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Religion & Politics

New Developments Worldwide

Edited by
Roy C. Amore

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Cover image courtesy of Roy C. Amore.

Contents

About the Special Issue Editor

Roy C. Amore researches and writes about the interaction of religion and politics all over the world, but with a special interest in Asian religions. Having earned his Ph.D. in Religion, specializing in Buddhism, at Columbia University in New York City, he has taught for most of his career at the University of Windsor in Ontario, Canada, where he is Professor at the Department of Political Science and has previously served as Associate Dean. His personal activities include interfaith dialogue, engaged Buddhism, and traveling with his wife Michelle Morrison. He is the author of numerous books, including *Religion* and *Politics in the World's Hot Spots* (Sloan); three world religions textbooks, coauthored with Amir Hussain (OUP)—*World Religions: Eastern Traditions (5th ed.), World Religions: Western Traditions (5th ed.), and A Concise Introduction to World Religions (4th ed.); Two Masters, One Message*, about the parallels between the lives and teachings of Buddha and Jesus; *Lustful Maidens and Ascetic Kings: Buddhist and Hindu Stories of Life*, coauthored with Larry D. Shinn, which retells classic Buddhist and Hindu moral stories. He has also served as editor for *Canadian Contributions to Buddhist Studies*.

Preface to "Religion and Politics: New Developments Worldwide"

Note on the Cover Picture: I took the cover picture of a Tibetan woman in 2007. She is dressed in the traditional way and is about to spin the prayer wheel to her left. As she walks, she fingers her prayer beads while continually repeating the "Om mani padme hum" mantra. As Tibetans have done for centuries, she is solemnly walking the Barkhor pilgrimage circuit in Lhasa. Pilgrims wind their way through the heart of old Lhasa on a course that passes sacred temples and other holy Buddhist sites. Having been born in autonomous Tibet, she now finds herself under the control of Han Chinese. She cannot read Chinese, but her grandchildren are being educated in Chinese. The signage on shops, even those owned by Tibetans must, by law, be in Chinese. If a shop owner wants to add the shop's Tibetan name to the sign, it must be below the Chinese characters and must be much smaller. The sign behind her has large Chinese characters, and in much smaller English it reads "Fire Hydrant". There's no Tibetan signage for her at all. This picture, for me, shows how political decisions taken at the top level impact the religious and everyday life of individuals, especially religious minorities.

This book features articles about recent developments in the interaction of Religion and Politics in various countries of Asia, Africa, Europe, and both North and South America. Most articles deal with one country, but some address an issue that spreads across a larger region.

Yashasvini Rajeshwar and I call attention to the controversy surrounding the rise of mass religious conversions in India. The national and several state governments, with their pro-Hindu "Hindutva" policies, put restrictions on mass conversions (usually of Dalits) from Hinduism to Buddhism, Islam, or Christianity. Meanwhile, those same governments encourage mass conversions to Hinduism under the pretense these are not religious conversions but just a matter of "Coming Home" to their Hindu origins.

Pashaura Singh reviews the complex history of the way that the Sikhs have interacted with the government from colonial to contemporary times. He argues that the Sikh concept of sovereignty has helped the Sikhs avoid the trappings inherent in the religion-politics divide.

S. Romi Mukherjee gives us an insightful and wonderfully reflective update on the continuing reactions, both desirable and undesirable, to the "Je suis Charlie" feelings among the French population. He finds that the population is not nearly as united as we thought at the time.

Byung Wook Jun and Sung Man Yoon analyze data from South Korea in an effort to test the perception held by some writers that persons with strong religious identification are less likely to cheat on their taxes and more likely to favor equitable tax policies. Their conclusions challenge those assumptions.

Terry Tak-lin Woo offers a passionate defense of the government of China's firm stance against outside influence and criticism of its policies dealing with China's religious minorities. She defends China's stance by calling attention to the government's fear of separatist movements and terrorists, especially among its Uyghur and Tibetan populations. She challenges what she considers to be the Western media's focus on only the parts of the government actions that fit its overly narrow perspectives. The essay is controversial in the way it calls into question the widely held views of many observers outside China.

Sulistiyono Susilo and Reza Pahlevi Dalimunthe develop a carefully constructed definition of religious radicalization and then analyze how both outside influence and local cultural norms play a role in the radicalization of some Muslims in Southeast Asia. They suggest some specific approaches

that should help deradicalization in the region.

Babajimi Oladipo Fasekes writes about the controversy in Nigeria, with its divided Muslim and Christian populations, concerning whether the government should encourage or shy away from the activities of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation. The conclusion is surprising, and perhaps unlikely to be implemented.

Rose T. Caraway draws upon data to argue that after the collapse of Soviet support, the Permaculture Movement in Cuba has, in addition to its environmental orientation, taken on a role that includes a spiritual dimension normally associated with religion.

Robert W. McGee, Serkan Benk, and Bahadir Yuzbasi draw on data from over 50 countries to address the question of whether there is any difference between Christian and Muslim respondents on the question of whether or not governments should increase taxes on the rich in order to subsidize the poor.

Daniel Levine offers reflections on his long career focused on researching the relationship of religions and the state, especially in Latin America. He suggests several interesting ways in which the scholarly understanding of that relationship has changed during the past half-century. A rather simplistic polarity between religion and the state is no longer valid in understanding Latin America, he argues.

Roy C. Amore
Special Issue Editor

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Article

Coming Home (*Ghar Wapsi*) and Going Away: Politics and the Mass Conversion Controversy in India

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Abstract: This article addresses two recent socio-religious trends in India: mass conversions to Hinduism (*Ghar Wapsi*) and mass conversions from Hinduism. Despite officially being a secular nation, organizations allied with the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) are actively promoting mass conversions to Hinduism. Other religions organize mass conversions, usually of Dalits, away from Hinduism and its legacy of caste discrimination. While several states have controversial laws placing restrictions on mass conversions from Hinduism, mass conversions to Hinduism are often seen as being promoted rather than restricted.

Keywords: Hindutva; religious conversion; ghar wapsi; mass conversion; India; Dalit

1. The Hindutva Ideology Underlying the Ghar Wapsi Movement

Ghar Wapsi[1] is a Hindi term, usually translating as "homecoming" or "coming home", which seeks to describe the arguably coerced mass conversions arranged by Hindu nationalist organizations of Muslim, Christian, Buddhist, or other Indians to Hinduism. The Hindutva point of view is that all Indians were originally, at least ancestrally, Hindu and hence such conversions are merely "coming home", returning to their ancestral traditions. Locating these religious conversions in the context of India's peculiar brand of secularism and diverse religious ideologies, this trend becomes increasingly important to the changing understanding of the citizen-body, both as a social as well as a legal entity. In light of the change in political power at the capital starting in 2014, these debates became particularly relevant.

Fundamental to the *Ghar Wapsi* trend is the definitional question of who is a Hindu and its evolution across the colonial and post-independence eras. At the core of this definitional debate stands the concept of Hindutva, a right-wing Hindu nationalist ideology that makes a strong connection between being Indian and being Hindu. To understand the Hindutva ideology's true definition of the Hindu, one must read V. D. Savarkar, who coined the term *Hindutva*. He famously raised a call to "Hinduise all politics and militraize (sic) all Hindudom", (Savarkar 1967) seeing aggression and violence as a justified means of protecting the Hindu-Indian nation (Rashtra). For Savarkar, there were three criteria to be Hindu—paternal descent, common blood (racial bond or *jati*), and common civilization (*sanskriti*)[2] (Katju 2011). While post-colonial, post-Independence India may seem to be at

[1] Though multiple spellings have been put forth in the transliteration of the Hindi term, this paper will use "*Ghar Wapsi*" unless quoting directly from sources that adopt alternate spellings.
[2] According to Sarvarkar, Hindutva "is not a word but a history. Not only the spiritual or religious history of our people as at times it is mistaken to be . . . but a history in full. Hinduism is only a derivative, a fraction, a part of Hindutva". By his definition, a Hindu is "a person who regards this land of Bharatvarsha, from the Indus to the seas as his Fatherland as well

odds with this definition given its basis in a seemingly secular law, this article looks to argue that the apparent contradiction between legal and religious discourse in the Indian state is in fact a convenient but false opposition.

Understanding the construction of the Hindu identity in India requires a foundation in the history of the Hindutva as an ideology in itself. The Hindutva, or the Hindu nationalist, movement is pledged to the attainment of the Hindu Rashtra[3], or a nation "of the Hindus for the Hindus". Perhaps what is more important for present discourse is, however, the re-emergence and revival of this school of thought with the Arya Samaj movement in the late nineteenth century, seemingly in response to British colonialism and western supremacy.

J. Zavos, a researcher on the relationship between religion, identity, and politics in South Asia, explains the birth and growth of the Arya Samaj movement. He argues that the tenets of the Arya Samaj (of a unitary God, the Vedas as the ultimate truth, and the Vedic Age as the Golden Age) "maintained its presence within the broad framework of established Hinduism . . . (retaining) its potential viability as an alternative framework" (Zavos 1999). Thus, this "alternative framework" posited itself against the work of proselytizing Christian missionaries, professing a strong association with the pursuit of dharma. By this measure, everyone could be "returned" to their "real" Hindu religion. The Arya Samaj movement proved to be the cornerstone of what later evolved into the political nationalist campaign.

Following the birth of the Samaj movement and the Sangh Parivar[4] (commonly shortened to "the Sangh" or "the Parivar") in the early 1920s, the Hindu nationalists began contributing to the independence movement, understanding freedom in terms of Hindu nationhood (the Rashtra). Thus, the victory of 1947 was merely political gain, not an ideological win and true freedom would involve religious independence and access to political power (Katju 2011). In this spirit, the nationalist struggle for freedom extended beyond gaining political independence. It is at this crucial juncture in Indian history that the roots of what can be understood as the Hindutva's primary definitional strategy emerge. With the Samaj primarily adopting the Orientalist conception of India as a land of spiritual superiority, civilizational glory, and other such self-aggrandizing claims, a deep-seated contrast against the Muslim Other was posited as the fundamental differentiator of the Hindu. Thus, the Hindu nationalist movement grew because of what T.B. Hansen, a leading commentator on religious and political violence in India, characterizes as a "highly successful strategy of cultural mobilization of Hindus against alleged threat of Muslim conversion" (Blom Hansen 1996).

This characterization, coupled with the political atmosphere of anger and disappointment following the Emergency between 1975 and 1977 during Indira Gandhi's term as Prime Minister, catalyzed the rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) as a political force to reckon with in the early 1980s. This rise of the BJP thus, according to some scholars, "does not constitute a threat to parliamentary democracy . . . The rise of the BJP is best construed as a response to social, economic, and political fragmentation in India, which itself is a reflection of the numerous fissures that already exist in the Indian morass" (Datta 1999).

Though A. Basu, an expert in South Asian politics, wrote in 1996 that "many observers assumed that the BJP's influence would be short-lived, for Hindu nationalism violated the principles of centrism, socialism, and secularism that had governed Indian political life since independence", (Basu 1996) the growth trajectory in the last few decades has spoken otherwise. It is evident, thus, that the birth

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as his Holyland, that is the cradle land of his religion" (Pandey 1991). Thus, by definition, Hindus cannot be anti-nationalist or even "un-nationalist".

[3] Translating to Hindu 'country' or 'polity', the Hindu Rashtra is a term used to refer to the formulation of state as imagined by Hindu nationalist forces. It is rooted in Savarkar's ideology that "not territorial unity, but the religious, racial, and cultural unity counted more in the formation of the national unit" and that "the Hindus were the bedrock on which the Indian independent state could be built" (ShodhGanga n.d.).

[4] The Sangh Parivar is a term used to refer to the group of Hindu nationalist organizations started by or inspired by the RSS. As explained by Jaffrelot, "taken together, these . . . are presented by the mother organization as forming the 'Sangh Parivar', or the 'family of the Sangh', that is, of the RSS" (Jaffrelot 2007).

of Hindu nationalism, the rise of the BJP and the spate of conversion campaigns are all in pursuit of the singular goal—the establishment of the Hindu Rashtra. This brings into focus the fundamental definitional question posed earlier—who is a Hindu? This construction was (and continues to be) based largely in opposition to the Muslim; what T.B. Hansen calls the "operational Other", posited as the reason that India has been unable to develop fully and occupy its rightful place in the world economy (Blom Hansen 1996). Thus, S. Muralidharan, a journalist-turned-political science researcher, argues that "Hindutva is a phenomenon defined by negative association—that which is not Islamic within the cultural framework of the Indian sub-continent is by definition Hindu in its provenance" (Muralidharan 1994). We will return to this theme in further detail shortly.

The second operative (and related) strategy in the construction of the Hindu by nationalist ideologues is, in the words of S. Clarke, a professor of culture and theology, "the enterprise of representing themselves (the East) within the already established representational discourse of the West" (Clarke 2002). This is evidence of one of the Hindutva's main approaches, the claim that "in order to be respected as different, we must imitate the Western—or Islamic—model of strength" (Blom Hansen 1996). Thus, the Sangh locates itself firmly within the language of the opponent, appropriating the argument into a position of strength.

It is this appropriation, the "invention of tradition", that C. Jaffrelot, a leading authority in South Asian politics, refers to famously as "strategic syncretism". According to him, "the content of this ideology has been supplied to a large extent by material taken from the cultural values of groups who were seen as antagonistic towards the Hindu community. This "syncretism" is "strategic" because it underlies an ideology that aims to dominate the others, in terms of prestige as well as on a concrete socio-political plane" (Jaffrelot 1993). Thus, the nationalist movement was both provoked by and inspired by the Other, usually depicted as the Muslim, but with the occasional Christian juxtaposition. At the core of this identity construction thus lies a two-fold argument. Firstly, we are not Muslim. Secondly, we are Western and Hindu simultaneously.

In keeping with the argument that Hinduism has adopted the strategies of the "enemy" to become more accessible and acceptable, it is argued that "Hinduism has made an attempt to define itself as a faith that can attract converts. Internet sites describing Hinduism today speak the language of mission and talk of creating a global community. In such sites, Hinduism is depicted along the lines of Christianity and Islam … Hinduism is defined as having canonical rituals, with precepts and obligations like Islam, with sacrements (sic) like Christianity and with a conversion strategy that models itself on both" (Robinson and Clarke 2003).

Thus, the ability to adopt or the choice to convert to Hinduism was enabled by "the process of the construction of "Hinduism" as a distinct religion … belief in the Vedas, it insisted, was the central pillar of this new Hinduism" (Sikand 2003). This Hinduization was most evident in the process of conversion of non-Hindu groups into the Hindu caste order, the trend that serves as the precursor to the *Ghar Wapsi* phenomenon.

2. Mass Conversions to Hinduism: The Ghar Wapsi Movement

With the BJP taking over control following the 2014 general elections, it has been commonly accepted that the Hindutva ideology now not only wields socio-religious control but also access to political power as well. Though no copy of the Sangh constitution seems easily available, sources confirm that Article 4 of the document reiterates the organization's identity as a cultural unit. Unofficial online sources that have sought to compile their constitution cite Article 4 (b) as reading:

> In consonance with the cultural heritage of the Hindu Samraj, the Sangh has abiding faith in the fundamental principle of tolerance towards all faiths. *The Sangh as such, has no politics and is devoted to purely cultural work. The individual Swayamsevaks, however, may join any political party*, except such parties as believe in or resort to violent and secret methods to achieve their ends; persons owing allegiance to such parties or believing in such methods shall have no place in the Sangh. (Curran 1950; Sabhlok 2015) (italics added)

Given the ability of individuals to straddle the lines between the two organizations of the RSS[5] and BJP, it is then evident that locating the current juncture of Indian politics is imperative for understanding recent socio-religious activity such as *Ghar Wapsi*.

Notwithstanding the impressive 8.2% growth rate during the first quarter of 2018–2019 and foreign exchange reserves touching a record high of USD 399.21 billion in April 2018 (ET Online 2018) (PTI 2019b), the new government has run into difficulties on socio-political fronts. Being perceived as the political front of the right-wing RSS, the BJP is often seen as unfriendly to minority communities and as chasing a blatantly pro-Hindu position. The *Ghar Wapsi* trend proves to be a clear instance of this claim, acting out Jaffrelot's theories of both "invention of tradition" and "strategic syncretism".

Ghar Wapsi has been variously translated as homecoming, conversion, reconversion, and return. It has its roots in the Arya Samaj and Sangh movements. In the words of Sumit Sarkar, "a whole battery of terms was developed from the late 19th century onwards as expansion directed towards marginal groups and tribals became more organized: "reclamation", "shuddhi" ("purification"), "paravartan" ("turning back", the term preferred by the Vishva Hindu Parishad[6] today). Common to all these labels is an insistence that all that is being attempted is to bring people back to their "natural" state (Sarkar 1999). While the concepts of *shuddhi* and *Ghar Wapsi* are often spoken of as interrelated, their present-day manifestations cannot be conflated. Yet, it is worth noting that both share common roots in the work of Savarkar, Dayanand Saraswati, and other Arya Samajis.

Adding to the Muslim Other and the belief in a "natural" state, another important contribution to the mass conversions and the increased popularity of the *shuddhi* movement was the British Raj itself, with voting rights and other political benefits being distributed on the basis of numerical proportions. Thus, it became increasingly important to artificially construct a Hindu majority by including the fringe populations in order to protect the interests of the upper caste Hindu minority in power (Sikand and Katju 1994). This line of reasoning is further supported by Hobsbawm's "threshold principle", arguing that for a community to attain viable nationhood, it must attain a minimum size (Muralidharan 1994). Other factors, according to some academicians, include the rise of Sikh militancy and Pakistan's declaration as a Muslim state, relegating Hindus to a position of second-class citizens in Pakistan (Malik and Vaypayi 1989). Understanding the current spike in *Ghar Wapsi* conversions is therefore inherently dependent on the lens of Hindu nationalism and its birth and growth in the socio-political history of the country.

As clearly portrayed in a majority of academic scholarships on the subject as well as mainstream public Hindutva discourse, the Hindu is defined as the non-Muslim. In the words of A. Varshney, a political scientist affiliated with Brown University specializing in South Asian ethnic and religious conflict, the fundamental goal of the Rashtra is that of Hinduization, creating a nation from emotional loyalty as opposed to political institutions and rule of law.

> The generic Hindu nationalist argument is that to become part of the Indian nation, Muslims must agree to the following: (1) accept the centrality of Hinduism in Indian civilization; (2) acknowledge key Hindu figures like Ram as civilizational heroes and not regard them as merely religious figures of Hinduism; (3) accept that Muslim leaders in various parts of India (between roughly 1000 and 1857) destroyed the pillars of Hindu civilization, especially Hindu temples; and (4) make no claims to special privileges such as the maintenance of

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[5] The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) is a right-wing Hindu nationalist volunteer organization that is seen as the parent organization for many other ring-wing organizations including the ruling BJP. The vision and mission section of the official website of the RSS opens with a quote from the organization's founder that " . . . if Hindusthan is to be protected, we should first nourish the Hindu culture" (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh 2012).

[6] "In 1964, in association with Hindu clerics, the RSS set up the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP—World Council of Hindus), a movement responsible for grouping the heads of various Hindu sects in order to lend this hitherto unorganized religion a sort of centralized structure" (Jaffrelot 2007).

> religious personal laws, nor demand special state grants for their educational institutions. They must assimilate, not maintain their distinctiveness. (Varshney 1993)

Speaking of the indigenous Muslim population in India, Bhaskarteerth, the deputy to the Shankaracharya of the Sharada Peeth, is known to have said that barring a "few hundred thousand" Muslims whose ancestors had come to the country from "Afghanistan and Baluchistan", the Muslims of India were descendants of Hindu converts and that, therefore, they should all be made Hindu once again (Sikand 2003). This notion of the Hindu identity being "true" and "real" (and simultaneously, the Muslim being the "enemy" to be overcome) is integral to the motivation behind reconversion campaigns.

The call to assimilate and "de-Muslim-ize" is echoed by politicians regularly as well. Following the 2011 bomb blasts in Mumbai, Subramanian Swamy, an Indian politician and economist affiliated with the BJP, published an editorial[7] in which he suggested that "fanatic Muslims consider Hindu-dominated India "an unfinished chapter of Islamic conquests" and thus, "Islamic terrorism is India's number one problem of national security". (Swamy 2011) He went on to write that:

> We need a collective mindset as Hindus to stand against the Islamic terrorist. The Muslims of India can join us if they genuinely feel for the Hindu. That they do I will not believe unless they acknowledge with pride that though they may be Muslims, their ancestors were Hindus. If any Muslim acknowledges his or her Hindu legacy, then we Hindus can accept him or her as a part of the Brihad Hindu Samaj (greater Hindu society) which is Hindustan. India that is Bharat that is Hindustan is a nation of Hindus and others whose ancestors were Hindus. (Swamy 2011)

The article then set out strategies aimed at negating the goals of this "Islamic terrorism". Amongst these goals were propagating the development of a Hindu mindset and the desire to convert India into *Darul Islam* or the "House of Islam".

> **Goal 3:** Turn India into Darul Islam.
>
> Strategy [to overcome this goal]: Implement the uniform civil code, make learning of Sanskrit and singing of Vande Mataram mandatory, and declare India a Hindu Rashtra in which non-Hindus can vote only if they proudly acknowledge that their ancestors were Hindus. Rename India Hindustan as a nation of Hindus and those whose ancestors were Hindus. (Swamy 2011)

This point of view is not isolated and Swamy has received much support from other right wing organizations. VHP General Secretary Surendra Jain publicly agreed with Swamy's statement that "God does not live in mosques but in temples", saying that "this is a truth that even Muslims agree to. Ask any Muslim if Allah lives in mosque and he will reply in the negative" (DNA Web Team 2015).

