Turkey has given rise to interesting studies (de Galember, 2009; Gökariksel and Mitchell, 2005). Fetzer and Soper (2005) compare how their differing perceptions of the relationship between church and state affects how well Muslim immigrants adapt in Great Britain, France and Germany. On the other hand, migration has effected among Muslims a profound cultural (Wieviorka, 1998) and religious (Cesari, 2004; Roy, 2004; Tietze, 2002) transformation, and a marked expansion of the social functions of religion (Pérez-Agote and Santiago, 2009).

We should add that the World Values Survey has made it possible to analyse the religious situation in some countries for which there was no systematic sociological information until now, which in turn makes it possible to effect comparative analyses. Gorski and Altinordu (2009: 65) give us a vision of the wide range of derived conclusions: 'At first glance, the data hardly suggest decline; on the contrary, they indicate increase (Antoun & Hegland 1987, Sahliyyeh 1990). This has led Berger and others to argue that the world is currently in a period of desecularization (Berger 2001, Karner & Aldridge

2004). Norris & Inglehart (2004) reject this view and develop an ingenious defense of secularization theory. On the one hand, they say, growing levels of existential security in certain countries and population segments have led to declining levels of religiosity; on the other hand, high levels of religiosity continue to be correlated with high rates of fertility. If aggregate levels of religiosity are increasing, they argue, this is the result of demographic forces, not of putative desecularization. But what about the Euro-American divide? This divide is explained by the strength of the welfare state (high security) in Europe and the persistence of laissez-faire liberalism (low security) in the United States.'

Our main conclusion is that we should equip ourselves with analytical instruments with which to better understand the varied situations in which religion is found all across the world and over time. From the perspective of religious change, the notion of secularization should be treated in analytical terms thereby avoiding the suppositions of universality and trans-historicity, and the teleological pretension as well. This is necessary due to religion's demonstrated capacity to adapt to change and, for this same reason, due to the variety of situations and processes that crop up in the world given this adaptive capability.

Towards an analytical framework of religious change

Dobbelaere (2002) designed an analytical framework at the three levels of *macro*, *meso* and *micro*. Societal secularization, the *macro* level, refers to relationships between society and religion, and specifically to the process by which religion is pushed towards increasingly marginal zones of modern western societies. On the one hand, this produces a rupture in the unity of the traditional sacred cosmos and, on the other, the progressive liberation of specific spheres of social life from its former religious guardianship. This dimension of secularization enters with full force into the purview of the social differentiation process (Dobbelaere, 2002: 29). Nevertheless, secularization, as a process for rationalizing the spheres of life, goes beyond economics to touch upon religion itself. Consequently, its organizational dimension, the *meso* level, inclines towards progressive rationalism and to its adaptation to changes; it is religion itself and its organization that are secularized and thereby adapt to the changes (Dobbelaere, 2002: 35). For this reason, this dimension has been called internal secularization by Luckmann (1967). The individual dimension, the *micro* level, refers to the process whereby individuals' religious beliefs and

practices are decreasing substantially, and the capability of religion and a church to determine their behaviour is also contracting.

The individual dimension of secularization tells us about the relationships between three institutional levels of religious life. The decline of religion in the individual sphere implies loss of importance for a specific institution made up of a specific historical religion and the corresponding church; but it does not necessarily imply the collapse of religiosity (belief in God, religious experience, etc.); if religiosity survives while religion and the church dwindle, individuals will have to construct their sense of life and verify it intersubjectively; religiosity would become de-institutionalized.

Each of the three dimensions has a certain analytical, and even empirical, independence, as they can entail different and even contradictory processes. But they are also interrelated. Precisely by establishing the possible theoretical relationships between the three we are building a very interesting set of instruments from an analytical point of view.

Religion, as a differentiated sphere, is a problematic category

Nowadays the consideration of the European case as just one of many, rather than as the universal way which must be taken, affects not only the area of religion but also many others. But some basic concepts of social science are taking longer than others to be reviewed; this is what is happening with religion. Peter van der Veer and Hartmut Lehmann point out that 'it is important to realize that both "nation" and "religion" are conceptualized as universal categories in Western modernity and that their universality is located precisely in the history of the Western expansion. The modernity of the concept of the nation needs little discussion beyond mentioning the relationship between the ideas of "nation" and "ethnicity" as raised by the reference to "birth" in the very word *nation*. The modernity of the concept of religion, as applied in the modern era to Hinduism, Shintoism, Islam, but also Christianity, is much less an accepted truism in the social sciences' (Van der Veer and Lehmann, 1999: 4).