Varanasi 2015, an Example of Ghar Wapsi: To understand the context and depth of the *Ghar Wapsi* trend in the Indian socio-political context today, it is perhaps useful to analyze an example of this and its portrayal in popular media. A popular news source, *Z News*, reported in October 2015 that 300 people were converted to Hinduism in Ausanpur village, sixteen kilometers from Varanasi, a city considered holy by parts of the Hindu community (Zee News 2015). The report, quoting *The Times of India* as a source, says the Dharma Jagran Samanvya Samiti claimed the individuals used to frequent a church that had been built in the area a few years ago. Following the conversion which included a *shuddhikaran* or cleansing, the newly returned Hindus were presented with a copy of the *Bhagavad Gita*, often described as the closest thing to a canonical Hindu text, and the *Hanuman Chalisa*, another book of religious hymns. Other reports claim the number was 315 individuals spanning 38 families,

[7] Swamy was later arrested for this editorial, with a case being registered under Section 153A of the Indian Penal Code, pertaining to crimes "spreading enmity between communities" (PTI 2011).

who had "gone away from the Sanatan Dharma (and) were brought back to the religion of their forefathers", as was apparently claimed by the organizers (Sharma 2015). What is perhaps interesting is the distinction that the report draws between religion and faith, quoting villagers as saying visits to the Church do not equate to official conversions to Christianity as that would mean losing the economic benefits that are associated with the Scheduled Caste (Hindu) identity (Dikshit 2015). "Interestingly, the report [in the *Times of India*] quotes an unnamed villager as saying that those converted had never left Hindu religion at the first place. He said that they had changed their faith not their religion as they feared losing the benefits that come from their SC status".

It is perhaps worth noting that Ausanpur village is in Prime Minister Modi's constituency. However, police officials denied the incident and an organizer who was detained following a complaint claimed he was celebrating the birth of a son at the temple, not facilitating a *Ghar Wapsi* (Sharma 2015).

A few months following this incident, Vishva Hindu Parishad leader Pravin Togadia claimed that the VHP alone had reconverted more than five lakh (500,000) Christians and two and a half lakh (250,000) Muslims. He is reported to have said "our rate of *Ghar Wapsi* used to be around 15,000 each year. But last year, we have crossed the mark of 40,000, which is excluding the figures of RSS . . . If Hindus need to be in majority in India and to save our religion, we have to engage in many more *Ghar Wapsi* drives to bring crores of others into our religion" (PTI 2016).

Earlier, in July 2015, the VHP had claimed that it had brought back 33,975 people to their "original faith" through the *Ghar Wapsi* campaign and had prevented a total of 48,651 people from converting out of Hinduism in the last year. The trend has increasingly drawn the attention of various political stakeholders, with the NDA (National Democratic Alliance) government being the subject of much criticism and officially asking Hindu organizations to slow down at the risk of overshadowing their public development agenda. To this, however, it is reported that the VHP General Secretary Champat Rai responded saying "The programme has been on for long and it will continue. Look at Mahatma Gandhi, he wanted his son brought back to Hinduism, so did many other leaders. All minorities in India have converted from Hinduism. They should accept their original faith" (The New Indian Express 2015).

Violence and intimidation are tactics used by Hindutva-inspired organizations such as the Dharma Jagran Samiti (Hindu-Religious Awakening Front) in Uttar Pradesh. Saurav Datta describes how some Christians in Agra, Uttar Pradesh, huddled in fear in their church at Christmas 2015. Hindu zealots had already burned two other churches in the area, so they had reason to fear (Datta 2015). The anti-Christian outbreak had been touched off by the publicity given to a large *Ghar Wapsi* in the region celebrating the mass conversion of thousands of Christians and Muslims to Hinduism.

The RSS boasted about having "returned" 53 tribal families as part of its 2017 goal of forming a "Christianity-free block" in Jharkhand. The purification ceremony involved having their heads marked with sandalwood paste and their feet washed by priests. A local BJP official explained "You cannot call it conversion. We are only bringing our lost brothers and sisters back to their religion" (Roy 2017; HuffPost Staff 2017).

Thus, it is evident that while the official state apparatus is increasingly trying to differentiate between and distance itself from vocally Hindu organizations, the power of such groups is evidently increasing and their activities are increasingly more public. With the official representatives publicly announcing the intent to continue these campaigns, no evidence of strict state action against them, and complications associated with welfarism and the caste hierarchy, trends like the *Ghar Wapsi* are becoming integral to not only the religious but also the socio-economic identities of many communities in the country. Asserting the Hindu identity is being portrayed as the right option, both from an economic as well as a spiritual standpoint.

3. Mass Conversions from Hinduism

Mass Conversions to Islam: There has been, however, much backlash against these claims. Drawing on the Islamic understanding that all creatures, including humans and even animals, are

"Muslims" by nature because they follow their God-given inner nature, some Muslim political leaders have turned the tables on the Hindutva *Ghar Wapsi* stance by themselves claiming that every Indian was born Muslim and thus, the very definition or understanding of *Ghar Wapsi* needs to be revised. "Everyone is born a Muslim, and then he is converted to other religions. *Ghar wapasi* is for these people to return to Islam", said Mr Owaisi [Asaduddin Owaisi, Indian politician and three-time Member of Parliament], referring to the Hindi phrase for homecoming used by right-wing hardline groups who organize conversion ceremonies for religious minorities (Sudhir 2015).

Historically, the mass scale attempt at "*shuddhi*" or "cleansing" by the Arya Samaj was met with much resistance from local Muslim powers as well, countered through the campaign of "tabligh" or "propogation". While this was once restricted to being the duty of the *ulama* or clergy, it came to be seen as the most fundamental religious duty of all Muslims, resulting in the arguable democratization of Islam. While this usually involved spreading the word of the Quran to neo-Muslims as well as others, there have been particularly interesting cases of co-option between the formal faiths of Hinduism and Islam. This process is most clear in the case of Siddiq Hussain, the founder of Deendar Anjuman, who, after hearing a Sufi saint predict that the savior of the Lingayats would be born into a Muslim family, declared himself the savior Deendar Channabasaveswara. Sikand writes of how, "in a booklet, titled *Deendar Channabasaveswara*, Siddiq Hussain claimed that the Hindu and Lingayat scriptures predict that through Deendar Channabasaveswara, "the entire Hindustan will turn Muslim". ... Deendar Channabasaveswara would then set about "uniting all hundred and one castes" by making all Hindus Muslim" (Sikand 2003). Thus, to be a good Hindu (and believe in the saving powers of Channabasaveswara), one must be(come) Muslim.

There are, in multiple ways, parallels that can be drawn between the purposes served by the *shuddhi* and *tabligh* movements. In the words of Sikand (2003), once again,

> Like issues such as Urdu-Hindi, cow-slaughter, and music before mosques, *shuddhi* and *tabligh* emerged as powerful mobilization tools and symbols of community honor and identity. If through its *shuddhi* campaign the Aryas were able, at least temporarily, to bridge the gulf that divided them from the Sanatani Hindus and to mobilize the support of large numbers of Hindus, including many non-Aryas, in their project, so, too, did *tabligh* serve as a means for Muslim leaders to gather the support of a wide cross-section of Muslim opinion. In stressing the fundamental duty of all Muslims in the *tabligh* enterprise, *tabligh* played a central role as a symbolic tool in the process of the construction of a pan-India Muslim community transcending differences of caste, region, sect and linguistic affiliation.

Mass Conversions to Christianity: Though a large percentage of the literature, both academic and popular, focuses on the discrimination against India's Muslim minority, the Christian population has also borne its share of the brunt. Christian missionaries are criticized for being too aggressive in the efforts to convert. There has been an increasing trend towards attacks on churches and violence against nuns, a development that Surendra Jain, the international Joint General Secretary of the VHP, said would continue if the Christian proselytizing did not stop. An article in the *International Business Times* quoted him as justifying such action by questioning whether "Christians would allow us to make a Hanuman temple in the Vatican?" (Singh 2015).

Rajnath Singh, the BJP government's Home Minister, expressed concerns over the mass conversion trend in a January 2019 speech. Singh went out of his way to assure the Christian audience that he strongly favored the government's commitment to protecting a person's freedom to choose any religion they wish. He then said, "But if mass conversion starts happening, (and) large numbers of people start changing their religion, then it could be a matter of concern for any country". (PTI 2019a) The implication seemed to be that the government would give at least some protection to Christians as long as they did not become too numerous.

Mass Conversions to Buddhism: Having been born a Dalit and then, after earning a doctorate in economics, representing Dalits in Parliament and serving as the principal author of the new Indian

Constitution adopted in 1950, Dr. Ambedkar made good on a longstanding promise. He had often said that even though he was born a Hindu, he would not die a Hindu. After studying several religions, he chose Buddhism because it was native Indian and had resisted caste discrimination from its beginnings. Through his study of the early history of Buddhism, which traces itself back well beyond the time of the Buddha of this era, he came to understand Buddhism as the original religion of India's Dalits. At a well-known mass conversion ceremony held at Nagpur in 1956, he and his wife converted to Buddhism. Then hundreds of thousands of other Dalits who had gathered for the occasion also converted. Since then more Dalits have become Buddhists. Several mass conversions were held to mark the 50th anniversary of the original mass conversion at Nagpur, including the conversion of 50,000 Dalits in Mumbai. These conversions have become even more frequent under the leadership of Rajratna Ambedkar, who frequently oversees mass conversions, often of 500 or more Dalits, who are angry at the continuing discrimination during the Modi era (Varagur 2018). These conversions are seen as a threat by the Hindutva advocates, and their fears grow with the increasing popularity of the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), with its Dalit and tribal constituencies, during the run up to the 2019 Parliamentary Election.

4. The Anti-Conversion Laws Controversy

While the temptation to read *Ghar Wapsi* as a recent phenomenon is large, religious conversions have been the subject of much controversy and legality from the pre-colonial era. Interesting, however, is the fact that most laws pertaining to religious conversion had the stated objective of curbing the trend, claiming to protect otherwise gullible and economically impoverished possible converts.

Post-independence, these restrictions resulted in individual states enacting various anti-conversion laws. Some of these pieces of legislation are the Madhya Pradesh Dharma Swatantrya Adhiniyam (1968), Orissa's Freedom of Religion Act (1967), Tamil Nadu Prohibition of Forcible Conversion of Religious Ordinance (2002–2004), Gujarat Freedom of Religion Bill (2003), and the Himachal Pradesh Freedom of Religion Bill (2007). Most of these bills, apart from outlawing forceful conversion through coercion and/or fraud, also interestingly require individuals to give notice to local authorities a stipulated number of days in advance of their intended conversion. It is thus evident that the State has defined for itself the role of a "protector", giving itself the window needed to affirm M. Galanter's view that "no secular State is or can be merely neutral or impartial among religions, for the State defines the boundaries within which neutrality operates". (Jenkins 2008) With this legislation, what was thus far strictly restricted to the private realm (matters of religion) gets converted to public acts and objects of legislation. The convert is thus no longer merely an individual but also a citizen and an object (and not subject) of the law.

In the continuing discussion regarding reconversions and anti-conversion laws, it is useful to take a closer look at one specific piece of state legislature. The Rajasthan state anti-conversion bill did not become a law as the then-governor Pratibha Patil (later President of India) refused to sign it. However, its contents provide useful insight into how religious conversions are understood by the Indian state today. As Jenkins writes, "controversial aspects of the Rajasthan bill include allowing the immediate arrest of the accused and exempting "reconversion" via a "clause that a person could be lawfully converted (back) into one's original religion". (Jenkins 2008). Following this, other states have also come forward with similar exemptions, with Gujarat looking to exempt conversions from Hinduism to Buddhism and Jainism, "on the grounds that Buddhism and Jainism were "denominations" of Hinduism". (Jenkins 2008) The amendment was not passed.

It is in the midst of this dialogue that the definition of "the Hindu" seems murky, being almost entirely defined by negation. Theoretically, Hindus are born into a caste and this membership is inherent to the identity of being Hindu, making it impossible to "convert" into Hinduism. Yet, with the inclusion and involvement of fringe communities and the increasing popularity of *shuddhi* campaigns and *Ghar Wapsi* movements, the practice of the Hindu identity has evidently gotten further complicated. In most cases, this inclusion is largely through a process of what Y. Sikand and M. Katju call "cultural

transformation" to a state of acceptance of various brahminical notions and practices. According to them, "the Arya Samaj and the VHP missionaries seem more concerned with weaning Muslims away from Islam than with the spiritual instruction and development of their converts" (Sikand and Katju 1994).

To further complicate this identity construction, the definition provided by the Constitution of India considers Sikhs, Buddhists and Jains as lying within the ambit of the "Hindu" umbrella. This is evident in Article 25 of the Constitution, speaking of freedom of conscience and religion. This Article reads as follows:

> "(1) Subject to public order, morality and health and to the other provisions of this Part, all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practice and propagate religion.
>
> (2) Nothing in this article shall affect the operation of any existing law or prevent the State from making any law—
>
> (a) regulating or restricting any economic, financial, political or other secular activity which may be associated with religious practice;
>
> (b) providing for social welfare and reform or the throwing open of Hindu religious institutions of a public character to all classes and sections of Hindus.
>
> Explanation I.—The wearing and carrying of kirpans shall be deemed to be included in the profession of the Sikh religion.
>
> Explanation II.—In sub-clause (b) of clause (2), *the reference to Hindus shall be construed as including a reference to persons professing the Sikh, Jaina or Buddhist religion*, and the reference to Hindu religious institutions shall be construed accordingly". (Government of India 1950) (italics mine)

Thus, the attempt to agree upon a shared definition of the Hindu throws up more questions than answers. Is the legal structure conflating Indian-ness with Hindu-ness? Does Hindu-ness represent a hereditary identity? In which case, can it be adopted across the caste hierarchy or only by (the men of) twice-born castes? On the other hand, if one were to buy into the arguments of the nationalists, are Hindus the inhabitants of Hindustan? If so, are the borders of Hindustan in sync with post-independent India or what the RSS has come to refer to as Akhand Bharat, the Undivided India?

The vagueness of defining the Hindu identity in contrast to the Other was evident in a promise made in the run-up to the 2019 elections by Amit Shah, the president of the BJP. In a tweet that received much backlash, Shah wrote, "We will ensure implementation of the NRC in the entire country. We will remove every single infiltrator from the country, except Buddha (sic), Hindus, and Sikhs" (Griffiths and Suri 2019). NRC, or the National Registry of Citizens, is a controversial register in the northeastern state of Assam that seeks to list all citizens. The fear was that, after forcing all residents of Assam to register, the government will then undertake to deport the estimated four million Bengali Muslims, many of whom have been living in Assam for generations or at least since being refugees from the 1971 civil war in Bangladesh (Gupta 2018). In a speech at a campaign rally, he later clarified that the government "won't send Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, Parsis, Christians, and Buddhists coming in from Bangladesh or Pakistan because they are our brothers and they've come here because they've faced persecution in those countries" (The Daily Star 2019). His statements reveal the Hindutva tendency to define the Other as Muslim while, when politically astute, allowing members of many other traditional religions of the country to reside under the Hindu tent.

5. Cultural and Political Implications of Mass Conversion

Irrespective of whether the individual state bills became laws or not, the trend in Indian legislation reveals important details on the public perception of religious conversions today. By these laws,

"*Ghar Wapsi*" or reconversions no longer are seen as religious conversions at all, but rather the correction of a previous, ancestral mistake. This point of view is further augmented by a second strand of thought that argues that Hinduism itself is not a religion, but rather a way of life. Vocal support of this argument came in the form of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's speech in Vancouver, Canada in April 2015, where he said "the Supreme Court of India in India has given a nice definition of *Hindu dharam* … the Supreme Court has said that *Hindu dharam* is not a religion but a way of life … " (PTI 2015) Thus, if Hinduism is seen as a lifestyle choice (as opposed to an organized religion), one cannot "convert" into/from it. By this logic, the argument of *Ghar Wapsi* is no longer about coerced conversion/reconversion but rather the re-adoption of a lifestyle or set of cultural practices.

Problems regarding the status of Hinduism as a uniform religion also contribute to this debate. This has been evident in R. Robinson and S. Clarke's introduction to their volume on religious conversions in the country, where they write:

> For some scholars of South Asia would recognize Christianity or even Buddhism as a religion, but would refuse to accord Hinduism the same status, referring to its loose structure and its location as a "way of life" rather than a set of tenets. The term Hinduism, it is pointed out came to be used only in much later times. (Robinson and Clarke 2003)

Tapan Basu et al, as quoted by Robinson and Clarke, traces the history of the process of creating a bounded Hinduism, writing:

> Savarkar's definition of Hinduism was an overtly "secular" one, linked to devotion to the Holy Land alone, but then land was immediately sacralized through a Hinduization of its geographical, historical, even zoological features. Golwalkar had prescribed a shared "respect for the cow" as the only basis for Indian unity whereas Seshadri describes a true Hindu home as a space sanctified by domestic shrines and holy icons, and a Hindu disposition as marked by regular temple attendance, daily worship and, at least, "minimum samskaras" like naming, marriage, and funeral ceremonies … Having first been freed from all observances … [Hinduism] transforms itself into a series of observances, of "musts", of the very external commandments which are supposedly the marks of non-Hindu Semitic cultures. (Robinson and Clarke 2003)

Adding to this, the issue with speaking of religious conversions is the assumption of watertight categories marking a conversion "from" and a conversion "to", a situation which often does not find resonance in real world scenarios. This artificial separation is further complicated by the common conflation of religion and culture, seen especially in the arenas of ritual and practice such as puberty rituals or ancestral rites. It has therefore been argued that it may perhaps be useful to read what is usually written off as conversions as transformations, a "gradual acculturation into the faith with few discernible radical shifts" (Robinson and Clarke 2003). Especially given that common understanding reads marital alliance as the most common entry-point as opposed to an identifiable ritual moment of "conversion", it may be useful to read this shifting religiosity as a long-term process rather than a marked moment in time.

In the most commonsensical understanding, "conversion betokens foundational rupture with prior faith and heralds inaugural displacement of religious affiliation, individually and collectively" (Dube and Dube 2003). However, if one were to read religiosity as transformation, it must also be kept in mind that not all transformation is motivated by strictly religious intent. Given the intrinsic link between the spread of religion, trade, and political power, it has also been argued that the promise of economic benefit and political power can be a strong influencing factor in the adoption of a different religion. With osmosis between local cultures and formal religions being common, the day-to-day practices of many communities were not subject to much change. What religious "conversion" did offer them, however, was a higher position on the socio-political hierarchy. Thus, the "religious conversion in the case of Dalit communities involved entering a liminal world: a world of possibilities that is weaved out within a limbo between the real and the utopian" (Clarke 2003b).

In support of this argument, R. Eaton writes on Bengali Muslims in particular, describing how

> ... the frontier folk of the eastern delta do not appear to have perceived Islam as alien, or as a closed, exclusive system to be accepted or rejected as a whole. Today one habitually thinks of world religions as self-contained "culture-boxes" with well-defined borders respecting belief and practice. But such a static or fixed understanding of religion does not apply to the premodern Bengal frontier, a fluid context in which Islamic superhuman agencies, typically identified with local superhuman agencies, gradually seeped into local cosmologies that were themselves dynamic. This "seepage" occurred over such a long period of time that one can at no point identity a specific moment of "conversion", or any single moment when peoples saw themselves as having made a dramatic break with the past. (Eaton 1993)

It is thus arguable, as S. Clarke did, that "religious conversion need not be a community contract, which inaugurates a relationship between tribals and Dalits and homogeneously intact symbolic constellations. Rather conversion involves a process of creative and constructive assemblage of eclectic religious resources garnered from a variety of sites" (Clarke 2003a).

It is to explain this fabric of multiplicity that P. Dundas introduces the concept of "spiritual cosmopolitanism" with regard to a characterization of religious life in the country (Dundas 2003). Applying this lens to India, it can be argued that "what people "converted from" was probably not substantively different from what they "converted to" (Fenech 2003). Thus, "conversion implies movement and we cannot hope to understand it without thoroughly examining both the place of arrival and the place of departure in each instance" (Brekke 2002).

Integral to this understanding of the trend of reconversions and its relationship with state power is the subject of conversion. While the argument is based on a certain construct of the Hindu in opposition to the primarily Muslim Other, the question of who converts is one that is key to decoding the *Ghar Wapsi* trend. SF Dale puts forth a rather blunt description when he writes:

> The great majority of conversions must have come from the lower castes, who most strongly felt the "inconvenience" of their subordinate, degraded status. It must have certainly been the lower caste women who married or became the concubines of Muslims; no Nambudiri or Nayar women are ever likely to have taken such a step unless they had already been outcasted for some profound social transgression. Lower caste concubinage followed by conversion, or the direct conversion of men or women for other reasons, would also have been more likely to have occurred in relatively heterogeneous commercial centers such as Calicut rather than in the conservative, predominantly Hindu countryside. (Dale 1990)

While there have been instances of upper caste conversions being recorded in history, Dale's writing from the context of the state of Kerala is often the common perception regarding conversions in the country. Evidently, "at least in the Indian context, one cannot separate the conversion of the individual from the conversion of the community. Conversion is a process leading to a new identity, but that identity is going to be both personal and social (caste/religious community) as the two are inexorably linked together" (Webster 2003).

It is also important to pay heed to the role of geography in the trend towards religious conversions across the country. In traditional settlement plans where residence was decided on the basis of caste, Dalit communities were relegated to the periphery of the villages, not only putting physical but metaphysical space between them and the organized form of majority religion in the area. This made them more susceptible to conversion (Clarke 2003b).

This counteracts interestingly to claims that non-Hindu groups living on the fringes of Hindu caste societies have, over centuries, been co-opted into the caste structure as Shudras or "untouchables", a process often referred to as Hinduisation (Sikand 2003).

6. Conclusions: Political Implications of the *Ghar Wapsi* Approach in a "Secular" State

The trend towards *Ghar Wapsi* reconversions and the cultural as well as political implications of this tendency cannot be understood independent of the current political clime of the country and its traditional stance with regard to the interface between religion and politics.

The 2014 general elections saw the return of an NDA (National Democratic Alliance) government, following the previous stint between 1998 and 2004 under the Prime Ministership of Atal Bihari Vajpayee. The Modi-led government swept the elections with 38.5% vote share between the various members of the NDA alliance amidst much fanfare and expectation. True to the rise of the BJP as a political party, the win was heralded importantly as a change from the disappointment of the UPA[8] government and Congress era while also being positioned as the "rightful representative of Hindu interests" (Basu 1996). It was evident that goals of secular economic development were not achieving the targets that were promised and sections of the population were coming to question the need for this secularism at all. Why couldn't the Centre be explicitly pro-Hindu? Given the inability to achieve the numerous India 2020 targets, was this the missing link? Narenda Modi's government inherited this political atmosphere.

Constitutionally, the relationship between Indian politics and religion is defined by secularism. India's secular identity is not, however, devoid of its own debates, not least of which are the challenges in the Indian social fabric and even the Indian understanding of the term itself. Sen delineates the biggest challenges to secularism in the Indian context as being communal fascism (use of violence to achieve sectarian threats, victimizing specific communities, etc.), sectarian nationalism (discourse of "two nations" in undivided India followed by "misdeeds" of Muslims) and militant obscurantism (using archaic beliefs to generate extremism) (Sen 1993). It is, however, arguable that the bigger debate at hand is the very definition of secularism itself. While the Western world perceives this concept as heralding the separation between state and church, India adopts the Gandhian notion of "*sarva dharma samabhava*" or tolerance towards/equidistance from all religions.

At the time of framing the Constitution in the years leading up to its adoption in 1950, the secular nature of the Indian state was never explicitly stated on the argument that it was evident, assumed, and natural. A watershed act of law in multiple ways, the 42th Amendment is famously known for introducing the words "secular" and "socialist" into the Preamble of the Constitution. Passed in 1976 and enacted through the course of 1977, the timing of this Amendment is crucial, coming during the Emergency declared by then-Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. It is equally important to note that there is no definition of "secular" put forth in the Constitution and thus, more often than not, the concept is seen to have "more affinities with multiculturalism" (Jaffrelot 2011).

It is, therefore, unquestionable that the biggest cost of this socio-political trend is the veracity of India's claims to secularism. With the BJP already accusing the Congress of "pseudosecular politics" (The New Indian Express 2018), the political core of the Indian state seems to be up for debate.

In the short run, this has resulted in heightened insecurity amongst religious minorities, many of whom have been subjected to increasing violence in recent times. In a report by Open Doors, a religious freedom watchdog working towards serving prosecuted Christians worldwide, "the number of reported incidents in the first three months of 2018 was greater than the total number of attacks in the whole year of 2014". (World Watch Monitor 2019) The report, titled 'We're Indians Too,' identifies four key drivers of persecution, two of which are particularly relevant to the argument of this article:

> An analysis of the data highlights four main drivers of persecution … First, the increased dominance of "Hindutva ideology" within Indian society appears to have created the conditions necessary for increased persecution. Second, state Anti-conversion laws operate

[8] The United Progressive Alliance (UPA) is a coalition of left and centre-left political parties in India. The largest member of the UPA is the Indian National Congress (INC). The UPA and NDA (National Democratic Alliance, of which the BJP is a part) form the two largest actors in Indian national politics.

> to increase religious persecution. (. . . a substantial number of incidents of persecution occur around the false perception of what constitutes "conversion" activities.) (Open Doors 2019)

Another report, released in 2017, also described similar findings, saying that "members of civil society and religious minorities stated that under the current government, religious minority communities felt increasingly vulnerable due to Hindu nationalist groups engaging in violence against non-Hindu individuals and their places of worship". (PTI 2018) This increasing unease amongst religious minorities was recognized even by individuals of public standing, with the outgoing Vice President of the country, Hamid Ansari, saying in his final official interview that there was a feeling of unease amongst Muslims in the country because of growing intolerance (Scroll 2017). In 2015, research conducted by Pew reported that India was ranked fourth in the world (behind Syria, Nigeria, and Iraq) for highest social hostilities involving religion (S 2017).

To those subscribing to the Hindutva ideology, it seems valid to claim that all persons native to greater India (Akhand Bharat or Undivided India) are Hindu by virtue to having an Indian, and therefore Hindu, ancestry. By understanding "the Hindu" as the traditional spirituality of the Indian subcontinent, this ideology can make the seemingly self-contradictory claim that conversion from Islam or Christianity is not a religious conversion but rather a "coming home" or a "returning" to one's true, ancestral spiritual identity. In stark contrast, the citizens of India who do not share the Hindutva stance—be they Muslims, Christians, secular Hindus or others—look upon *Ghar Wapsi* as an alarming trend which threatens both individual religious freedom and the constitutional mandated secularism of India governance.

When is religious conversion "coming homing" rather than conversion? Given the increasingly porous boundaries separating the space of religion and politics in India, this is a question without an explicitly apparent answer. While the arguments of "culture boxes" and "spiritual cosmopolitanism" give us the theoretical frameworks within which to understand the trend and India's political leadership peddles the language of "way of life", it remains that the identity of the Hindu citizen, the minority communities and the Indian citizenry are caught in an uncomfortable and arguably dangerous state of fluidity and flux. Complicated by the presence of affirmative action for specific caste identities and the resulting differentiation between personal faith and organized religion, the *Ghar Wapsi* trend is positioned squarely in the spaces of grey amidst definitional debates and socio-cultural practices unique to India.

It is evident that this "homecoming" then becomes a multi-layered process; one that sees the transformation of the citizen-body from a subject into an object of the law, the shift of focus from individual to community as primary actor, and the evolution of 'conversion' from a momentary shift of identity to a long drawn out process of change. When these processes and spaces of grey are facilitated by those in power, it would seem, is when religious conversion can be described in the language of "homecoming".

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How Avoiding the Religion–Politics Divide Plays out in Sikh Politics

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Abstract: This article looks at the intersection of religion and politics in the evolution of the Sikh tradition in the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods in the Indian subcontinent. The Sikh notion of sovereignty is at the heart of the intersection of religious and secular domains, and this relationship is examined empirically and theoretically. In particular, the conception of mīrī-pīrī is presented as a possible explanation for understanding the 'new developments' in contemporary Sikh politics in India.

Keywords: Akal Takhat; British Raj; halemī rāj; Khalsa; mīrī-pīrī; religion and politics; secularism; SGPC; Akali Dal; Punjab

1. Introduction

The purpose of this essay is to look at the changing dynamics of the intersection of religion and politics at various historical junctures in the evolution of the Sikh tradition, thereby understanding the more recent developments in Sikh politics in the Punjab. Notably, the distinction between the public and private spheres did not exist in the early Sikh tradition prior to the colonial rule of the early 19th century. The Sikh Gurus mediated the two spaces as one. For them and for societies of that time in India, this division did not exist. This is the same division as between religion and politics, or between church and state. In recent studies, "religion" is not considered simply a belief system or a purely interior impulse secreted away in the human soul and limited to the private sphere, or an institutional force separable from other non-religious or secular forces in the public domain. Rather, religion in today's world is understood as a living, vibrant, social formation. It is broadly understood to encompass not only institutional forms of religion but also ethical, ritual or social issues that form a part of religious milieu. Similarly, "politics" is broadly conceived to encompass not only government structures or political parties but also the social movements that tend to influence, sooner or later, the values that shape government policies. The idea of the 'public sphere' is a European invention, which divides it from private space at the time, when church and state separated after the 15th century in Europe. The most widely-known theory of the public is Habermas's concept of the "public sphere" (Habermas 1989). In its original formulation, the "public sphere" was intended to describe a unique structural transformation in European society. In particular, late 17th-century Europe witnessed the emergence of a public domain, in which public opinion was crafted through the process of rational debate. This "bourgeois public sphere" coincided temporarily with the "rise of political liberalism and early capitalist social orders, forming a necessary foundation for constitutional democracy as we understand it today" (Fisher 2017, p. 21).

In her recent article, Amanda Lucia has skillfully shown how during the independence movement, M. K. Gandhi modeled an embodied confluence between politics, social responsibility, and religion. In the post-independence period, India has reverted to indigenous models of close collaboration between the political and religious fields. In fact, contemporary Hindu religious leaders have become prominent actors in the public sphere, rejecting the western ideal that the privatization of religion is

an essential component of modernity. Instead, their asceticism blends seamlessly with routine media appearances and their abilities to hold public office, to lead social service and humanitarian campaigns, to become global ambassadors for Hinduism. They have become spokespersons of a new vibrant global Hinduism, including those who tired of Gandhi's tolerant ecumenism and sought to construct India as an exclusively Hindu nation. Modern-day Hindu leaders have become public officials with exceptional influence in India's governance, to the extent that Hindu dominance and self-proclaimed supremacy threatens the secular character of India's social democracy and its religiously diverse citizenry (Lucia 2019).

In the present context, the Sikh refusal to buy into the dichotomy between religion and politics is making a difference in contemporary Indian and Punjab politics. In particular, the Sikh doctrine of *mīrī-pīrī* (Secular-Religious) affirms that religion and politics are bound together, thereby allowing religious issues to be defended in the political arena and political activity to be conducted in accordance with the religious values of truth and social justice. We can comprehend this intersection between religion and politics in contemporary Punjab only if we try to understand briefly the historical development of early Sikh tradition by means of the Sikh Gurus' attitude to minority formations in the face of powerful politics of Mughal Empire and in the face of hegemonic Brahminical traditions. For this purpose, we will address the following questions: How did Guru Nanak (1469–1539) and his successors resist what some scholars and interpreters understand as the brutal state structures of their times? How have these attitudes of resistance changed in the current period? Is there also any continuity in modern times? We will address these issues by examining canonical Sikh sources.

To understand the intersection of religion and politics at different historical junctures, let us begin with the notion of sovereignty from the Sikh perspective. The term 'sovereignty' refers not only to the ability but also the right to freely express one's life-world, with the "power to authorize" one's own speech. In his dialogue with the followers of the Nath tradition, Guru Nanak was asked: "Who is your Guru, by whom you have been authorized?" The Guru responded: "The divine Word (*shabad*) is my Guru, I am a disciple of the state of consciousness (*surti*) that arises from its ever resounding vibration" (Guru Granth Sahib [GGS], p. 943). Thus, the state of consciousness, whose essential mark is the equipoise between ego and ego-loss, became the foundation for Guru Nanak's power of self-authorization. Guru Nanak always invoked Akāl Purakh ("Eternal One," God) as *Sachā Pātishāh*, the "True Sovereign" (GGS, p. 463), whose *hukam* ("divine will, order or command") supersedes all temporal authority. He bequeathed the concept of sovereignty to one and all by asserting that if God is the 'True Sovereign' in the spiritual and temporal realm, then a human being as a creation of God partakes of the sovereignty of the Divine. Jasbir Singh Ahluwalia maintains that the divinity of God is the source of the sovereignty of the human person: to be fearless is to be free, and to be free is to be sovereign. Providing the philosophical basis for the sovereignty of a human being, therefore, Guru Nanak predicated God as "Fearless" and "Devoid of Enmity" in the Mūl Mantar (Ahluwalia 1983, p. 148). The Punjabi word for 'sovereignty' is *patishāhī* that is frequently employed by Guru Nanak and his successors in the Sikh scripture (GGS, pp. 5, 48, 144, 590, 749, and 1073). For Guru Nanak, this sovereign consciousness comes only when one overcomes one's self-centeredness or ego (*haumai*) through the discipline of meditation on the divine Name (*nām simran*): "One who is blessed with the gift of singing the praises of the Lord, O Nanak, is the king of all kings" (GGS, p. 5). Thus, sovereign consciousness overflows with the sense of fearlessness and compassionate love for everyone.

Guru Nanak himself was not content to leave the ethical principles that he expounded in his life as merely theoretical constructs, but instead sought to institutionalize them during the last two decades of his life at Kartarpur. He referred to the earth (*dhartī*) as the place to practice righteousness (GGS 7) and his own village was conceived as a place of justice where the divine will was carried out. The congregation assembled at the Guru's house at Kartarpur symbolized the establishment of divine sovereignty on earth. There, Guru Nanak lived as the 'spiritual guide' of a newly emerging religious community. His attractive personality and teachings won him many disciples, who received his message of liberation through religious hymns of unique genius and notable beauty. He was the central

authority for the early Sikh community and the definer of tradition for his age. He placed explicit emphasis on the ideal of moderate living in the world in which spiritual development and activist social engagement through selfless 'service' (*sevā*) went hand in hand.

In Guru Nanak's view, the key discipline of meditation on the divine Name (*nām simaran*) was meant to liberate oneself from the shackles of ego or self-centeredness (*haumai*). The word *simaran* is derived from the Sanskrit root *marana*, meaning "to die" or "pass away," suggesting that this process is a form of remembrance that automatically lets go of one's self-centeredness. It is remembrance of one's own mortality, of the ego's death, remembering which one awakens to the reality of the divine Name. It is the condition of experience of finitude in the first place, leading to an awareness of the eternally sounding vibrations of the divine Name and making it a sacrificial practice for transforming memory by eliminating one's ego consciousness. It provides the means for an individual to actively participate and make changes in the world. It is as inherently spiritual as it is secular. For Guru Nanak and his successors, there was no contradiction between mystical experience and the life of a householder, soldier, or political leader (Mandair 2013, p. 155). Although Guru Nanak viewed the apprehension of the divine Name (*nām*) in terms of interior devotion, his emphasis on the extension of the knowledge gained in the process must be acknowledged. This extension of an interiorly gained understanding of the divine Name is predicated upon social responsibility and as such should be seen as movement away from the subjective speculation of the medieval poet-saints of North India.

Here, it is instructive to note that some scholars have pointed towards the 'hegemony' of the Khalsa-centric interpretation of the Sikh tradition (Axel 2004; Jakobsh 2015). Accordingly, the triumphalist narrative of the Khalsa began to inspire the imaginations of certain Sikhs in the 19th century, and later motivated the British to incorporate Sikhs into their notorious colonial endeavor, which in turn reified the interpretation that became dominant in scholarly circles. However, another way to look at these scholars' writings is that their observations derive from a skewed understanding of the institution of the Khalsa as simply the 'military-wing' of the Sikh Panth ('community') that originated in the face of Mughal persecution. This particular understanding is based on the 'early pacifism versus later militancy' discourse that has dominated in popular writings on Sikhism. This discourse draws attention to the apparent contradiction between the interior devotion of the early Nanak-panth ('followers of Guru Nanak's path') and the militant character of the Khalsa tradition. For instance, Khushwant Singh's history of the Sikhs contains a chapter entitled, 'From the Pacifist Sikh to the Militant Khalsa' (Singh 1999, pp. 76–98). No serious scholar today ascribes to Singh's pacifism versus militancy argument. Following the Orientalist paradigm, such works ignore contextual depth and misrepresent the process of evolution by focusing too much on the apparent 'contradiction' between 'religion' and 'politics' in the Sikh tradition (Singh 2012, p. 201). The present study offers a counter-perspective to the framework of "early pacifism verses later militancy" discourse. It challenges the reductionist approach that defines the Sikh culture simply as a religion of interior devotion limited essentially to the private sphere without taking into account its relevance in political, economic and social arenas of public sphere.

2. Historical Context of Early Sikh Formations

Guru Nanak kindled the fire of autonomy and courage in those who claimed to be his disciples (*sikh*, "learners"). He inspired them to stand up against any kind of injustice and tyranny. For them, he set an example to raise one's voice at the right moment from the standpoint of truth and social justice: "Nanak speaks the Word of Truth; he proclaims the Truth at the most appropriate moment of time" (GGS, p. 723). This proclamation was made in the historical context of Babur's invasion of India when Guru Nanak was standing in "the city of corpses" (ibid.). He frequently condemned the corrupt and violent state structures of his times. During his invasion to secure northern India in the 1520s, the first Mughal emperor, Babur (1483–1530), achieved his final victory over Ibrahim Lodhi in 1526 in the field of Panipat. Most instructively, Guru Nanak commented upon the violence inflicted on innocent people in his four hymns, collectively known as *Bābar-vāṇī* ("Utterances concerning Babur",

GGS, pp. 360, 417–18 and 722–23). In fact, these hymns provide an eyewitness account of Babur's invasion of India and throw considerable light on the devastation caused by his army. He was pained to see the suffering of the innocent who had little to do with politics and war: "You spared Khurasan but yet spread fear in Hindustan. Creator, you did this, but to avoid the blame you sent the Mughal as the messenger of death. Receiving such chastisement, the people cry out in agony and yet no anguish touches you. Creator, you belong to all. If the mighty destroy only one another, one is not grieved" (GGS, p. 360). The principal theme in his *Āsā* hymn is related to the question of why the weak and innocent should suffer unmerited torment at the hands of the strong and in this respect this hymn has obvious affinities with the Book of Job in the Hebrew Bible. God is called into account, just as Job summons him. Guru Nanak makes it quite explicit that it was the Creator who sent Babur as the messenger of death to destroy the Lodhi Sultanate. He underscored the point that if any mighty person attacks "the weak and unarmed" person, then it is a violation of an ethical norm of warfare (Singh 1989, p. 116).

Guru Nanak's response to war and suffering is not limited to his personal anguish. A careful examination of his works reveals a powerful condemnation of both the invaders and the rulers. Guru Nanak describes the Lodhis as "wretched dogs" for their moral failure to protect their sovereignty and the innocent people. They had acted in a manner contrary to the divine intention and were responsible for the ultimate overthrow of their dynasty. In the *Tilaṅg* hymn, on the other hand, Guru Nanak refers to Babur's army as the "marriage-party of sin," and thus charges them for their moral failure to forcibly demand a "dowry" from the suffering people (GGS, p. 722). Elsewhere, Guru Nanak holds heedlessness of Akal Purakh on the part of the general public responsible for bringing about this retribution. In the case of the rape of women, for instance, the Guru makes the following comment: "The wealth and sensual beauty which intoxicated them became their enemies. The messengers of Death, under orders to persecute, strip them of their honor and carry them off" (GGS, p. 417). Here, Guru Nanak is not blaming women's own behavior for being raped but rather describing the obduracy of human nature. All the violence in war and rape was caused by the senseless pursuit of worldly pleasures and heedlessness of Akal Purakh. Some other verses represent a terrible portrait of women being raped by soldiers who did not bother to discriminate between Hindus and Muslims who were in their path: "Some lost their five times of prayer, some the time of *puja*" (GGS, p. 417). Thus, Guru Nanak was deeply anguished over the horrible situation of women. He employed the Punjabi phrase "stripping of one's honor" to describe the rape of women by the Mughal army. In fact, rape is regarded as a violation of women's honor in Punjabi culture. For all his sympathy with the suffering people, Guru Nanak was cognizant of the situation of poor women and their agony reminded him of a religious truth that unrighteousness would be punished according to divine justice.

Guru Nanak was fully aware of the relationship between the two existing domains of temporal and spiritual sovereignties (*mīrī-pīrī*) in contemporary India. He employed the key words *pir* (saint) and *mir* (sovereign), representing religious and secular powers in early 16th century. In his *Āsā* hymn, he claimed that the religious leaders miserably failed to halt the invader with their miraculous tricks, by falsely claiming that the Mughals will be blinded when they arrive (GGS, pp. 417–19). Riding on their fast-running horses, the Mughals fired their guns on the army of Pathans on their elephants. Guru Nanak thus admitted the enormity of violence caused by Babur's army as part of Mughal invasions of India, but he rendered it small from the perspective of a larger metaphysic of divine Order (*hukam*). Guru Nanak fully realized that unchecked political power could easily crush the religious authority of saintly people. He sowed the seeds of *mīrī-pīrī* tradition in his bold resistance against the power structures of his times. One can raise the issue of the *Bābar-vāṇī* being the exception in the context of the overall emphasis of Guru Nanak's teachings of interior devotion. This is simply not the case. Guru Nanak's critique of political structures of his times may be seen in his other works, particularly in his *Vār Mājjh* (GGS, p. 145), *Vār Āsā* (GGS, pp. 468–69) and *Vār Malār* (GGS, p. 1287–88).