The most radical criticism of the very notion of religion is that made by Talal Asad. This author attempts to demonstrate that it is impossible for social science to make a universal, trans-historical definition of religion. To do this he takes as an example the definition given by Clifford Geertz (1973) as a system of symbols. In the 1980s, Asad had already criticized this definition with the accusation that 'with its emphasis on meanings ... it omits the

crucial dimension of power, ... ignores the varying social conditions for the production of knowledge'. And 'its initial plausibility derives from the fact that it resembles the privatised forms of religion so characteristic of modern (Christian) society, in which power and knowledge are no longer significantly generated by religious institutions' (Asad, 1983: 237). Twenty years later, Asad goes further and considers that considering religion as a separate sphere from social life has no meaning outside the notion of the secular. In an Islamic society it makes no sense to talk of religion as a separate sphere from politics. The secular is a creation of western societies as part of a modernization project on a planetary scale. And this means that secularism is the western project to separate religion from the rest of social life; a project for both western and non-western societies. Asad is not only considering non-western societies but also the western ones. This separation has not always existed in the West, as the case in medieval Christianity shows (Asad, 2003: 1–17). But it is not clear either that it exists in contemporary western societies. He attempts to demonstrate this when he mentions the theoretical position of José Casanova on the relationships between religion and politics. 'Casanova points to three elements in that thesis [secularization] all of which have been taken – at least since Weber – to be essential to the development of modernity: (1) increasing structural differentiation of social spaces resulting in the separation of religion from politics, economy, science, and so forth; (2) the privatization of religion within its own sphere; and (3) the declining social significance of religious belief, commitment, and institutions. Casanova holds that only elements (1) and (3) are viable.' For Casanova, 'the deprivatization of religion is not a refutation of the thesis if it occurs in ways that are consistent with the basic requirements of modern society, including democratic government. In other words, although the privatization of religion ... is part of secularization, it is not essential to modernity.' And Asad adds that Casanova's position 'is not an entirely coherent one. For if the legitimate role for the deprivatized religion is carried out effectively ... elements (1) and (3) are both ... undermined.' With the legitimate entry of religion into the debates about economy, education and science, the principle of structural differentiation no longer holds. And with 'the passionate commitments these debates engender, it makes little sense to measure the social significance of religion only in terms of such indices as church attendance' (Asad, 2003: 181–2).

'In much nineteenth-century evolutionary thought, religion was considered to be an early human condition from which modern law, science and politics emerged and became detached. In this

[twentieth] century most anthropologists have abandoned Victorian evolutionary ideas, and many have challenged the rationalist notion that religion is simply a primitive and therefore outmoded form of the institutions we now encounter in truer form (law, politics, science) in modern life. For these twentieth-century anthropologists, is not an archaic mode of scientific thinking, nor of any other secular endeavor today; it is, on the contrary, a distinctive space of human practice and belief which cannot be reduced to any other. From this it seems to follow that the essence of religion is not to be confused with, say, the essence of politics, although in many societies the two may overlap and intertwine' (Asad, 2002 [1982]: 115).

For Asad the relationships between religion and politics have never completely ceased to exist, since he considers that religion is always mixed with politics and power, even when these are constitutionally separate in western countries. Asad takes as his own the idea that 'the public domain is not simply a forum for rational debate but an exclusionary space. ... the public sphere is a space *necessarily* (nor just contingently) articulated by power' (Asad, 2003: 183–4). And he quotes Robert Wolff (1969: 52) when he discusses the public sphere: 'if an interest falls *outside* the circle of the acceptable, it receives no attention whatsoever and its proponents are treated as crackpots, extremists, or foreign agents'.

Annotated further reading

Asad T (2003) *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Asad starts off here by distinguishing between the secular, as an epistemological category and secularism as a political doctrine. In the first part, the author attempts to establish the basis for what should be an anthropology of secularism. The second part, more relevant to this study, deals with various themes including the relationships between religion and secularism and the building of nation-states. This is where we can see Asad's radical criticism of the notion of religion per se, as a category deriving from the historical construction process of the western nation-states and used by the political movement he calls secularism. The third part is a specific analysis of Egyptian society during the colonial period.

Berger P (ed.) (2001) *Le Réenchantement du monde*. Paris: Bayard.

Berger, one of the great theorists of secularization, compiles this collection with the general idea that in the vast majority of contemporary societies religion is in good shape and has a very strong influence on the political arena, with the exception of Europe.

Separately and from the general perspective, the book

reviews the evolution of the great historical religions. On the other hand, Europe as an exceptional case and the different elements which configure the religious transformation of China today are considered.

Casanova J (2006a) Secularization revisited: A reply to Talal Asad. In: Scott D, Hirschkind C (eds) *Powers of the Secular Modern: Talal Asad and His Interlocutors*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 12–30.

In this work José Casanova responds to the criticism made by Talal Asad (2003: Ch. 6) of the relationship between religion and politics. Casanova considers that their positions are not so different and that his own reasons for reconstructing the theory of secularization are the same as those used by Asad to reject it as a myth. For Casanova, Asad's rejection follows the Foucauldian path of the genealogical approximation to the concepts, while he chooses the more classical one of historical sociology. It may be that the path chosen by Asad leads to a criticism of the very notions of modernity and democracy.