The most poignant analysis of the complexity of state violence is given in Guru Nanak's *Malār* hymn. Here, the Guru employs the metaphors of deer (*haraṇ*), hawks (*bāj*) and state officials (*siqdār*) who act as trained agents-provocateurs to push a community in a particular direction, especially on the path of self-destruction. For instance, if a hunter wants to catch the herd of deer's in the forest, he will pick up a 'baby deer'. He will then feed him to raise him in a particular way so that the deer becomes fully dependent upon the hunter. After the deer is fully trained, the hunter will let him loose in the forest where he becomes the leader of other deers. Eventually, the trained deer will bring the herd of deers into the trap of the hunter. Similarly, a trained hawk will lead other hawks into the snare of the hunter. The original hymn reads as follows:

> *Mahalā* 1 (Guru Nanak).
>
> Deer, hawks, and government officials are known to be trained and clever. When the trap is set, they trap *their own kind*; hereafter, they will find no place of rest. He alone is learned and wise, and he alone is a visionary scholar (*paṇḍit bīnā*) who practices the divine Name. First, the tree puts down its roots, and then it spreads out its shade above [to protect *people* from sun]. The kings become tigers—[*beasts of prey*]—and their officials become *greedy dogs*; they go out and awaken the sleeping *people* to terrorize them. The public servants inflict wounds with their nails: O dogs! Lick the blood and marrow of *the poor*. Behold, where creatures will be judged [according to their deeds]; there, the noses of these tyrants will be chopped off [in disgrace] and they will be branded as untrustworthy [in the divine court]. (GGS, p. 1288)

Most of the time, Sikh scholars have a tendency to pick up few lines of this hymn to show Guru Nanak's powerful critique of the rulers and the invaders alike that is partially true. There is a need to maintain the structural unity of this hymn in exegesis so that we can appreciate its true import. In addition to the condemnation of despotic rulers, Guru Nanak offers a severe critique of the agency of various human actors from within the community who are actually responsible for much of its agony. In the Sikh scripture, for instance, a 'deer' appears as the symbol of 'illusion' without the knowledge that the real 'musk' (*kastūrī*) lies in his own body but looks outside in bewilderment. A 'hawkish' person employs his 'surrogate power' to bring oppression to his own people. Similarly, agents-provocateurs act as 'extended arms' of state machinery to carry out its evil designs.

In the *Malār* hymn, Guru Nanak presents his own take on violence as politically motivated. He strongly condemns the rulers and the agents of state structures for being ultimately responsible for mass killings. The three categories of people described in this hymn as deer, hawks and agents-provocateurs are actually responsible for creating a situation for state repression. The fourth category consists of 'visionary intellectuals' (*paṇḍit bīnā*) who maintain their integrity in all circumstances without shifting their positions. By practicing the discipline of the divine Name (*nām-simran*), they protect the interests of their community much in the same way as a shady tree protects people during a hot summer. Here, the metaphor of a 'tree' is significant because it is rooted, grounded, unwavering, and does not get distracted from the present moment. Therefore, the ideal persons in Guru Nanak's view are taught to persist similarly rooted, grounded, and unwavering in their meditation on the divine Name, whether they be sitting, walking, or amidst the bustle of everyday life. They live and die protecting the honor and dignity of their faith and community. In Guru Nanak's usage, the Punjabi term *pati* essentially refers to the core of a person, encompassing honor, self-respect and social standing. The Guru proclaims: "He alone truly lives in whose heart dwells the Lord. O Nanak, no one else is truly alive. If one lives in ignominy by losing one's self-respect (*pati*), all that one eats [for survival] is illegitimate" (GGS, p. 142).

Most interestingly, an entry in a copy of the Goindval volumes (*pothīs*), complied in the late 16th century, describes Guru Nanak as "Emperor Bedi protective of matters religious and temporal" (Mann 1996, p. 97). This title illuminates the unique Theo-political status of the Guru in the 16th-century Sikh community. Before he passed away in 1539, Guru Nanak appointed his disciple Laihṇā to be his

successor, by renaming him as Angad ("My own limb"). The contemporary bards, Sattā and Balvaṇḍ, have employed royal terminology to describe Guru Nanak's establishment of a divine 'kingdom' (*rāj*) at Kartarpur on the solid foundation of Truth, embellishing it with royal metaphors such as the 'creation of a castle', 'striking of a coin', and calling the ceremony of the Guru's succession the 'royal coronation'. Having installed a royal canopy over Laihṇā's head, the Guru applied the ceremonial mark to his forehead and bestowed on him the patrimony of the sword of spiritual knowledge, power and heroism to provide effective leadership to the growing Sikh community. The most astonishing act of Guru Nanak in this ceremony of 'royal coronation' was to bow down to his disciple while he was still alive (GGS, p. 966). Guru Angad (1504–1552) chastised the Mughal Emperor Humayun, when he visited the Guru at Khadur following his defeat at the hands of Sher Shah Suri at the Battle of Khanua in 1540 CE. An early narrative in the *Mahimā Prakāś Vārtak* states that as Humayun was kept standing for about 46 min (*due ghaṛī*) in the presence of the Guru, he lost his patience and attempted to lash out while the Guru was playing with children (Bajwa 2004, pp. 62–63). Guru Angad reminded the visitor: "O Mughal! Was this sword meant to be drawn against Sher Shah in the battlefield or against us now [by posing a hero to strike against the saintly people]?" (Bajwa 2004, p. 63). At the end of this verbal encounter, we find Guru Angad blessing the Mughal emperor, reassuring the now-humiliated Humayun that he will regain his lost throne in the near future (Fenech 2014, pp. 41–42). Once again, we hear the voice of Truth speaking to the power of a haughty emperor.

Further, there is contemporary evidence that a group of Brahmins living in Goindval complained against Guru Amar Das (1479–1574) to the Lahore administration (GGS, p. 306). The third Guru dispatched his son-in-law, Ram Das, to Lahore to meet with Emperor Akbar (r. 1556–1605) in order to answer grievances that Brahmins raised in the royal court. They raised objections against running a free community kitchen (*laṅgar*) at Goindval, abandoning the traditional religious and social customs and ignoring distinctions of four castes. Ram Das's simple statement that all are equal in the eyes of God pleased Akbar, who dismissed the accusations of the appellants (Bajwa 2004, pp. 76–77). The formation of a minority Sikh community was thus facing these early struggles in the face of powerful politics of Mughal authorities and hegemonic Brahminical traditions. Under these circumstances, Guru Amar Das inspired his audience to remain steadfast by practicing the discipline of meditation on the divine Name (*nām simaran*) in conjunction with selfless service (*sevā*) to fellow beings. He contrasted the "true sovereignty" of the devotees of God with the "false sovereignty" of worldly rulers: "The Lord blesses his humble devotees with sovereignty (*pātishāhī*)), fashioning the true crown upon their heads. They are always at peace, and immaculately pure; they perform service for the True Guru. By contrast, we should not call those to be kings, who die in conflict, and then enter again the cycle of reincarnation" (GGS, p. 590).

Akbar became curious about the newly emerging Sikh community. His incidental visit to meet with the third Guru, Amar Das, at Goindval in 1571 was the beginning of cordial relationship between the Sikhs and the Mughals. By that time, the institution of the community kitchen (*laṅgar*) had become a permanent feature of the Sikh Panth. The Guru made the compulsory rule of commensality: "First sit in the status-free lines to eat the common meal, and then meet with the Guru in the congregation." This striking phrase has its origins in the narrative of *Mahimā Prakāś Vārtak*, in which Guru Amar Das proclaimed that Akbar "should partake in the sacred food prepared in the community kitchen before seeking the Guru's audience" (Bajwa 2004, p. 86). The fourth Guru, Ram Das (1534–1581), provides us with a contemporary reflection on this meeting: "Kings and emperors are all created by God; they all come and bow in reverence to God's humble servant" (GGS, p. 305). On this occasion, Akbar offered a grant of revenue-free land to the Guru. Upon his refusal to accept the gift in keeping with the Sikh tradition of self-reliance, it was given to the Guru's daughter Bibi Bhani, implying that the revenue-free land went to her husband, Guru Ram Das. In order to lessen the potential for rivalry from his sons, Guru Amar Das decided to establish a new settlement for his son-in-law and successor, Guru Ram Das. The fourth Guru laid the foundation of the new town in 1577, when he inaugurated the excavation of

the large pool called Amritsar at the original site. The fifth Guru, Arjan (1563–1606), inherited this place from his father when he assumed the office of the Guru in 1581.

2.1. Establishing a Divine Kingdom at Ramdaspur

Religious communities around the world frequently critique the temporal authority of worldly rulers with the utopian idea of a divine kingdom where diverse groups of people live with peace and harmony. The reality of a divine kingdom became unmistakable in Guru Arjan's proclamation: "There is no other place like the beautiful and thickly populated Ramdaspur. The divine rule prevails in Ramdaspur due to the grace of the Guru. No tax (*jizyā*) is levied, nor any fine; there is no collector of taxes" (GGS, pp. 430, 817). The administration of the town was evidently in the hands of Guru Arjan. In a certain sense, Ramdaspur was an autonomous town in the context and framework of the Mughal rule of Emperor Akbar. Guru Arjan's claim that there was no collector of taxes at Ramdaspur points toward a reality that it came under the authority of the Guru, not under the Mughal state.

In a particularly striking composition, Guru Arjan claims to have established the rule of justice and humility (*halemī rāj*) in the town of Ramdaspur: "The merciful Lord has now ordained a commandment that none shall be domineering over others. All shall abide in peace, prosperity and justice. Thus is established the rule of justice and humility on earth" (GGS, p. 74). This text clearly indicates that Guru Arjan enacted the divine rule in actual practice in providing comfortable living to the people at Ramdaspur. It is no wonder that the early Sikhs were preoccupied with the understanding of the spiritual roots of the principles of justice, dignity and fearlessness. In fact, the idea of the divine rule of justice and humility (*halemī rāj*) occurs in Guru Arjan's lengthy composition molded on the style of Guru Nanak's preceding composition of twenty-two verses in *Sirī Rāgu*. These two hymns are remarkably interconnected in terms of important themes. For instance, Guru Nanak makes the following assertion in the nineteenth verse: "O Sovereign! You are the ultimate authority over the kings and emperors. Nanak lives by contemplating your Name" (GGS, p. 72). As an ideal, divine rule transcends and judges human rule. Discourse about rule is always centered on power and privilege, and on the rights and duties of those who have it. It involves a process much more than a place, a way of life much more than a location on particular territory. Therefore, the main focus here is not on kings but on rulers, not on kingdom but on power, not on territory but on process. In this context, Guru Arjan's idea of divine rule was related to an ethical way of life based on the principles of truth, social justice and humility taught by Guru Nanak. This life style would create the spirit of fearlessness among the contemporary Sikhs, particularly the residents of Ramdaspur, who would feel that they were directly under the protection of God, the King of all kings. No worldly power could disturb their peace of mind.

One must not underestimate the powerful appeal of Guru Arjan's verses in their socially subversive function. The common people, particularly the peasantry of the Punjab, could easily interpret their message in political terms. For the Sikhs, Guru Arjan was indeed a "true king" (*sachā patishāh*) in contrast to the false rulers of the world. His personal authority and appeal rested on his charismatic ability to embody Divine Power. His reign was marked by a number of far-reaching institutional developments. First, the construction of the Darbar Sahib (present-day "Golden Temple") amidst the sacred pool of Amritsar was the momentous achievement of his building program. It acquired prominence as the central place of Sikh worship. The founding of new towns of Tarn Taran, Sri Hargobindpur and Kartarpur (Jalandhar) in rural areas saw large number of converts from local Jat peasantry. In this context, Louis Fenech makes an interesting observation that "the construction of cultural artifacts such as buildings and cities resonating with power and authority of the Mughal darbar ["court"] and the Mughal sovereign himself as the apotheosis of the divine, refashioned to serve both the spiritual and economic needs of Guru Arjan and the growing Sikh Panth" (Fenech 2008, p. 66). Second, Guru Arjan inherited a rich and substantial scriptural corpus that he took upon himself to systematize and organize into what became the Guru Granth Sahib, the key marker of Sikh identity for generations to come. Indeed, the making of Sikh scripture was a massive editorial undertaking, which ended in

the establishment of the Adi Granth in 1604. The manuscript bearing this date is still in existence at Kartarpur, in the Jalandhar District of Punjab. That is why it is commonly known as Kartārpur Pothī ("Volume"). Third, the installation of the Sikh scripture in the Darbar Sahib in 1604 enhanced its centrality in Sikh life. As a result, the city of Ramdaspur emerged as a new "power center" in its own right. Finally, by the end of 16th century, the Sikh Panth had developed a strong sense of independent identity, which is quite evident from Guru Arjan's assertion, "We are neither Hindū nor Musalmān" (GGS, p. 1136).

The author of *Dabistan-i-Mazahib* ("The School of Religions"), a mid-17th-century Persian historian, Maubad Zulifkar Ardastani, attests that by "the reign of Guru Arjan Mal, [the Sikhs] became very numerous. Not many cities remained in the inhabited region, where the Sikhs had not settled in some number" (Grewal and Habib 2001, p. 66). The same author provides us with an important insight into the regular system of voluntary offerings collected by the *masands* ("deputies"). He does so from purely an economic angle by comparing these contributions of loyal Sikhs, *bhet* ("offering") and *nazar* ("gift"), with the *bāj* ("tribute") levied by the Mughal rule. Later theorists, however, seized upon this idea to suggest political motives in the religious work of the Sikh Gurus (Singh 2006, p. 45). To the skeptical mind all this appeared to be the stuff of sovereignty (Fenech 2008, p. 65). In fact, the growing strength of the Sikh movement attracted the unfavorable attention of the ruling authorities because of the reaction of Muslim revivalists of the Naqshbandi order in Mughal India. There is clear evidence in the compositions of Guru Arjan that a series of complaints were made against him to the functionaries of the Mughal state, giving them an excuse to watch the activities of the Sikhs. Unsurprisingly, on 4 November 1598, Emperor Akbar officially visited the Sikh court at Goindval. He listened to the devotional singing in the congregation and was greatly impressed by "the recitation of the Hindi verses that had been composed by Bābā Nānak for expounding the knowledge of God" (Singh 2006, p. 21). He acknowledged Guru Arjan's "great store of spiritual love" and the selfless service of the Sikhs (Singh 2006, p. 19). At the Guru's instance, Akbar remitted the annual revenue of the peasants of the district who had been hit hard by the failure of the monsoon. He was genuinely impressed with what he saw at Goindval and gave his explicit approval to the work done by Guru Arjan. The emperor's nod to his philanthropic work put those Mughal officials who were involved in the machinations of Prithi Chand and his followers on guard. As a result of tax remission, Guru Arjan's popularity skyrocketed in the rural peasantry of the Punjab.

The liberal policy of Emperor Akbar may have sheltered Guru Arjan and his followers for a time, but it could not remove the nefarious designs of the Guru's enemies for good. The effect of his policy of religious tolerance did not last long after his death in October 1605. As a matter of fact, his liberal approach was much despised by many of his more aggressive co-religionists, particularly the protagonists of the Naqshbandi revivalist movement (Singh 2006, p. 150). In the volatile atmosphere of Prince Khusrau's rebellion, Guru Arjan was tortured to death on 30 May 1606 by the orders of Emperor Jahangir (r. 1605–1628). Although the crowning cause of capital punishment was presented as Guru Arjan's alleged blessings to the rebel Prince Khusrau, there were other urgent religious, socio-cultural, and economic factors that contributed in the final judgment of the absolute monarch. The Mughal administrators of Lahore who had been carefully monitoring the Sikh movement for a number of years found their opportunity to finally act against the Guru. They moved swiftly to eliminate Guru Arjan and cripple the rapidly growing Sikh movement. Through their machinations, they purposefully kept the Guru's execution from public view in an attempt to absolve the state by subverting the understanding of the Sikh community.

2.2. Mounting a Non-Violent Protest March: Chauṅkī Chāṛẖnī

Guru Arjan's execution empowered his followers to stand for the ideals of truth, social justice and fearlessness more boldly. A radical reshaping of the Sikh Panth took place after his martyrdom. His son and successor, Guru Hargobind (1595–1644), signaled the formal process when he traditionally donned two swords symbolizing the spiritual (*pīrī*) as well as the temporal (*mīrī*) investiture. He also

built the Akāl Takhat ("Eternal Throne") facing the Darbār Sāhib, representing the newly assumed role of temporal authority. Under his direct leadership, the Sikh Panth took up arms to protect itself from Mughal hostility. According to Bhāī Gurdās, this new martial response was like "hedging the orchard of the Sikh faith with the hardy and thorny *kikkar* tree" (*Vār* 25:25). It was meant to achieve a balance between temporal and spiritual concerns. Thus, Guru Arjan's martyrdom became the watershed in Sikh history, contributing basically to the growth of Sikh community self-consciousness, separatism, and militancy.

A distinctive resistance movement in the form of a processional devotional singing (*chauṅkī chāṛhnī*, "mounting or marching of the *chauṅkī*") march came into being when Emperor Jahangir put the sixth Guru, Hargobind, into jail in the fort of Gwalior. During the Guru's absence from Amritsar at the time of his internment the elderly Sikh, Baba Buddha (d. 1635), started the first processional *chauṅkī* from the Akal Takhat to protest against the Mughal authorities. The author of the Persian *Dabistān-i-Mazāhib* (1640s) testifies, "*during this time the Masands and the Sikhs used to go and bow down to the wall of the fort*" (Singh 2011, p. 117). One Sikh would hold a torch (*mishāl*) of protest, leading the chanting Sikhs to Gwalior. It was the impact of such musical processions from Amritsar to Gwalior that Emperor Jahangir released Guru Hargobind in 1612 much before the completion of the actual imprisonment of twelve years. To commemorate this tradition of protest against the Mughal authorities, Baba Budha laid out a special procedure of the earliest processional *chauṅkī* with the blessings of Guru Hargobind. This public musical performance has been followed for the last four centuries and has become an integral part of non-violent Sikh protests. In fact, the modern-day *Nagar Kīrtan* ('Public Performance of Devotional Singing') parades in different cosmopolitan cities around the world are extended versions of this earlier tradition (Singh 2011, pp. 117–19).

After four skirmishes with Mughal troops, Guru Hargobind strategically withdrew with his armed retinue to Kiratpur in 1634 at the edge of Shivalik Hills in the Hindur territory of a vassal beyond the jurisdiction of the Mughal Empire. Amritsar fell into the hands of the *Miṇās* (descendants of Prithi Chand), who established a parallel seat of authority with the support of Mughal officials. Notably, Guru Hargobind designated his grandson Har Rai (1630–1661), Gurditta's younger son, as his successor before he passed away on 3 March 1644. This was done in response to Mughal interference in Sikh affairs because Dhir Mal, Gurditta's elder son, had already established a parallel seat of authority at Kartarpur in Jalandhar District with the help of a revenue-free grant given to him by Emperor Shah Jahan on 29 November 1643. With the original Kartārpur Pothī (1604) in his possession, Dhīr Mal laid claim to the office of Guru. The Mughal emperor had thought of bringing the Sikhs under control by supporting the claims of Dhīr Mal and his followers. The mainline Sikh tradition, however, continued to honor the decision of Guru Hargobind.

Guru Har Rai designated his youngest son, Har Krishan (1656–1664), to be his successor before he passed away at Kirtapur on 6 October 1661. This decision was a direct challenge to Emperor Aurangzeb (r. 1658–1707), who had kept the eldest son Ram Rai as hostage in Delhi on the assumption that Ram Rai would be the heir apparent of Guru Har Rai and could be manipulated into bringing the Sikhs under control. The emperor summoned the young Guru to Delhi through Raja Jai Singh of Amber. Anticipating that the emperor would insist that he demonstrate miraculous feats, Guru Har Krishan refused to meet with him in person. Meanwhile, an epidemic of smallpox was raging in the city of Delhi, and the Guru came out of Raja Jai Singh's bungalow to tend the sick. During the service of healing the sick, Guru Har Krishan was himself afflicted with the disease of smallpox. He made the pronouncement of designating his successor as "Baba Bakale," meaning that the next Guru would be found in the town of Bakala, in effect referring to his great-uncle Tegh Bahadur (youngest son of Guru Hargobind), who lived there in the town of Bakala at that time. Guru Har Krishan passed away on 30 March 1664, thus denying the emperor any opportunity to interfere in the designation of a rightful successor in the mainline Sikh tradition.

During the period of the ninth Guru, Tegh Bahadur (1621–1675), the increasing strength of the Sikh movement in the rural areas of the Malwa region of the Punjab once again attracted the hostility

of Mughal authorities. The Guru encouraged his followers to be fearless in their pursuit of a just society: 'He who holds none in fear, nor is afraid of anyone, is acknowledged as a man of true wisdom' (GGS, p. 1427). In doing so, Guru Tegh Bahadur posed a direct challenge to Emperor Aurangzeb who had imposed Islamic laws and taxes on non-Muslims. According to an earliest narrative, when a group of Hindu *pandits* ('scholars') from Kashmir asked for the Guru's help against Aurangzeb's oppressive measures, he agreed to do whatever was necessary to defend their rights to wear their 'sacred threads and frontal marks' (Dasam Granth/DG, p. 70). A message was sent to the emperor saying that if Guru Tegh Bahadur could be persuaded to accept Islam, the Hindus would convert as well. Accordingly, the Guru was summoned to Delhi, and when he refused to abandon his faith he was publicly executed on 11 November 1675. In a recent study on Aurangzeb, Audrey Truschke provides an imperial perspective that the emperor "had the Sikh guru Tegh Bahadur executed in 1675 for taking up arms against the Mughal state" (Truschke 2017, p. 38). Later, she acknowledges that the execution is not mentioned in any Persian texts from Aurangzeb's period but still she speculates that it happened "for causing unrest in the Punjab" (ibid., p. 54). Surely, Guru Tegh Bahadur's message of resistance against state oppression was the sufficient reason for his elimination even though there is no contemporary evidence that he took up arms against the Mughal state.

2.3. Institutionalizing the Khalsa: An Army of Warrior Saints

If the martyrdom of Guru Arjan had helped to bring the Sikh Panth together, the second martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur helped to make 'human rights and freedom of conscience' central to its identity. In this context, Wilfred Cantwell Smith has aptly remarked that "the attempt forcibly to convert the ninth Guru to an externalized, impersonal Islam clearly made an indelible impression on the martyr's nine-year-old son, Gobind, who reacted slowly but deliberately by eventually organizing the Sikh group into a distinct, formal, symbol-patterned, boundaried community" (Smith 1981, p. 191). Tradition holds that the Sikhs who were present at the scene of Guru Tegh Bahadur's execution shrank from recognition, concealing their identity for fear they might suffer a similar fate. In order to respond to this new situation, the tenth Guru, Gobind Singh (1666–1708), resolved to impose on his followers an outward form that would make them instantly recognizable. He restructured the Sikh Panth and instituted the Khalsa ("pure"), an order of loyal Sikhs bound by common identity and discipline. On Vaisakhi Day 1699 at Anandpur, Guru Gobind Singh initiated the first so-called 'Cherished Five' (*panj piare*), who formed the nucleus of the new order of the Khalsa. These five volunteers who responded to the Guru's call for loyalty, and who came from different castes and regions of India, received the initiation through a ceremony that involved sweetened water (*amrit*) stirred with a two-edged sword and sanctified by the recitation of five liturgical prayers.

Guru Gobind Singh symbolically transferred his spiritual authority to the Cherished Five when he himself received the nectar of the double-edged sword from their hands and thus became a part of the Khalsa Panth and subject to its collective will. In this way, he not only paved the way for the termination of a 'person' holding the office of Guru but also abolished the institution of the elite appointed deputies (*masands*), who were becoming increasingly disruptive. Several *masands* had refused to forward collections to the Guru, creating factionalism in the Sikh Panth. In addition, Guru Gobind Singh removed the threat posed by competing seats of authority when he declared that the Khalsa should have no dealings with the followers of Prithi Chand (*Mīṇās*), Dhir Mal (Guru Har Rai's elder brother, who established his seat at Kartarpur, Jalandhar), and Ram Rai (Guru Har Krishan's elder brother, who established his seat at Dehra Dun) (Singh 2017, p. 75). With the creation of the Khalsa, the Guru infused a new spirit among his warrior-saints, who were ready to fight against injustice and tyranny. Thus, in transforming Sikhs into a self-governing warrior group, the tenth Guru set in motion a profound change in the political and cultural fabric of the Mughal province of Punjab (Dhavan 2011, p. 3). Most instructively, his army was never to wage war for power, for gain or for personal rancor: "The Khalsa was resolutely to uphold justice and to oppose only that which is evil" (McLeod 1997, p. 105).

Following the *mīrī-pīrī* tradition of Guru Hargobind, Guru Gobind Singh assumed characteristics of a spiritual leader as well as a temporal ruler who had the specific responsibilities to protect righteousness (*dharam*). Unsurprisingly, waging battle was part of his *dharmic* responsibility. The majority of the narrative of his life is devoted to detailed description of a series of battles. Indeed, Guru Gobind Singh was an able spiritual and political leader who maintained a court at Anandpur, and who led an army in many battles throughout his life. In this context, Hardip Singh Syan makes an interesting observation that the tenth Guru had transformed his estate into something more sizable and converted himself into a local monarch: "Unlike previous Gurus, Guru Gobind Singh's power was profoundly political, and given the heightened geo-political sensitivities of late 17th-century Mughal India, it was seen as overtly threatening to Mughal authority" (Syan 2013, p. 157). The creation of the Khalsa by Guru Gobind Singh was unique in two senses: first, it invited all Sikhs to join the Order of the Khalsa regardless of their background, and second, it had a coherent vision of political sovereignty. The tenth Guru proclaimed: "The Khalsa shall rule, no enemy shall remain. All who endure suffering and privation shall be brought to the safety of the Guru's protection" (*Tanakhāh-nāmā*, cited in(McLeod 1989, p. 64). All Sikhs were encouraged to become warriors of righteousness (*dharm*) engaged in a struggle against tyranny. Thus, Guru Nanak's fundamental message of human equality, self-respect, dignity, and fearlessness found its practical expression in the lived experience of the Khalsa (Singh 2017, p. 76).

Before he passed away in 1708, Guru Gobind Singh placed the spiritual and temporal authority (*jama*) within the collective body of the Khalsa, emphasizing the corporate sovereignty of the Sikh Panth. He also closed the Sikh canon by adding a collection of the works of his father, Guru Tegh Bahadur, to the original compilation of the Adi Granth. Most significantly, he terminated the line of personal Gurus, and installed the Adi Granth as the eternal Guru for Sikhs. Thereafter, the authority of the Guru was invested both in the scripture (Guru Granth) and in the corporate community (Guru Panth). The compound term *Sarbat Khālsā* ("Entire Khālsā") originated in the 18th century to describe the temporary unity accomplished by the linking of different Sikh principalities (*misls*) for some shared purpose, such as campaigns against the armies of Mughals and Afghan invaders. Finally, in 1799, Ranjit Singh (1780–1839) succeeded in unifying the Punjab, taking control of Lahore and declaring himself Maharaja. For the next four decades, the Sikh community enjoyed more settled political conditions, and with territorial expansion as far as Peshawar in the west, people of different cultural and religious backgrounds were attracted into the fold of Sikhism. The political sovereignty in the litany "The Khalsa shall rule!" had become the destiny of the Khalsa, and it was fulfilled in the time of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. After the death of the Maharaja in 1839, however, his successors could not withstand the pressure exerted by the advancing British forces. After two Anglo–Sikh wars, in 1845 and 1849, the Sikh kingdom was annexed to the British Empire.

3. Sikhs in the British Raj (1849–1947)

With the loss of the Punjab's independence, the Sikhs were no longer the masters of their own kingdom. The introduction of the British administration into the Punjab at the time of annexation in 1849 brought profound changes in the Punjabi society. First, the colonial rulers introduced a large measure of bureaucracy and the rule of law, which established a new kind of relationship between the individual and the state. The 'paternal' rule of the early decades was eventually replaced by the 'machine rule' of laws, codes and procedures (Grewal 1990, p. 128). Second, the British introduced a worldview grounded in the secular, modernizing ideology of the Enlightenment. Third, the British sought to cosset and to control the Sikhs through the management of the Golden Temple and its functionaries (Kerr 1999, p. 153). In this context, the British even sidestepped the dictates of statutory law which required them to maintain "the separation of secular and religious matters, neutrality in the treatment of religious communities and the withdrawal from involvement in religious institutions" (ibid., p. 164). Indeed, for the alien British, the need to control the Golden Temple was the greater. Finally, they put a legal ban on carrying of weapons. This decision was meant to disarm the Khalsa who had fought valiantly against the British in two Anglo–Sikh wars in 1845 and 1849.

Here, it is instructive to closely look at Harjot Oberoi's major arguments in *The Construction of Religious Boundaries* (Oberoi 1994), relating to the socio-religious movement among the Sikhs in the colonial period based upon the ethnographic approach and a Foucauldian vision of the 'new episteme' fashioned by the Singh Sabha. For him, the Singh Sabha consisted of two components: the Sanatan and the Tat Khalsa ("Essential Khalsa"). Sanatan Sikhs accepted the authority of the Vedas and *Puranas* in addition to the Sikh scriptures, thereby believing in incarnations and the ideas of pollution and purity based upon the caste system. The Tat Khalsa, on the other hand, rejected all Hindu accretions prevalent in the Sikh society in the 19th century. Applying a social scientific method of analysis, Oberoi argues how the Tat Khalsa, the most influential segment of the Singh Sabha movement, succeeded in eradicating all forms of religious diversity at the turn of the century and in establishing uniform norms of religious orthodoxy and orthopraxy (Oberoi 1994, p. 25). As a consequence of the success of the Tat Khalsa reformers, Sikhs in the early 20th century came "to think, imagine and speak in terms of a universal community of believers united by uniform rites, symbols and scripture" (Oberoi 1988, p. 154).

In his analysis, however, Oberoi tilts the balance of evidence artificially in favor of Sanatan Sikhism. There is no doubt that some Sikhs did embrace Hindu practices in the 19th century. By projecting this backward, Oberoi seems to imply that Sikh identity was always predominantly fluid, with free mixing of Sikh and Hindu practices. This is questionable. From as early as the period of Guru Arjan, Sikhs clearly were encouraged to think of themselves as a distinct community. Not surprisingly, J. S. Grewal criticizes Oberoi's view of the Singh Sabha "as a new episteme arising out of praxis" since it precludes the "possibility of any meaningful linkages with the past" (Grewal 1997, p. 73). Further, Oberoi's division of the Singh Sabha into 'Sanatan tradition' and the 'Tat Khalsa' is problematic. There were three strands of thinking represented by three prominent individuals. First, Khem Singh Bedi of Amritsar Singh Sabha supported the centrality of the Singh identity and the significance of the Khalsa initiation, but he also stressed the idea of divine incarnations, the need for a living guru, and the indivisibility of Sikh and Hindu society. Second, Gurmukh Singh of Lahore Singh Sabha held the middle position that the activities of the ten Gurus and the Guru Granth Sahib serve as the ultimate source of Sikh belief and practice. The Singh identity was the ideal but those who had not undergone the Khalsa initiation were an indivisible part of the Sikh Panth as long as they recognized the Guru Granth Sahib as the 'Eternal Guru'. Sikhs constituted a distinct community and the question of Hindu–Sikh relationship was a redundant issue. Third, the position of Teja Singh of Bhasaur Singh Sabha was far more radical. He claimed that anyone who has not undergone the Khalsa initiation should have no place within the Sikh Panth. In his vision of 'orthodoxy', the periphery was to be simply excised, and raising the issue of Hindu–Sikh relationship was an insult to the Sikhs. In the beginning of the 20th century, "Bedi and Bhasaur were eventually sidelined" (Mann 2004, p. 63) and Gurmukh Singh's middle position of the Tat Khalsa achieved general acceptance, both in institutional and ideological terms.

The British developed their theory of the "martial races" of India during the latter part of the 19th century, in accordance with which they classified Sikhs as a martial race, thus favoring them as army recruits with the requirement of turban and Khalsa initiation. Notably, during the British Raj, the ways and means of the master discourse came to be mimicked by the native Punjabis in ultimately undercutting the colonialist agenda. The new cultural elite among the Sikhs was moving to the apex of a more homogeneous, less 'oral and popular' oriented, textually focused 'syndicated' tradition that roughly corresponded to the typologies of 'religion' furthered by the colonists. The Khalsa of the Singh Sabha reformers was both old and new. The emerging Tat Khalsa identity espoused by the dominant wing of the Singh Sabha had been forged, admittedly from the pre-existing ores, in the crucible of colonial encounter. In addition to the economic and military policy of the British, there were other elements, which meshed together to produce a great impact on the emerging Sikh identity. These additional elements in the larger colonial context were new patterns of administration, a new technology, a fresh approach to education, the entry of Christian missionaries, and the modernist perspective based on the scientific paradigm of the Enlightenment. All these factors produced a kind

of neo-Sikhism, characterized by a largely successful set of redefinitions in the context of the notions of modernity and religious identity imposed by the dominant ideology of the colonial power closely associated with Victorian Christianity. The Singh Sabha ideologues employed Protestant categories of Christian missionaries to redefine Sikh concepts. As such, modern Sikhism became a well-defined 'system' based on a unified tradition and the Tat Khalsa understanding of Sikh identity became the norm of orthodoxy. In a recent study, Arvind-Pal Mandair described the impact of colonial rule on the Sikh tradition as follows: "In the process of projecting themselves as a legitimate body in the public sphere governed by British law, the earlier principle of heteronomic sovereignty was overlain, and to some extent displaced, by modernist principle of autonomic sovereignty which was essential for converting the Panth into a nationalized community (or *qaum*) characterized by the notion of a people with its proper religion (Sikh*ism*), their own language (Punjabi) and a geographical territory or homeland they could call their own (Punjab)"(Mandair 2015, p. 119).

In the beginning of the 20th century, the two leading wings of the Singh Sabha reformers from Lahore and Amritsar merged into one with the establishment of Chief Khalsa Diwan (CKD) in 1902, mainly due to the need for greater political coordination in the face of a more aggressive adversary, the Arya Samaj, as the principal agent of political Hinduism in Punjab. The CKD's main achievement was to get an important constitutional change in the form of legal recognition of the distinctive Sikh wedding ritual in the Anand Marriage Act of 1909. However, the soft 'constitutional politics' of the urban elites of the CKD was soon replaced by the 'politics of agitation' followed by the more robust Akalis from the rural backgrounds. In the 1920s, the Akalis helped to re-establish direct Khalsa control of the major historical gurdwaras, many of which had fallen into the hands of corrupt *mahants* ('custodians') supported by the British. The Akali movement began in 1920 as a non-violent agitation by constituting a representative body of the Sikhs known as the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC: "Chief Management Committee of Sikh Shrines"). This agitation is sometimes described as the "Third Sikh War" of 1920–1925, although it is better known as the Gurdwara Reform Movement. The Tat Khalsa reformers demanded control of Sikh shrines in opposition to the British supported *mahants* and *pujārīs* ('priests'). The last gasp effort of the British to manipulate the Sikhs via management of the Golden Temple and its priests proved an ignoble failure in 1919 when General Dyer's invited visit to the Temple failed to pacify the Sikhs. The Akali answer was given in the non-violent agitations over the *Nankana Tragedy, Keys Affair*, at *Guru-ka-Bagh*, at *Jaito*, and elsewhere:

3.1. Nankana Tragedy

An attempt to secure Gurdwara Nankana Sahib, the richest of all the gurdwaras, liberated from a notorious *mahant* was made on 20 February 1921. All the 150-*jatha* members were butchered and burnt alive by the *mahant*'s hired goons. The next day, when 2200 Sikhs marched to liberate the gurdwara, the authorities relented, and the Commissioner of Lahore handed over the keys to the SGPC President. The SGPC did not co-operate in the inquiry and prosecution of the perpetrators of this horrible crime on M. K. Gandhi's appeal, resulting in mild punishments to the *mahant* and his hired ruffians (Singh 2014, p. 331).

3.2. Keys' Affair

Another Akali agitation began when Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar took away the keys of Golden Temple's treasury from Sunder Singh Ramgarhia, government-appointed *Sarbrah* ("Manager") and Vice-President of the SGPC on 7 November 1921. SGPC officials and other Sikhs were arrested and prosecuted for discussing the prohibited "Keys' Affair". Non-violent Sikh agitation and non-co-operation followed by the SGPC call to completely boycott the Prince of Wales' visit to India compelled the government to hand over the keys to the SGPC President and release Sikhs jailed during agitation on 11 January 1922. The "First decisive battle for India's freedom," in M. K. Gandhi's words, was thus "won" (Singh 2014, p. 331).

3.3. Guru-Ka-Bagh Morcha

This agitation began in August 1922. The Sikhs were arrested for cutting wood from gurdwara land on the basis of a backdated complaint obtained by the authorities from the *mahant* who had already surrendered the gurdwara and attached property to the SGPC. The SGPC sent a *jatha* daily under the oath of non-violence from the Akal Takht. The *jatha* members and other volunteers were brutally beaten to unconscious. The police atrocities on non-violent Akalis won sympathy and admiration for them at the national and international level. Failing to browbeat the struggle, the government extricated itself out and released all the 5605 persons including 35 SGPC members in November 1922 (Singh 2014, p. 331).

3.4. Jaito Morcha

The SGPC passed a resolution in August 1923 to sympathize with the Maharaja of Nabha who was compelled to abdicate by the government. Relations with authorities were strained further when the police disrupted an *Akhaṇḍ Pāṭh* ("continuous reading") of Guru Granth Sahib at Jaito. To assert the sanctity of the ritual, *jathas* of 25 Sikhs each were sent from Akal Takht after administering an oath of non-violence. They were brutally beaten on their entry in Nabha state and left in far-flung areas (Singh 2014, p. 331).

The Akali campaign was finally terminated by the drafting and passing of the Sikh Gurdwaras Act of 1925, under which control of all gurdwaras passed to the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC). The Akalis were the forerunners of the modern political party known as the Akali Dal ('army of the immortal'). Control of the gurdwaras gave the SGPC enormous political and economic influence. In the course of time, the SGPC became the 'authoritative voice' of the Sikhs. As a democratic institution, it represented the majority Sikh opinion and provided the Akalis political muscle in a dangerously factionalized Punjab. The gurdwaras as autonomous Sikh spaces became powerful symbols of Sikh sovereignty and encouraged Sikhs to proclaim a separate national identity (*qaum*). However, Akalis did not define this nationhood in exclusive terms, but rather emphasized its place within the community of nations that constituted Indian political milieu. However, the Indian National Congress (INC) made a transition from communitarian nationalism advocated by such leaders as M. K. Gandhi to a secular nationalism, thereby redefining itself in terms of Western European secularism, which recognized political representation only on the basis of the separation of religion from the secular state (Mandair 2013, pp. 96–97; Mandair 2014, p. 79). The INC's privileging of secular nationalism undercut Sikh aspirations for political autonomy. In April 1940, Vir Singh Bhatti of Ludhiana wrote a pamphlet demanding "Khalistan" as a buffer state between India and "Pakistan" to oppose the "Pakistan Resolution" of the Muslim League. The Akalis, however, rejected this idea on the grounds that it was a theocratic model. They were looking for alternatives to buttress their claims for a measure of self-determination.

As the specter of partition was on the horizon of Indian politics in 1942, the mission of Stafford Cripps appeared to concede the demand of Pakistan in principle. The precarious situation of the Sikhs in the Punjab became obvious because of their thin demographic distribution over the province. They put forward the "Azad Punjab Scheme", which the Akalis popularized for about two years as an alternative to Cripps Proposals. For the Sikhs, a separate Sikh state or Khalistan would be synonymous with an area where no single community will be in absolute majority. They invoked property and religious/historical associations as the criteria of partition and talked of "Sikhistan" with the option to join either Hindustan or Pakistan to extort the largest possible concessions in terms of territory. In this context, G.E.B. Abell wrote a confidential document on 5 June 1946: "If the Sikhs raise the question of a separate Sikh state such as KHALISTAN, the answer is that it would have been quite impossible for the Cabinet Mission to consider such a scheme in view of the fact that the Sikhs would be a small minority in every area of the districts which it had been proposed to include in such a territory" (India Office Library, London, File R/3/1/132, folio 51; cited in Nahal 2011, p. 140). Under these circumstances, Jawaharlal Nehru gave a solemn assurance in 1946 that there was nothing objectionable in the Sikhs

having an area demarcated in North West of India, where they could "enjoy glow of freedom." With the largest proportion of the Sikhs opting for India in 1947, the "East Punjab" became, in a sense, a gift of the Akalis to the Indian Union (Grewal 1990, pp. 178–80).

4. Sikhs in Post-Colonial India (1947–Present)

In 1947, the British withdrew from India and the subcontinent was partitioned to create two independent republics of India and Pakistan. Partition was especially hard for the Sikhs because it split the Punjab into two. Most of the 2.5 million Sikhs living on the Pakistani side fled as refugees; though many settled in the new Indian state of Punjab, some moved on to major cities elsewhere in India. Rehabilitation and settlement resulted in a significant change in the demographic pattern in the Punjab. In 1951 the Sikhs formed about 35 percent of total population of the state, while the Hindus represented the majority with over 62 per cent. After partition, the Sikh members of the Constituent Assembly refused to sign the draft constitution to be adopted by the people of India on 26 January 1950. They resented the fact that the Constitution of India did not recognize the independent identity of the Sikhs and failed to establish a separate personal law for them. This was hardly an auspicious beginning for the Sikhs in post-independence India. The Congress government did not honor the solemn promises given to ensure Sikh self-determination before independence. The Sikhs also resented that all state boundaries in the new Indian union except those of the Punjab were redrawn based on the mother tongue of the majority of residents. Thus began the Sikh struggle for Punjabi *Sūbā* ("Province") in the 1950s and early 1960s.

4.1. Punjabi Sūbā Agitation

As a minority community, the Akalis realized that any politics based on religious identity will not succeed. For them, the only way forward in the political sphere was to raise the issue of Punjabi language spoken by both Sikhs and Hindus in the Punjab as the marker of their identity. They asserted that the demand for a linguistic state was democratic, secular, and beneficial to both Sikhs and non-Sikhs alike. But the urban Hindus led by the Jan Sangh ("People's Organization" with its Arya Samaj leanings) feared that this demand was only a ruse for creating a state with Sikh majority. Thus, the first two decades after the partition were marked with Punjabi *Sūbā* ("Province") agitation of the Akalis, resulting in the heightened political rivalries between the Akali Dal and the ruling Congress Party. More than 50,000 Sikhs went to jail in this non-violent movement. It was only after the major contribution of the Sikhs in the Indo-Pakistan war of 1965 that the central government became receptive to the Akali demand. The demographic pattern changed with the creation of a 'Punjabi Province' on 1 November 1966 as the result of the reorganization of the state into the Punjab and Haryana on linguistic grounds. The Sikhs formed the majority with over 62 percent in the new Punjab state. Eventually, the Akali Dal was able to wrest political power in the Punjab with the help of the erstwhile Jan Sangh and other allies. Of course, the central government at New Delhi would frequently topple their ministry to bring the Congress rule back in the state (Singh 2014, p. 30).