Casanova J (2006b) Rethinking secularization: A global comparative perspective. *Hedgehog Review* 8: 7–22. Casanova differentiates three types of significance within the term secularization. First, secularization as the decline of religious belief and practice. Second, secularization as the privatization of religion, considered as a possible historical trend and as a standard condition of modern democracy. Finally, secularization as the autonomy attained by the different secular spheres with respect to religion. The author reviews the relationships between the three aspects established by North American and European sociologists, depending on the different positions held by religion in their respective societies.

Davie G, Hervieu-Léger D (eds) (1996) *Identités religieuses en Europe*. Paris: La Découverte. This book presents an analysis of religion in Europe. After a general review of the European model, a questioning of secularization theory (by David Martin) and an analysis of different religious inheritances in Europe, the book examines various European countries: Germany, Switzerland, Denmark, Greece, France, Britain, Belgium, Italy and Spain. It also analyses the significance of the appearance of new religious movements and the influence of a united Europe on the future evolution of religion.

Dobbelaere K (2002) *Secularization: An Analysis at Three Levels*. Brussels: PIE-Peter Lang.

This is an attempt to draw up a framework to analyse the religious change deriving from the three different facets or levels which for this author constitute the theory of secularization. The first level is societal secularization, which means the progressive separation of religion from other spheres of society, such as politics, science, or economy. The second level is individual secularization, which implies the decline of religious commitment, beliefs and practice. The third and final level is the secularization of the religious organizations themselves, the process by which these adapt to modernity.

Eisenstadt SN (2000) Multiple modernities. *Daedalus* 129(1).

The concept of multiple modernities tries pragmatically to avoid the teleological and universal character of the notion of the modernization process established by sociology and based on the analysis of this process in western societies. In all modern societies there are common traits which distinguish them from their respective traditional forms, but these are produced in multiple different ways. In some cases modern forms are consistent with the historical tradition, so that the relationship between modernity and tradition may be different in each country.

Gorski PS, Altinordu A (2008) After secularization? *Annual Review of Sociology* 34: 55–85.

This is a general review of the theory of secularization, of its validity for the western world and the difficulties in applying it to non-Christian religions and non-western countries. The authors offer an in-depth review of the different positions held by social scientists on the relationships between religion and democratic politics, i.e. on whether the exclusion of religion from public life is a condition of democracy. Gorski and Altinordu consider secularism as a political movement and an ideology, and then state the variety of existing forms of secularity. Finally, they comment on the theoretical strategies which may be used to analyse religious processes in contemporary societies.

Martin D (1979) *A General Theory of Secularization*. New York: Harper.

Secularization is a phenomenon occurring within Christianity. The theory of secularization is based on four components: the first is the crucial historical events in each country, including to what extent the Protestant Reformation was successful. The second component is the resulting patterns, with the main ones being the Anglo-Saxon, the North American, the Latin and the Russian. The third component refers to the Calvinist influence and the Enlightenment, in relation to the process of modernization. The fourth and final component is the relationship between religion, nationalism and cultural identity.

Stepan A (2000) Religion, democracy, and the 'twin tolerations'. *Journal of Democracy* 11(4): 37–57.

The author starts from the question of whether all world religious systems are compatible with democracy. The response is defined in three phases. The first suggests establishing the minimum institutional and political requisites a political system must comply with to be considered a democracy; these requisites are defined by the *twin tolerations*: the minimum limits on freedom of action which must be set by the political institutions vis-a-vis the religious authorities, and by religious authorities and groups in relation to the political institutions. The next stage is the question of whether European democracies are able to comply with these twin tolerations; so the European historical experience should be avoided. The third stage is to ask the two questions above but

in relation to countries influenced by other religious traditions such as Confucianism, Islam or Eastern Orthodox Christianity.

Tiryakian EA (1993) American religious exceptionalism: A reconsideration. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 527 (May): 40–54. American religious exceptionalism is found within the context of what is generally called American exceptionalism. The religious vitality of the US has been considered as a distinctive national characteristic since its definition by de Tocqueville. This vitality is periodically renewed and continuously extended to new social contexts. On the other hand, the weight of the three great religions – Protestantism, Catholicism and Judaism – is also considered as exceptional.

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Alfonso Pérez-Agote is Professor of Sociology at the Universidad Complutense of Madrid. He is the coordinator of the GERICR (Groupe Européen de Recherche Interdisciplinaire sur le Changement Religieux). His books include: *La nueva pluralidad religiosa* (2009), *Religión y política en la sociedad actual* (2008), *The Social Roots of Basque Nationalism* (2006) and *La situación de la religión en España a principios del siglo XXI* (2005). [email: aperezag@cps.ucm.es]

résumé Le concept de sécularisation comme incompatibilité entre modernization et religion est passé par successives minorations de sa validité scientifique à partir du moment où la sociologie a importé le terme.

mots-clés changement culturel ♦ changement religieux ♦ modernisation ♦ rationalisme ♦ religion ♦ sécularisation

resumen La noción de secularización como incompatibilidad entre modernización y religión ha sufrido sucesivas limitaciones a su validez científica desde que la sociología importara el término.

palabras clave cambio cultural ♦ cambio religioso ♦ modernización ♦ racionalismo ♦ religión ♦ secularización

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