4.2. The Anandpur Sahib Resolution (ASR)

A sense of injustice and discrimination dawned upon the Akalis when many Punjabi villages were kept out of the Punjab at the time of reorganization of the state. The central government made the new capital of Chandigarh a union territory to be shared by both the Punjab and Haryana and kept complete control over river-waters, irrigation projects and power in Punjab. Nevertheless, the 'green revolution' of 1960s and 1970s made the Punjab the breadbasket of India. In 1973, the main political party of the Sikhs, the Akali Dal, passed the Anandpur Sahib Resolution (ASR), demanding increased autonomy for all the states of India. Over the following years, relations with the Indian government became increasingly strained as a result. The ASR for more autonomy for all Indian states afforded Prime Minister Indira Gandhi the opportunity to depict the Akali Dal as 'separatist' organization and to present herself as India's savior in much the same way as Jawahar Lal Nehru had earlier branded the

demand for a Punjabi *Sūbā* as 'communal'. Although the demands of the ASR were primarily secular, the language used to articulate those demands enabled Indira Gandhi and the Punjab Congress Party to interpret it as a religiously inspired secessionist document (Shani 2008, p. 53). The most controversial wording of "the pre-eminence of the 'voice of Khalsa' in the Panth" in the ASR sub-preamble gave credence to more sectarian elements within internal Sikh politics. Using the political strategy of accusations of treason by putting the Akali Dal in the 'secessionist' trap, Indira Gandhi wanted to consolidate her power.

4.3. Akali Protest against National Emergency

When Indira Gandhi was unseated by the verdict of Allahabad High Court, she immediately declared a state of emergency and the suspension of parliamentary democracy in June 1975. Interestingly, the Akali Dal was the most successful regional party in India, which opposed the promulgation of the draconian Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA), giving the police the power to arrest and to detain people without trial. The Congress party was desperate to break up the formidable Akali Dal, which had sent 40,000 volunteers to court arrest against the emergency. It was, therefore, looking for someone who could challenge and put an end to the traditional Akali hegemony over Sikh affairs. Irritated by the Sikh response, Indira Gandhi started to directly intervene in the Sikh 'political system' (Shani 2008, p. 53). The Congress party promoted Sant Kartar Singh Khalsa who led the largest procession in Delhi to observe the 300th anniversary of Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom, while the Akali leaders were in jail. Unfortunately, he died in a road accident on 16 August 1977. Before his death, he named Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale as his successor who was formally elected at a *bhog* ('completion' of a continuous reading of the Guru Granth Sahib) ceremony at Mehta Chowk on 25 August 1977. When the emergency was lifted in 1977, Indira Gandhi's Congress was completely routed in parliament elections, bringing a coalition government of Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) for the first time. The Akali Dal came to power in the Punjab and joined the government at the center as a coalition partner (Singh 2016, p. 186).

4.4. Dharam Yudh Morchā ("Agitation of Righteous War")

As a result of the Nirankari–Sikh clash in Amritsar in 1978, Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale arrived on the central stage of political scene. In the following year, he was promoted and supported by the Congress in SGPC elections, although his Dal Khalsa party won only four seats. To a certain extent, this initial alliance of Congress with Bhindranwale was fruitful, as the Akali administration lost control of the state government in the 1980 elections. Indira Gandhi's Congress also won mid-term elections at the center on the slogan of 'unity and integrity' of India. However, Bhindranwale proved to be what Shani has termed a 'Lion of the Punjab' that Indira Gandhi could not tame (Shani 2008, p. 55). The assassination of Lala Jagat Narain in September 1981 pointed to Bhindranwale as a possible suspect. Having failed to arrest him at Chando Kalan in Haryana, the Punjab Police set fire to his vans and burnt Bhindranwale's sermons and several copies of the Gurū Granth Sāhib. This was an affront to Bhindranwale's sensibilities. He voluntarily offered himself for arrest at Mehta Chowk on 20 September 1981. After intensive investigation, he was released because of lack of evidence. This resulted in the meteoric rise of the charisma of Bhindranwale who dissociated himself from the Congress party, demonstrating that he was his own man. Subsequently, he moved to Guru Nanak Nivas in the Golden Temple Complex to join hands with the Akalis in the 'agitation of righteous war' (*dharam yudh morchā*) against the central government in 1982. He repeatedly exhorted his followers that 'an armed Sikh should not kill the unarmed' (Das 1995, p. 132). About 30,000 Sikhs took oath at the Akal Takhat to court arrest as part of this ongoing struggle. Two more batches of Akali *Jathas*, making a total of 100,000 volunteers, courted arrest on 27 April and 12 May 1983 (Singh 2016, p. 186).

Indira Gandhi sought to meet the Akali 'threat' to India's territorial integrity by further encouraging its separatist tendencies in an attempt to split the movement and subsequently crush it (Shani 2008, p. 55). As part of this strategy, a wedge between the Hindus and the Sikhs in the

Punjab was to be created. The undercover agents of 'Third Agency' posing as armed 'Sikh militants' massacred Hindu passengers in a hijacked bus going to New Delhi in 1983 (Sidhu 2014). Bhindranwale and Akali leaders condemned this horrible event alike. The center imposed the President's rule in October 1983. Undoubtedly, the imposition of President's rule marked the beginning of a resort to what Gurharpal Singh has termed 'violent control' which exposed the limitations of Indira Gandhi's variation of her father's strategy of 'hegemonic control'. Accordingly, the Nehruvian approach consisted of 'disarticulating Sikh ethno-nationalism through accommodation, co-option, symbolic agreements, and subsequently, non-implementation of such agreements'. Indira Gandhi's 'innovations included a more overt use of violent control mechanisms with a search for an alternative hegemonizing ideology in Hindu revivalism' (Singh 2000, p. 110).

Indian media gave excessive coverage to Bhindranwale, to the extent that his presence soon overshadowed that of the Akalis. By late 1983, he had grown powerful enough to challenge them directly by moving into the Akal Takhat accompanied by militant organizations such as All India Sikh Student Federation led by Amrik Singh, and the Babbar Khalsa. Once lodged into the Akal Takhat, as Mandair argues, these organizations began to accumulate weapons in an attempt to counter the brutalities of the Punjab police and Hindu fundamentalists: "This was done under the watchful eye of the authorities who made no attempt to stop stockpiling of weapons, leading many to speculate that the situation had been carefully controlled by intelligence agencies as part of a bigger plan" (Mandair 2013, p. 102). This bigger plan was revealed from the release of confidential documents [dated 6, 14, 23 February 1984]—how UK Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, sent SAS ('Special Air Service', a unit of British Army that undertook a number of roles including covert reconnaissance, counter terrorism, direct action, and human intelligence gathering) to advise Indira Gandhi on Indian army plans "for the removal of dissident Sikhs from the Golden Temple" months before the disastrous raid on Amritsar (Singh 2016, pp. 175–76).

By neatly conflating the image of Bhindranwale as the arch 'Sikh terrorist' with the 'Punjab problem', 'Khalistan' and the 'Hindu–Sikh conflict', the whole Sikh community came to be perceived as the enemy within, ready at any moment to collude with the 'foreign hand' of India's arch enemy and neighbor, Pakistan (Mandair 2013, pp. 102–3). It provided a pretext for Indira Gandhi to send the Indian army to attack the Golden Temple Complex on 3 June 1984, on a Sikh holiday when a large number of devotees were commemorating Guru Arjan's martyrdom. The assault that followed—code-named 'Operation Blue Star'—resulted in the deaths of more than 4000 people, including Bhindranwale, as well as the destruction of the Akal Takhat and severe damage to the Golden Temple itself. A few months later, on 31 October 1984, her own Sikh bodyguards assassinated Indira Gandhi. For several days, unchecked Hindu mobs in Delhi and elsewhere killed thousands of Sikhs. As a consequence of these events, 1984 became a turning point in the history of modern Sikhism, precipitating an identity crisis within the Sikh Panth. According to Mark Juergensmeyer, the following decade saw the Sikh religious rebellion marked by bloody encounters between militant Sikhs and the armed forces of the secular state of India (Juergensmeyer 2008, p. 115). Although he justifies his central argument that religion has a peculiar tendency to exacerbate violence, he confounds the distinction between religious and secular violence by his statements like "the secular is a sort of advanced form of religion" (Juergensmeyer 2008, p. 23) and "secular nationalism is 'a religion'" (Juergensmeyer 1993, p. 15). Due to the rise of religious violence in the contemporary world, he maintains that even if religion is not the problem, it is still problematic. Accordingly, religion is often not the cause of conflict, but exacerbates already existing conflicts.

4.5. Declaration of Independent Sikh State by the Sarbat Khalsa

The attack on the Golden Temple Complex and thirty-six other gurdwaras in the Punjab simultaneously, and the Sikh pogroms in Delhi and other parts of India gave rise to the belief among many Sikhs that only an independent Sikh state could safeguard their sovereignty. Dispersed militant groups quickly began a war of 'national self-determination'. They assassinated the Akali

Leader Sant Harchand Singh Longowal shortly after he had signed a 'peace accord' with the Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. This effectively made the Akali leaders irrelevant as Sikh politics began to be dictated by the militant groups. In April 1986, a specially convened global meeting of Sikhs (*Sarbat Khalsa*) was held at the Akal Takhat on Vaisakhi Day in which 80,000 Sikhs participated. They formally passed a resolution of an independent Sikh state, *Khalistan*, a declaration that concretized the idea of a Sikh nation (*qaum*) that had been in the making for almost a century, albeit an imagined nation that was in search of statehood (Mandair 2013, p. 103).

Earlier, the idea of Khalistan was floated as part of the strategy to break the Akali hegemony on Sikh politics. It began with a half-page advertisement in the *New York Times* on 12 October 1971 by Dr Jagjit Singh Chauhan (1927–2007), a former Finance Minister in the Punjab government led by Chief Minister Lachhman Singh Gill, who headed a minority breakaway group of the Akali Dal supported by Congress. Chauhan was a 'hawkish person' who became the self-proclaimed president of the Khalistan Council, asserting that Sikhs were a 'religious, ethnic, and cultural entity, distinct from Hindus that rule India'. A 'nation in our own right,' Sikhs have 'endured persecution and endless suffering at the hands of an intolerant, mercenary majority that rules India—the Hindus' (New York Times, 12 October 1971). Unsurprisingly, functionaries of militant groups in the Sikh diaspora largely financed the armed struggle for Khalistan, especially in Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States. The Indian government reacted to the *Sarbat Khalsa* resolution of Khalistan by implementing a politics of 'violent control' that further undermined the Akali position and unleashed a vicious counter-insurgency targeting the militant groups throughout Punjab. Conservative estimates suggest that more than 80,000 people (mostly Sikhs, along with some Hindus and others) lost their lives in the Punjab during the decade from 1982 to 1992 (Mandair 2013, p. 104).

4.6. Current Issues

The physical elimination of Sikh militants through staged police encounters and military operations allowed the previously discredited moderate faction under the leadership of the former Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal (b. 1927) to reassert control over the decimated Akali movement and rekindle their anti-Congress alliance with Hindu nationalists (Shani 2008, p. 73). For political purposes, Badal pushed the Akali Dal towards Punjabi rather than Panthic identity. The party realized that it could not secure a share of state power without the support of Hindu electorates. Even after securing a majority of its own in the assembly elections of 1997, the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) chose to form a coalition government with the BJP. Since then, their coalition has been based upon urban-rural collaboration "as the support base of the SAD is predominantly rural and that of BJP urban" (Narang 2014, p. 345). The SAD has remained the only political choice for the Sikhs, making Parkash Singh Badal the Chief Minister of the Punjab thrice (1997–2002, 2007–2012 and 2012–2017) after 1984. Earlier, he became the Chief Minister of the Punjab twice (1970–1971 and 1977–1980) but was not allowed to complete his term of five years by the central government. It is no wonder that Badal has maintained complete familial control over the party by removing his vocal opponents tactically through power play.

The complexity of the Sikh situation in India, as Gurinder Singh Mann argues, is underscored by the fact that the top positions within the country, including those of the prime minister, the chief of the Indian army, and chief of the Indian supreme court have been occupied by the Sikhs such as Manmohan Singh (Prime Minister of India, 2004–2014); Joginder Jaswant Singh (chief of the army, 2005–2007); Bikram Singh (chief of the army, 2012–2014), and Jagdish Singh Khehar (chief justice, Supreme Court of India, 2017–2018). He asserts that the Sikh Panth has made peace with its destiny as one of the many communities within the contemporary Indian state. Yet, one has to notice the inauguration of a memorial dedicated to "Sant Giani Jarnail Singh Ji Khalsa Bhindranwale and all other martyrs of the 1984" next to the Akal Takhat in 2012 (Mann 2017, p. 114). It is true that a considerable mythology gathered around Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale during his lifetime. His death during Indian army's assault on the Golden Temple in June 1984 assured that he would always be remembered as a great hero and martyr of the Sikh Panth.

During the SAD-BJP rule in the Punjab, a series of cases of desecration of the sacred scripture of the Sikhs took place, beginning with the incident of 110 torn pages of the Guru Granth Sahib found early in the morning of 12 October 2015 at Bargari in Fridkot district. This shocking incident was followed by subsequent protests throughout Punjab. During the early morning hours of 14 October 2015, two Sikh protesters were shot dead by the police at Behbal Kalan as the protesters had turned violent, setting a police vehicle on fire. The Sikhs around the world condemned the sacrilegious incidents. On 10 November 2015, a huge gathering of the *Sarbat Khalsa* at Gurdwara Baba Naudh Singh passed resolutions condemning the Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal for his failure to arrest the culprits. On 20 November 2015, the Punjab Cabinet proposed to increase the penalty for sacrilege from three years in prison to life imprisonment. The bill was passed on 22 March 2016. However, the real fallout of Bargari sacrilege and Behlbal Kalan firing was the crushing defeat of SAD in the 2017 assembly elections, giving a large majority of 77 seats to Congress. The Akalis won only 18 seats while the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) managed to win 20 seats.

Much like the Nirankari–Sikh clash of 1978, the Congress staged a comeback by playing with the religious sentiments of the people of Punjab. Even as SAD appears to be on slippery ground and the Badals are facing a tough time, there is no clear alternative to them, as anti-Badal groups among the Sikhs remain completely fragmented. The most recent non-violent protest at Bargari (1 June 2018–9 December 2018) emerged as a rallying point for Sikhs and it was expected that it could present a political alternative. However, the way the agitation (*morcha*) was lifted without giving any future roadmap only added to the fluidity in the Panthic space (Singh 2019). Moreover, Dhian Singh Mand, a radical of yesteryear and the leader of Bargari Morcha, whose popularity skyrocketed during the agitation, was battling in late 2018 and early 2019 for political relevance because he sabotaged the movement through his backdoor maneuvering with the Congress government.

5. Conclusions

The intersection between religion and politics has always been an integral part of the dynamics in the evolution of the Sikh tradition. The seeds of sovereignty sown by Guru Nanak flowered in the form of an ideology of *mīrī-pīrī* for a new religious-political dispensation. As such, what was latent became manifest, and what became manifest awakened the Mughal authorities to a formidable challenge in the thrust of the growing Sikh power (Ahluwalia 1983, p. 144). In the beginning of the 19th century, Rattan Singh Bhangu presented in his *Sri Guru Panth Prakash* (1810s) the political mission of the Sikh Panth as an indivisible part of its worldview. In his conversations with Captain Murray who was charged with preparing the history of the Sikhs, Bhangu stressed the point that the Sikh Panth had always "preserved the right to sovereignty" (*ham rākhat pātishāhī dāavā*). He asserted that Baba Nanak was the "master of both spiritual and temporal matters, but in his grace gave the political power to Mir Babur (1483–1530), the founder of the Mughal dynasty" (Dhillon 2004, p. 263). He further claimed that three generations later, Babur's descendants began to misuse their power—the execution of Guru Arjan, and later that of Guru Tegh Bahadur being the concrete examples of this—and forfeited their right to rule as a result of their misdeeds. Guru Gobind Singh decided to "elevate the Sikhs" to the position of rulers and assigned them a visible identity by ordering them to wear their hair uncut and bear weaponry (Mann 2017, p. 117). Thus, the constant recitation of the litany "*Khalsa shall Rule!*" in the congregational prayer has shaped the perceptions of the Sikhs at different historical junctures. They have invoked the 18th-century traditions of *Sarbat Khalsa*, heroism, defiance, loyalty and martyrdom in their present-day struggles. What counts is history as a people actually understand it in their living experience, and for most Sikhs that history dwells in the present as well as in the past (McLeod 2000, p. 88).

One recurring theme in the process of Sikh formations has been 'interference' in Sikh affairs by the state, whether it was the Mughal regime or the British Raj or even the Government of India. Most recently, the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) has warned its ally BJP against interference in Sikh religious affairs. It strongly objected to an amendment to Section 11 of Sri Hazur Sahib Management Act, which allows the government to elect gurdwara management chief. Even though the BJP claimed no

attempts were being made to "dilute" Sikh shrines, the Akalis remained defiant. In a series of tweets, SAD spokesperson Manjinder Singh Sirsa accused the BJP of meddling in the affairs of gurdwaras by trying to install its own persons in gurdwara managements: "We can sacrifice the alliance but cannot tolerate interference in the religious affairs of the community." Sikh minorities across the world are feeling agitated over attempts by the BJP to try and interfere in Gurdwara Patna Sahib. We stopped that by petitioning BJP chief Amit Shah. Now attempts are being made by the BJP-led Maharashtra Government to install their own person as head of the board of Gurdwara Takht Hazur Sahib, Nanded. "This cannot be tolerated. Let the BJP be warned. For us MLA/MP posts are not important. For us, the service of the community is important. If they don't stop meddling in our religious affairs, we will be forced to take the extreme step," Sirsa warned in a video message (*The Tribune* 2019, 31 January 2019). A truce has finally been called between the warring BJP and SAD, after a meeting between BJP president Amit Shah and the Akali Dal president Sukhbir Singh Badal in Delhi. Both the Akali Dal and BJP confirmed that the presidents of the two parties met for almost two hours. During this meeting, Shah is said to have assured Sukhbir that the amendment made in the Act would be withdrawn (Khanna 2019).

In the 20th century, modern governments have continuously redefined the religious-secular distinctions for the purpose of classifying institutions, practices and people as either "religious" or "non-religious." By doing so, the state actors have been "able to redefine and monopolize the meaning of sovereignty, thereby divesting Sikhs of access to their own forms of sovereign consciousness in their enunciations" (Mandair 2015, p. 140). For instance, the original 1950 text of the preamble to the Constitution of India used only the words "sovereign democratic republic." The addition of the terms "socialist" and "secular" came by way of the forty-second amendment to the Constitution Act of 1976, enacted during the national emergency proclaimed by Indira Gandhi from June 1975 through January of 1977 (Larson 1995, p. 10). This was consciously done to promote the Nehruvian model of the religion–secularism divide based upon the modernist assumptions of the West. Unsurprisingly, right-wing Hindus have strongly criticized it as pseudo-secularism.

The highly contentious Article 25 (2)[b] of the Indian Constitution states that "reference to Hindus shall be construed as including a reference to persons professing the Sikh, Jaina or Buddhist religion, and the reference to Hindu institutions shall be construed accordingly." The legal net of 'Hinduism' is cast very widely in the Constitution of India in such a way that it raises the fundamental problem of defining 'Hinduism'. Sikh resentment resurfaced during the 1980s when Akali leader Parkash Singh Badal publicly burned a copy of Article 25 in New Delhi. Both Sikh and Hindu politicians have used popular interpretations of constitutional wording for their own purposes in ensuing confrontation. Therefore, to remove this misunderstanding, the National Commission to Review the Constitution headed by the former Chief Justice of India, Justice M.N. Venkatachaliah, made the following recommendation: "The commission, without going into the larger issue on which the contention is based, is of the opinion that the purpose of the representations would be served if Explanation II to Article 25 is omitted and sub-clause (b) of clause (2) of that article is reworded as follows—(b) "providing for social welfare and reform or throwing open of Hindu, Sikh, Jain or Buddhist religious institutions of a public character to all classes and sections of these religions" (Ramachandran 2002, The Tribune, 3 April 2002). When this amendment to Article 25 is carried out, the Indian Constitution will duly recognize the distinct and independent identity of Sikhism.

One of the significant consequences of contemporary globalization has been to sever the connections between the state—a coercive apparatus of governance defined in terms of its monopoly over organized violence—and the nation—an 'imagined political community' (Anderson 1991)—to the point where 'many national projects today no longer involve an aspiration to acquire their own sovereign state' (Scholte 2005, p. 228). Accordingly, the de-territorialization of nationalism has created a space for the assertion of 'multiple and overlapping sovereignties' (Inayatullah and Blaney 2004). Thus, sovereignty is no longer seen as the absolute and exclusive attribute of territorially demarcated nation-states, but as plural and mobile. Consequently, Shani argues, it may be possible for the Khalsa Panth to escape the long shadow of territoriality cast by 'the myth of Westphalia' and reclaim the sovereignty invested in

it by Guru Gobind Singh at Anandpur in 1699 without the establishment of Khalistan (Shani 2014, pp. 279–80; Shani 2008, pp. 128–51). Shani's arguments make sense in a global framework based upon the universality of Sikh values. They may not appeal to a fringe group of the Sikhs (whether in the Punjab or in the diaspora) who are still involved in raising the slogan of 'Khalistan' (Singh 2016, pp. 182–83).

Sikh resistance to brutal state structures has always been formidable. When the Akal Takhat, the seat of temporal authority and political power of the Sikhs, was destroyed during Operation Blue Star in 1984, the Government of India swiftly rebuilt it to pacify the Sikhs. The Sikh Panth did not accept the government-built Akal Takhat, and they razed it to the ground and rebuilt it with their own resources. This action was simply meant to preserve their sovereign consciousness. The Punjab crisis was specifically created by the government agencies that acted as 'extended arms' of state machinery to carry out its evil designs. In modern parlance, it is known as 'penetration strategy': "You stand for separation of religion and politics; encourage use of religion in a certain community for political purposes; and then take action against the community for mixing religion and politics" (Grewal 1998, p. 101). In this context, Virginia Van Dyke (2009) has recently provided a summary of competing narratives of the Punjab crisis. The dominant narrative told by the Akali Dal and supported by many academic and journalistic sources focuses on the malfeasance and vindictiveness of the state, more specifically the Congress Party and Indira Gandhi herself. In this narrative, the rise of a militant movement was a creation of Congress in 1978 to successfully destabilize the Parkash Singh Badal government, leading to nearly two decades of strife. In order to defeat the nefarious designs of Congress, so goes the narrative, there is a need for the coalition between the BJP and the Akalis to preserve harmony and reassure the populace of continued peace. This coalition is also necessary in changing the image of the Sikhs as anti-national. In contrast to the above view, there are other narratives that focus on the desire of the Sikhs for autonomy or independence. And there are also opposing viewpoints to the argument that the coalition between the Akali Dal and the BJP is a statesman-like inter-communal alliance to preserve the peace. According to these alternative voices, including from those few and dwindling number of Akalis who do not belong to the Badal faction, the alliance with BJP is completely self-serving on the part of the BJP and Badal and his supporters. These voices are relatively muted due to the widespread desire for peace, along with structural changes that support the main Akali faction's position (Dyke 2009, p. 126).

However, there is still another narrative, one that deserves much more attention than it has received to date, namely a narrative highlighting the ongoing *non-violent* dimension of Sikh 'militancy'. The representation of Sikhs and Sikhism in violent and militant images has been pivotal in popular understandings of Sikhism since colonial times. Sikh history is indeed replete with the valor of the Sikh warrior in battle. However, there is less attention to the Sikh warrior in equally and perhaps more demanding non-violent actions. For instance, Paul Wallace (2011) makes the point that the Sikhs are not essentially violent but militant where 'militancy' does not mean violence in actions and reactions alone, but also an aggressive and passionate stand for the cause of their religion and the Gurus. Through a study of the development of non-violent militancy, Wallace argues that public demonstrations and political demands through non-violent means have been more successful than violent ones. Three case studies (of the Gurdwara Reform movement from 1920–1925, the Punjabi Suba ('Province') movement from 1947–1966, and movement against the emergency imposed by the Prime Minister Indira Gandhi from 1975–1977) highlight the strengths of non-violent struggles and those of the actors within the Akali Dal. The violence during the 1980s in the Punjab, Wallace argues, is now finding ways of closure through non-violent democratic means, moving away from 'anti-centrism' to 'cooperative federalism'. Conflict resolution can be found through measures of democratic process and accommodating the former militants in a peaceful manner, along with initiating transparency and justice through the state structure (Wallace 2011, pp. 85–101).

In sum, the Sikh life-world intends to overcome the frequently encountered 'religious'/'secular', 'private'/'public' and 'belief'/'practice' binaries of 'Western' traditions. In this context, Ivan Strenski has

made an important observation that "religion can be both public and a player in the game of political power, where the conventional clichéd assumptions about religion being this so-called 'spiritual' and internal reality do not always square with facts" (Strenski 2010, p. 154). It is no wonder that all the public–private, religion–politics, and church–state dichotomies have come under the powerful critique of postmodern and post-colonial studies. It has been forcefully argued that such dichotomies, rather than describing reality as it is, justify a certain configuration of power.

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Article

Je Suis Charlie or the Fragility of the Republican Sacred: On January 11th, 2015 and Its Afterlives

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Abstract: Following the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks, the demonstrations or "public mourning" of January 11th, 2015 were heralded by many as the return of the republican sacred, the re-crystallization of a long dormant *people*, and the resurrection of French fraternity *en vivo*. However, in the saturation of these political hagiographies, a series of trenchant critiques and observations quickly sought to deconstruct the meaning and putative symbolic power of January 11th. One was struck by the homogeneity of "the people" and the ostensible absence of Arabo-Muslim voices in the somber effervescence that typified the post-Charlie ambiance. Moments of silence were mocked in the *banlieue* and the homage rendered to the "blasphemers" was blasphemed itself. The imperative to "be Charlie" emerged less as a totemic index of republican solidarity than a Manichean strategy which exacerbated the generally perceived "*fracture française*". The result was not only a calling into question of the legitimacy of January 11th, but also a series of counter-articulations which affirmed inter alia "Je ne suis pas Charlie" or worse "Je suis Coulibaly". January 11th also divided the French left between those who read the event as the re-enchantment of the republican sacred and the people and "liberal" missives which deemed it a simulacra of solidarity, a racist demonstration comprised of "Catholic Zombies" and "Islamophobes". This paper examines the cleavages engendered by January 11th and its afterlives which reveal not only the fragility of the Republic as a project, but also the fragility of the political sacred that has historically girded this project. At stake is not simply the question "who is Charlie", but rather "who are the people" and what form they can or should take in a pluralist republic plunged in the perilous *entre-deux* between communitarianism and the possibility of a cosmopolitan republicanism. January 11th, far from being a simple demonstration, is a metaphor, a nodal point, and a seismograph of the force and frailness of the republican sacred and its capacity to enthrall, convince, and console.

Keywords: *Charlie Hebdo*; *Je Suis Charlie*; January 11th 2015; French Republic; secularism; terrorism; fraternity

1. Introduction: Hagiography, Hysteria, and the Unconscious of the Event

The terrorist attacks that shook France between January 7 and January 9 were remarkable not least for their spectacular brutality and symbolic opacity, but also because they confirmed looming anxieties in the hexagon concerning the severity of the much touted "*fracture française*". In the overload of meaning that followed the attacks, the events were perceived as indices of the failures of French paradigms of integration, of the latent Islamophobia embedded in contemporary recensions of *laïcité* and freedom of expression, and of "*banlieue* blues" of all sorts. However, the acknowledgement of the fracture was buttressed immediately by a ritualized attempt to suture it into the aura of the republican imaginary and simultaneously disavow it through the redeployments of the mystique of a trans-historical "people", a new cult of Marianne, and long dormant forms of fraternity.

Whether described as a collective mourning ritual or a moment of collective hysteria, the "Republican Marches" of January 11th, 2015, the largest national gatherings since the Liberation, were exercises in the "Republican sacred". They were exercises in civil religion—the politico–spiritual exercises of the people. Despite the a-religious neutrality of *laïcité*, the Republic has always strained to usurp the religious function. Evinced in pantheons, rites, secular goddesses, and sites of memory, the sacred (which may in fact have nothing to do with religion at all) forms the unconscious of the Republic. Or rather, the sacred is the unconscious of secular modernity. And January 11th was, for many, its great desublimation. The rhapsodies that explained "the event" spoke of *inter alia* the quest to "rediscover the Republican sacred", (Laurentin 2015, p. 10) "the enormous *élan* of fraternity", (Bardou 2015) a "powerful communion"(Bidar 2015, p. 15), the re-ritualization of the Place de la République as a site of memory (Ory 2016, pp. 121–24), a "sacred union, a national communion, a republican explosion" (Truong 2015, p. 7), and "the hope of a civil religion born of the effervescence of those who march (La Croix 2015)". All of the aforementioned mythemes congealed in the "Spirit of January 11" and the anguished determination to assure that it would not fall dormant again. The hagiographies would multiply and January 11th became the object of a burgeoning intellectual industry (see Lamouthe 2015). Perhaps the mythemes were rhetorical signs. Nevertheless, the expressions of the republican sacred, as political imaginary and discursive *dispositif*, were unequivocally purposive in their attempts to embed January 11th in the *longue duréé* of the national narrative. This is precisely where "the people" re-emerge as a non-recuperable agent in the unfolding drama of the revolution and the combat that continues against enemies both old and new.

Yet, if the sacred is the unconscious of the Republic, the sacred too has an unconscious. It is also an epistemological category which, as Michael Carrier perspicaciously observes, constitutes a "reflection of a generalized anxiety about collective life" (Carrier 2005, p. 140). Just as religion always contains its own blasphemy, the sacred too is never sure of itself. Many would push this uncertainty to a point of auto-critique and posit, with varying degrees of virulence, that the fracture could not be so readily resolved through Republican mythology—that myth was still a lie. The sacred is never one thing, but rather transversal in nature. It is also a site of contestation. Piere Nora thus evokes the existence of "splittings" in the unconscious of January 11th, the unconscious of "the people". For Nora, January 11th was indeed "an awakening of the Republican and patriotic unconscious (Nora 2015)", one stifled for so long by the hegemony of the *libéral-libertaire*.[1] Yet, like all of the great "fusional events" in the history of the Republic, it was also "shot through with contradictions" . . . "an event is never what it appears to be. It can signify the contrary" (Nora 2015). January 11th, like the oscillations of the sacred and the profane, is typified by its inconsistencies and denials. Stated otherwise, in the dialectic of the sacred and the profane, one polarity contains its opposite . . .

Nonetheless, the event established a series of Manichean oppositions with little dialectical nuance or sublation. The sacred opposes the profane, but it also exists in competition with other loci of the sacred itself: the Republic and Islam/Islamism, the "political community" and the "ethno-religious community", blasphemers and the injured, republican transcendence and religious transcendence, the nation and its enemies, the universal and the concrete, and, of course, *Je suis Charlie* and *Je ne suis pas Charlie*. These tensions and tensors form the topography of the unconscious of the event which needs to be traced in the same manner as the Republican common good needs to be tracked. *Pace* Rousseau, perhaps there can be no politics without appeals to religious sentiment and the symbolic. This being said, the cores of religion are often plagued by unspoken doubts and function as elaborate responses to deep ontological uncertainties. Civil Religions, like those which crystallized on January 11th, 2015 may not be any different. However, the sacred and the profane are not given or "always already" there. They are not spaces of deep noumena or untimely irruptions of other worldly hierophany.

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[1] The irony, of course, is that despite its unequivocal commitments to *laïcité*, *Charlie Hebdo's* politics shared more with the *liberal-libertaire* than normative framings of French Republicanism.

Rather, they are tendentious discursive categories imagined, elaborated, and marshaled by human actors driven by the most human of interests. Following from this, while "the event" may possess an unconscious, the phantasms, longings, and *desedirata* that circulate in its folds are formed of material and socio–political sediments.

With a view to unpacking and mapping the unconscious of the event, this article traces and problematizes the machinations of the dialectic of the sacred and the profane as evinced in the ritualizations of civil religion on January 11th, the discourses and actors who strained to give them meaning, and also those voices who were excluded from the latter constellations or who refused to participate *tout court*. Section one examines the sacralization of the event and pays particular attention to how the Durkheimian framework of the sacred-social-symbolic was, on the one hand, re-enacted and, on the other hand, reconfigured to affirm the eternal presence of the Republican sacred and defend its transhistorical sanctity. Conversely, section two explores the "profanation" of the event or rather how it revealed not the explosion of the Republican sacred, but its simulation; how January 11th was a desperate, feigned, and neurotic attempt to secure and render permanent an ethico–political framework that was not only impermanent and fragilized, but, perhaps, non-existent. And in between the ecstatic political tremors of Republican effervescence and the nostalgia for something that may have never existed, there can be no real resolution. We thus conclude with a sober analysis of "Republican Futures", asking, "what now", and questioning whether French Republicanism can endure as a comprehensive and normative political framework, particularly when its comprehensiveness is called into question within the fiery interstices of the sacred and the profane.

2. Union Sacrée

2.1. Durkheim Redux

As an event, January 11th also participated in the philosophical logic of "event" qua *événement*. In the *annales* of contemporary French philosophy, the imagined opacity of *l'événement* refuses materialism and embedded forms of critique. On the contrary, it opposes itself to phenomena, matter, and the stuff of the quotidian. The "event" is a radical break; it is the introduction of the irreversible and the frenzied propulsion of political desires; it is the arrival of the Real as a traumatic kernel of Being and the Pauline instauration of the reign of the universal; it is the Messianic seizing of collective destiny and the paroxysm of the will to truth (see *inter alia* Badiou 1988; Deleuze 1969; and Baudrillard 1992). The hagiographies of the "spirit of January 11th" organize these *topoi* into the larger rubric of the coming to consciousness of the sacred. The Durkheimian resonances which inform and shape the sacralizing discourse of the event are not arbitrary. On the one hand, they, like Durkheim, offer theme and variation on the paradoxical rubrics of "social energies" and "social facts". On the other hand, they attest to the perennial nature of the fundamental categories of his theory of religion, a theory which cannot be detached from his own republican commitments. Stated otherwise, the "sacred" of January 11th voices itself in the chiasmatic play of effervescence, collective representations, totemism, and temporal rupture. In Durkheim's own framing of the undulations of the sacred and the profane, one also recognizes the pulsations of *aporia* and presence, the latent and the manifest, the repressed and the released etc. This theoretical nexus functions as a vital hermeneutic for the decrypting of the "spirit of January 11th" and the narratology of its civil religious communion.

2.2. Sursaut Républicain

It is a truism to suggest that communities unite around shared traumas. However, January 11th was not simply a moment of collective grieving, let alone the attempt to heal a national wound. While mourning was certainly the order of the day, the event also inserts itself into a transhistorical narrative of the Republican sacred. Its ultimate expression and actualization come in the mythical cohesion of citizen-subjects in the category of the People, who are not simply "people", but conductors for the circulation of "social energies" which, for Durkheim, were quite real. As he notes, the "sacred is

an organizational center around which gravitates a set of beliefs and rites" (Durkheim 1995, p. 39), a center whose gravitational pull is explained in terms of the "exceptional energy" of this force which impresses itself on the human mind and inspires religious feeling (Durkheim 1995, p. 39). In *L'Individualisme et les intellectuals*, Durkheim's 1898 response to the Dreyfus Affair, the discourse of social energies is, furthermore, deeply politicized:

The moral agitation that these events have incited is not extinguished and I am among those who think that it should not be extinguished; because it is necessary . . . The hour of rest has not come for us. There is too much to be done to assure that it is not indispensable for our social energies to be perpetually mobilized. This is why I believe the politics of the last four years to be preferable to what preceded them. They have succeeded in maintaining durable collective activity of a considerable intensity . . . The essential was to not let ourselves succumb into a state moral stagnation . . . (Durkheim 1997, p. 44).

January 11th, as an "awakening", was reconfigured by many as one such mobilization. From this view, while typifying the logic of the sacred and the profane, the waxing and waning of robust forms of social cohesion and void of fragmentation, the event also partakes in a history of the waning and waxing of social energies and figures as the logical extension of a story begun in 1789. And it is in 1789 that we bear witness to the naissance of "Republican temporality" or the naissance of the people's ceaseless attempt to push through history in an impossible becoming. What has been called the national story is the story of the fading and rebirth of sacred-social energies and the continual aggregation and disaggregation of the people. The Revolution (1789), the Commune (1871), The Dreyfus Affair (1894–1906), The Liberation (1944), May 68', the 1998/2018 French World Cup victories, and January 11th are not isolated events or moments in history. Rather, they are chapters or unfoldings of the national narrative that strain to overcome the chasms between myth, memory and the material.

Therefore, on the one hand, January 11th could be considered the re-kindling of the sacred as social energy and collective morality. Society's alternation between the sacred and the profane, between sharply contrasted moments of profane diffusion and sacred effusion (Durkheim 1995, pp. 216–17) is ultimately an energetic trajectory from listlessness to exaltation and the quickening realization of society and the nation. On the other hand, the energetic trajectory is metonymically bound to the narrative of the Republic and as the people emerge through effusion, they also take solace in or "understand themselves" as *actors in the ritualization of Republican myth*. Following from this, the sacredness of the ritual depends on the density of the actors' belief in the Republican project itself or nostalgia for its potentially lost grandeur. If the sacred is the social or the recognition of the individual as being coextensive with a transcendent force larger than one's self, this transcendent force is also that which forms the sediment of the history and historical mythos of the Republic. And myths, hagiographies, and the stories we tell ourselves about ourselves can always take the form of fetishism—i.e., the story that we no longer believe to be true, but that we hold on to avoid the risk of political, subjective, and or racial/religious ontological disintegration. Here, the socializing effects and ontological transformations engendered by the Republican sacred are also imbricated in Republican time and historicity. Communion in the present is re-communion with the "people" of the past who too are re-awakened with each progressive effusion. Membership in the political community is mediated by sacralizations and rites, but also as Vincent Duclert remarks, by "History", which "essentially has for France the function of creating the feeling of belonging. The national story is written of victory and defeats . . . heroism by politics, it works! Unity constructs itself around values . . . it is democratic and civic heritage which constitutes the pride of the French people" (Duclert 2015, p. 55). On January 11th, *Charlie Hebdo*, perhaps against its own wishes, was transformed into the ultimate emblem for these values and this heritage. *Charlie* too became a fetish. And the terrorist attacks were quickly construed as, following Natacha Polony, "attacks against heritage, against French culture" (Polony 2015, p. 35). "Charlie" found itself as a new signifier for French liberty, an ideological mosaic and allegory for the Republic itself. But in the environs of January 11th, could the real structural deficits of liberty "on the ground" be so easily elided in the mantras of *Je Suis Charlie*. And resonating in this particular political unconscious was the larger question of "liberty from what . . . from whom etc".

This being said, it cannot be denied that strong forms of solidarity are produced of the people as inhabiting the same temporal framework, girded in a set of unitary and uniting narratives, material supports, myths, and rituals. Furthermore, as Henri Hubert evokes, the republic is less a manner of organizing the polis, than a subterranean *substrate* that flows under the people as the move through history and progressively realizes itself, a substrate interrupted by Empires, occupations, and attacks, but always there, ready to be resurrected in the new advents of Republican time (see Hubert 2005). Amongst the lessons of January 11th was that the ethical threshold of a given society must necessarily come from somewhere and be reborn and re-emboldened. Consolation and collective morality can only take shape through the apprehension of this vulgate, a sacro-political substrate (or temporal unconscious). However, one cannot elide the degree to which "vulgates" and "substrates" play in the nebulous interzones between history and hagiography, between social facts and simulacra.

2.3. Marianne Crayon: Somber Effervescence and the Saturation of the Symbolic

The French Republic, albeit *laïque* and ferociously anti-clerical, finds its singularity in its sustained engagement with the problematic of the sacred foundations of the political, or, following Mona Ozouf, the problematic of the *transfert de sacralité*. Republicanism's insistence on the strict separation of temporal and spiritual power does not preclude the possibility of refashioning the political as sacred, a refashioning which paradoxically does not problematize the separation and the neutrality which it engenders. That is, the problem of civil religion or the sacralization of the political is the problem of the attempt to canalize religious sentiments for political purposes with a view to forging strong modes of citizenship. Citizenship then does not refer to a simple legal status, but participates in the rich nexus of community, communication, *communitas*, and communion. January 11th was a ritualized attempt to secure this community and its social morality in a historically ritualized space and locus of collective memory—*Place de la République*. However, the community cannot be secured, defined or redefined without material, acoustic, and iconic supports. The symbolic is the corollary of the sacred. Or, as Camille Tarot remarks, "religion is the symbolic system of the sacred". (Tarot 2012, p. 275).

For hermeneutic purposes, we can designate the symbolic as the "sites", both tangible and intangible where "social energies" are projected and negotiated. These sites are thus alternately divested of their materiality, but simultaneously "re-densified". They serve as points of relay in an onto-political dialectic wherein politico–religious energies are sent to the sign, congealed, and sent back as collective morality. For Pascal Ory, January 11th and its refrains throughout 2015, was the permeation of the symbolic, or the attempt to "maintain—or rather create—*le lien social* through the aggregation of the group around signs of recognition (symbols); in this, an important observation: the importance of emotion as source of energy for the social motor" (Ory 2016, p. 121). The symbolic captures and makes coalesce formless reservoirs of the sacred, and its binding force depends on the strength of the ritualization and the robustness of effervescence.

Unlike Durkheim's howling Arunta, the effervescence of January 11th was a somber state of exaltation. A state-sponsored ritual, it nonetheless was an attempt to establish moral unity through effacing the individual in the real and imagined undulations of political community. It performed a type of political "work", bringing him to recall his belonging to something transcendent to himself, and orchestrating a "moral toning-up" where he would reconnect with the nexus of Republican values, morality, and *mana*. In this matrix of feeling and mourning, collective beliefs could potentially "gel" into a spontaneously established civil religion. Effervescence is not simply the entry into the domain of "unthinking", affectivity, instinct, and bodily or psychic abandon. For Durkheim, it was a project designed to bring energies and political passions to the service of the nation. As witnessed on January 11th, the liminal passage that effervescence initiates can be incited by moral outrage and foment the imperative for collective agitation. Reminding participants of the vastness and density of the social, by de-atomizing them the event aspires to wrest them from the throes of finitude and the reckoning with those who have also died.

The efficaciousness of effervescence is contingent upon the symbolic constellation that anchors it. On January 11th, this constellation was "conservative" or "desiring to conserve" something. Contra global and post-national reveries and fashionable liberal cosmopolitanisms, to the surprise of many, the totemic acts of January 11th appeared as an atavism which would make even *Charlie* wince—the return of the nation. The flag, the Marseillaise, the homage to the police and the forces of order, and the slogans, all appeared to evacuate, once and for all, the legacy of May 68 and the *après-mai*. They served to awaken "the clan" to the fact that there were forces living outside of them. These forces, both religious and political, relocated the romance of the nation as both a sacro-political substrate and space of consolation. Modish taboos on patriotism as the province of rednecks and *pecnot* were lifted in the effusion and with it the pervasive slackening of the social. Symbolic life, far from returning individuals into the so-called darkness of the primitive, allows them rather to overcome the anxieties of profane life and the ever-present threat of further atomization (or terror). January 11th, as collective transference, provided a fleeting moment of social binding between individuals, symbolic life, and morality, one which inscribes itself in collective memory and therefore eases the trauma of the profane. In this regard, there is nothing strange in France's decision to respond to the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks with appeals to the sacred-symbolic-social. The challenge, of course, is how to sustain the binding effected by effervescence, how to bring it to resonate under the roughness of the profane.

The ultimate totemic consecration came in the resurgences of Marianne, now dubbed "Marianne Crayon" or "Crayon Guiding the People" (Figure 1). She would be immortalized on the cover of *L'Obs* (January 11–21, 2015) with the caption "Continue the Combat".[2] As the Mariannology of Maurice Agulhon insists upon, the goddess was never simply just an image on stamps and town hall meeting rooms. As an allegory of the republic and its liberty, it was also the symbolic means through which the nation produced and reproduced itself through various imaginary practices. As the "Republic", she is the materiality of its values and their transmutations. After the attacks of January, 2015, it was quickly understood that in a global and post 9/11 world she may be one god among many whose absolutism and correspondence to the nation stand always be challenged. And if the gods are not ritualized, their sacred power dissipates. On January 11th, she was resuscitated and the allegory of liberty and the universal was modified with the cartoonist's pencil. According to the photographer Martin Argyroglo, the correspondence between the photo and Delacroix's iconic painting was forged by chance. Indeed, the moment was not staged, but the uncanny resemblance was precisely what allowed it be inscribed in a collective imaginary that evokes the "substrate" on the level of representation (See Bonnet 2015). The pen doubles as the sword and in the midst of the flags, banners, and fists waived, a woman dressed as a clown is spotted. The republic laughs. And perhaps, fundamentalists should not take themselves so seriously. In the haze of the Roman candles, one also reads signs saying "Not Afraid", "Quickly more Democracy everywhere against Barbarism", and, of course, the most ubiquitous, enigmatic, and potentially divisive slogan of the new civil religion; *Je suis Charlie*.

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[2] Following the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks, a plethora of «Marianne Crayons» came to permeate French visual culture, in the media, in graffiti, in municipal buildings, and university campuses. The attacks produced their own distinctive «mariannology».

Figure 1. "Marianne Crayon".

2.4. Marianne Twerk

In the miasma of post-Charlie Mariannology, one Marianne was, nevertheless, overlooked. Following the attacks, journalists and anti-terrorist analysts rushed to establish the genealogies and lines of filiations, both political and personal, of those behind the violence. It soon surfaced that Amedy Coulibaly, the ISIS operative responsible for the attack of a police officer in Montrouge and the attack on the Hyper Casher supermarket at the Port de Vincennes, had an older sister of 7 years. Suffice it to say, she did not share her brother's world view.[3] Maïmouna Coulibaly (aka Maïmouna Rouge Coulibaly or Maïmouna Rouge Red) is a dancer and choreographer inspired primarily by Afro-jazz, modern jazz, and African traditions. However, she is most renowned for her dance classes. She is a professor of "booty therapy", a modern derivative of a certain style of frenetic and sexualized Afro-Caribbean dancing and dancehall, more commonly known as "twerking". On a 2013 TV spot on *Le Grand 8*, where she also twerks with Roselyne Bachelot, former minister of solidarity and social cohesion under President Nicolas Sarkozy, she defines "booty therapy" as "therapy by the butt", "a manner of liberating female femininity through shaking one's butt" . . . in general we're in a world where women are very stressed and complexed by everyday fashion, what's in the magazines and all that . . . shaking your ass frees you" (Coulibaly 2013). For Coulibaly, booty therapy functions as an embodied critique of the reification of women by capitalism, racism and xenophobia. A second-wave feminist and post-modern situationist of sorts, she also regularly organizes "booty therapy flash mobs" at Paris train stations and malls. On the day her brother killed the police officer, she tweeted, "shooting at the end of my street". Unaware of her brother's implication in the attacks, on the evening of January 7th, she did not cancel her "booty therapy" courses, insisting that she "would not stop living following the massacre" and inviting all to "release", "ease their tensions" and "express their sadness or mounting anger . . . " With her family she would soon condemn her brother as not representative of Muslims (Coulibaly in Hall and Marie 2015).

While no means viral, images of Maïmouna began to circulate on the web, and amongst them an image of the Professor of Booty Therapy herself donning a Phyrigian cap and a tricolored bustier (Figure 2). Indeed, Maïmouna Coulibaly often transformed herself into Marianne and ostensibly saw no contradiction between her religion, her Malian origins, the allegory of the Republic, and her booty—the

[3] Amedy Coulibaly had ten siblings of which he was the only male.

latter two united in their respective search for liberty and non-domination. Moreover, according to one blogger, this was not simply a costume, but the allegory re-constructed: "Maïmouna Coulibaly incarnates republican values so much that she poses as a sexy black Marianne, Phrygian bonnet on her head and a mini tricolor bustier. She is publicity for the "*vivre ensemble*" of Manuel Valls and certainly not anti-Semitic. In fact, on her Facebook page we find her pressed up against the wealthy television personality Arthur" (SenBuzz 2015).[4] The allegory is transformed again with the story of the Republic: Marianne Coulibaly, Marianne Twerk.

Figure 2. Maïmouna Coulibaly/¨Marianne Coulibaly.

2.5. #JesuisCharlie

French Republicanism has always been bifurcated between its appeals to reason and autonomy and its rhetorical function and strained attempts to engender and seize upon political affect. As a governmentality, it is also a discursive apparatus, implicitly designed to stir passions which permeate the reciprocal dialectic between citizens and institutions. The republican public sphere is not simply delimited to those who have mastered bourgeois reason. On the contrary, it is a plane where the vectors of the passional and the rational intersect and mutually distill one another. Rhetoric, slogans, linguistic traces, and apophatic political-semiosis are indeed collective representations, precisely where language no longer communicates, but represents or allegorizes. And if *laïcité* and Republicanism are not solely ideas tied to administrative or procedural practices, but also "spiritualities" (see Comte-Sponville 2008; Buisson 2014; and Peillon 2010), one of its many spiritual exercises consists in the repetition of mantras (Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, Vive la République, Vive la France, the People etc.). The environs of January 11th were anchored in a motto, a battle cry, and a lament: *Je suis Charlie*. Yet, as with much rhetoric, there was little consensus on what the phrase really meant or, rather, such consensus was necessarily overlapping—we agree on the principle, but not its significance or application. The polysemic dimensions of the phrase allowed for everyone to locate themselves in its valences in a myriad of often contradictory significations that destabilized its purported sanctity.

The brainchild of Joachim Roncin, artistic director of the magazine *Stylist*, the slogan began to circulate on line during the afternoon of January 7th and went viral and global within a matter of hours. The public sphere and the info-sphere intersect or rather the public sphere was de-materialized. The phrase inscribes itself in a long political tradition of identification with the victim and the metonymic victim (the state, national values, history etc.) in a symbolic becoming-other; we are all Jews, we are all New Yorkers, we are all undesirables, etc. The identification is always incomplete and produces a series of slippages in the play of the signifier. In addition, the content or identificatory processes instantiated by the slogan were less important than the existence of the slogan itself as representation, or as Gilles Kepel notes, "logo" for the events; "It is thus an artifact of generation Y . . . product of the web, at once a logo and a slogan, carrying both image and sound, it is the vector of an extraordinarily powerful message . . . it does not signify, in effect, that Charlie is the name of

[4] Arthur is a popular TV personality and producer of Jewish-Sephardic origins, known also for his televised clashes with anti-Semitic comedian Dieudonné.

a subject—in French, one would say "my name is Charlie"; the term "suis" ties the subject "je" to a new identitarian community named Charlie—whose descent into the public sphere on January 11th is the act of collective baptism" (Kepel 2016, p. 281). *Charlie* is thus detached *from Charlie Hebdo* and functions as a new ontological index of the people who themselves remain undefined, unfulfilled, and impossible. Yet, it is curious that Kepel uses the term identitiarian instead of political, begging the question of the constitution of the community, its contours, and its politics of "baptism-inclusion". But were throngs of people at Place de la République and elsewhere really being baptized? If so, what was their religion?

In the simplest sense, one could argue that to say "*Je suis Charlie*" is to denounce Jihadism and Islamic fundamentalism. Of course, this observation already opens up longstanding debates in France concerning when the critique of terrorism becomes the critique of Islam and whether secular critique naturalizes forms of Islamophobia: More attention thus needs to be given to the mediatized rapport between "je suis Charlie" and "il ne faut pas faire l'amalgalme" with the latter phrase reigning in the subtextual virulence of the former. Following from this, however, is the fact that "being Charlie" was not to necessarily identify with its dirty jokes and brashness, and if there was an identification with the cartoonists and their work, for the most part it was not out of love for *Charlie*. Indeed, the majority of the global response, including many of those who were "baptized" on January 11th, had never read or bought the newspaper. And although many a Frenchman were bemused by the destruction of their childhoods, this too was informed by nostalgia for a fading cultural landscape as opposed to an unyielding defense of bad taste.

This being said, underneath *Je suis Charlie*, one located the polarities of the strident defense of expression (now wholly synonymous with *laïcité*) and Voltairean "non, oui" logics which dictated that we may not agree with the content of your speech, but we defend your right to speak freely. In the latter case, "being Charlie" appeared to have less integrity than one imagined. For Lylia Bouzar, saying "*Je suis Charlie*" does not necessarily entail that one agrees with mockeries of the Prophet. As she suggests, one can be *Charlie* in many ways and the slogan is "one that each of us can define in their own manner; I can be wounded by the caricatures and support freedom of expression . . . I can be *Charlie* in marking my solidarity with all those who mobilize against terror . . . many felt that becoming *Charlie* prevented them from criticizing the content of *Charlie* . . . and thus finally affirmed that they were not" (Bouzar in Bianco et al. 2015, p. 16). The perspectivalism in readings of slogan and the absence of coherence on the level of the symbol revealed the internal cleavages that besieged the *Charlie* "community". Here one oscillated between "literal" and more embracing readings of *Charlie* and more figurative interpretations that indeed dehistoricized *Charlie* and deradicalized its political vision. As for the surviving members of *Charlie Hebdo*, or those who really were *Charlie*, they readily accused a large part of the *Charlies* for being hypocrites, cowards, and liars (Bouzar in Bianco et al. 2015, p. 19). In other words, *Charlie* did not feel that "Je suis Charlie" signaled any real solidarity with them and also noticed, like many, how the phrase was instrumentalized and how it called into question their own longstanding pacifism and rabid atheism. How could one be *Charlie* and not steadfastly affirm the sacred right to blasphemy?

One should be suspicious of slogans, but nonetheless critically attentive to their capacity to establish Schmittian frontiers between friends and foes, between those who are and those who are not. Freedom of conscience dictates that one also has the right to not be *Charlie* without fear of reprisal. But the phrase divided the hexagon into two imaginary "identitarian communities" and, in the process, rolled back the very freedom of consciousness that it defended. *Charlie* was open in its disdain for radical Islam and radicalisms of all genres which it ceaselessly combated with the crayon. In the paranoia of the *après-Charlie*, the slogan was also entwined in the rhetoric of combat. *Je suis Charlie* . . . we are at war . . . Defend Paris. Hence, the taboo on the clash of civilizations thesis was also lifted: whereas Huntington's ideas were once considered as mere ideological fodder for US geopolitics in the post-cold war era, after *Charlie*, references to the clash of civilizations were invoked ad nauseam by French intellectuals on the left and right without the least hesitation. For other Catholic philosophers,

the discourse of the new crusades was also not off limits (See Marion 2015). In the nexus of combat, the logo also has a dialogical function: on January 7th, one of the Kouachi brothers exclaims "we killed Charlie" and 5 days later France responded in saying *Je suis Charlie*. And is there not a fleeting analogy between the block-printed black and white flags of ISIS and the block-printed black and white design of *Je suis Charlie*, revealing the unconscious existence of a war of sacralities? If civil religion aspires to employ religious sentiments for political objectives, it does not necessarily do away with religion whose authority and visions of transcendence may often refuse those political objectives and the rituals, cults, and baptisms that fortify them. *Je suis Charlie*, an emblem of the republic, polarized—it divided Muslims against Muslims, non-Muslims against Muslims, the poor against the elites, the poor against the poor, and the left against the left. In the process, it obliged us all to rethink what the identity of the Republican political community really is. Unfortunately, the process of such rethinking and recalibration remains unachieved, just as the sacred frenzies of January 11th waned and grew exhausted. After the long cycle of terrorism that crippled France in the years following "Charlie", "Je suis Charlie" was replaced by "Je suis fatigué".

3. Sacrée Union

3.1. Are "They" Coming . . . ?

The sacred may oppose the profane, but it can also be deployed to suture negativity and absorb contradiction. Yet, in its attempts to establish epistemological coherence, its integrity is never guaranteed. The sacralisation of January 11th was perhaps over-determined, a desperate effort to disavow the existence of two Frances, two peoples, and the narrative of trauma and social exclusion that festers underneath all talk of the sacred republican substrate. Any posing of "the people" implicitly evokes, through the dialectic of presence as absence, the material and symbolic peripheries of the imaginary community and its eventual coming apart. Trepidation was felt in the moments leading up to the Republican Marches; the question that occupied many, but that no one dared ask, was—would "they" come? Those of Arabo-Muslim origin found themselves once again burdened with the task of offering "proof" of their belonging and solidarity. And if they remained silent/absent, one could only interpret this abstention as evidence for their belief that "*Charlie* had it coming", *de facto* branding them as co-conspirators with Islamism. Beyond this, other questions loomed; What was so special about *Charlie*? Why did the Republic not march after Mohammed Meerah's attacks on a Jewish school in Toulouse? What if the events of January, 2015 concerned only the Hyper-Kasher supermarket? Would there still be a sacred union? Many a troubled conscience also asked whether the "crystallization" of January 11th was unconsciously a march not simply against Islamic terrorism, but Islam itself. Was it indeed a glorious spectacle where white elites affirmed their right, to not just freedom of speech, but to punch down and mock the religion of the largely marginalized—an exercise in cruelty? With some exception, most accounts from the ground confirmed that "they" did not come and that underneath the slogans, totems, and chanting, there was also a coming to consciousness of, as Pierre Rosanvallon suggests, the cleavage between an "involved France" and an "abandoned France", a tragic reckoning with how "appeals to Republican order would not suffice to recreate society" (Rosanvallon 2015). And in the midst of these ruminations, the on-going debate between classical French Republicanism and Anglo-Saxon liberalism was re-ignited. But unlike its intellectual precedents in the 1990s, it was generally admitted that, this time, the stakes of the debate were enormous, that France may have one last chance to "get it right".

3.2. Catholic Zombies

January 11th placed in relief the internal disarray of the left which had continued to gestate since the "Veil Affair" pitting an "old school" Republican left against a "new school" liberal pluralist/culturalist left. For the former, Europe and its tradition of freedom of expression was non-negotiable. For the latter, Europe was plagued by the ghosts of colonialism and its traditions of

secularism and freedom of speech risked lapsing into trenchant forms of Islamophobia. In addition, was there a normative ground for something called "Western values" or "Republican values?" In the post-*Charlie* days, these camps ceased to engage in simple mediatized intellectual gaming, but morphed into fully fledged orthodoxies vying for positioning in the public discourse and ratcheting up their respective attempts to direct public consciousness. According to Anastasia Colosimo, *Charlie* had something of a political "ricochet effect" wherein "the left tears itself apart, find itself blocked in its ambivalence to *progressisme*, which it is charged with defending and signals the fictional nature of its supposed unanimity . . . a Charlie left . . . a communitarian left . . . the stakes of the moment would concern the question of alterity, particularly that of Muslims, and its treatment which would over-determine the resurgence of blasphemy" (Colosimo 2016, pp. 21–22). In effect, the "cartoon debate" was part of a much larger debate or rather the allegorical image of the fractures themselves.

In the hexagon, the fracture(s) reached a point of paroxysm in Emmanuel Todd's controversial excavation of the event's real unconscious. The demographer, veering between sociological analysis and investigative journalism, took it upon himself to explain, once and for all, who *Charlie really was*. And, according to Todd, he was not what many wanted him to be. The people did not descend onto the streets on January 11th to defend their love of liberty and non-domination. Rather, the ostensible absence of the Arabo-Muslim community and mediatized concatenations of the republican marches compelled Todd to surmise that the event was an imposture, a "Catholic zombie effect" or a totalitarian and neo-populist orgy for a largely Islamophobic and hegemonic white middle class (Todd 2015, pp. 70–77). In effect, the unconscious of the event and the unconscious of the unconscious was also split between a left *laïcard* polarity and a right Catholic polarity who secretly conspired within the rhetorical vacuum that was *Je suis Charlie*. Hence, for Todd,

> Charlie, like Maastricht, functions in two modes, one conscious and positive, liberal, egalitarian, and republican, and the other, unconscious and negative, authoritarian and non-egalitarian, which dominates and excludes . . . it is necessary to concentrate our attention on the concrete objectives of the event (*January 11th*) to understand its latent values. Above all, it was a question of affirming a social power, a type of domination, an objective attained through marching in mass. The identification with the satiric journal *Charlie Hebdo* reveals a powerful dimension of rejection on the part of the demonstrator. The Republic reconstructs itself through championing the right to blasphemy and applies immediately the obligation to blaspheme on the emblematic personage of a minoritarian religion of a *socially excluded* group . . . .the violence of the demonstrations of January 11th. Millions of Frenchmen took to the streets and took as the priority of their society the right to spit on the religion of the weak . . . does Charlie have a relationship to the darkest years of contemporary France? (Todd 2015, pp. 87–88)

Todd thus profanes the purported sacrality of January 11th and the aura of its political ritual. Underneath its supposed Islamophobia is furthermore the specter of anti-Semitism and the identification of a "people" with their "religion", a recipe for the most unsavory of essentialisms, racisms, and xenophobias. Furthermore, regardless of the rhetorical power of its appeals to egalitarianism, the left and the extreme left are complicit with the right and extreme right in their unconscious embrace of the value of non-egalitarianism (Todd 2015, p. 176). Todd instructs us to be suspicious of the middle class who, despite their cosmopolitan posturing, remain insular and paranoid; they simply cannot "wesh, wesh" with the kids in the *banlieue* and this, it would seem, is reason enough to resent them. Finally, *Charlie* punched down and while Todd is not problematizing the critique of religion, he is ultimately claiming that irreverence and critique are conditional and contingent. One must never insult the weak or the "victims" regardless of their beliefs and dogmas.

The "Todd effect" unleashed a maelstrom. The Charlie left and the culturalist left lambasted each other as being respectively Islamophobic and Islamo-*gauchiste* apologists for terror (i.e., "the attacks were France's fault" etc.). And if the former were denounced by Todd and co. for unconsciously endorsing the positions of the extreme right, the latter were denounced by the *laïcards* for unconsciously

collaborating with Islamic extremism and rationalizing terrorism. Caroline Fourest, for instance, reproached Todd for deploying the social sciences and faulty methodology to find excuses for terrorism while also fortifying an "*islamo-gauchisme*" that chooses to remain blind to the realities of Islamism; instead, for Fourest, they prefer to pass their time performing an on-going inquisition of secularists who are all unwittingly Islamophobic (Fourest 2015). One could argue that the Todd effect forecloses the spirit of critique and intellectual rigor and vulgarly confounds appeals to secularism and *laïcité* with racism. Beyond this, it was said that Todd insulted the dignity of those who marched, perversely profited from a moment of trauma for self-interested purposes, and committed a type of treason in insinuating that the event was haunted by neo-Vichyist undertones. Fellow demographers also questioned the integrity of Todd's findings and assailed him for over-determining the absence of Arabo-muslims at the event and unconsciously exacerbating the anxieties concerning their absence/silence (see Harris Interactive/LCP in Levy 2015). Beyond overlooking the ethnic or "social mixity" of January 11th, Todd's "simplism" also, according to others, elided the heterogeneity of class at the event where, indeed, the workers were present (see Corcuff 2016). And as for the "spirit of January 11th", Luc Rouban's demography concludes that amongst those who marched, Catholics were in the minority with the majority of demonstrators being anti-Islamophobic, tolerant, and primarily of the left; in fact, as Rouban notes, "the thesis of Emmanuel Todd is contradictory in and of itself. It remains that the general perception of Islam in France is unfavorable, but as our responses indicate, the issue is rather about what Islam represents for the Republic. Nonetheless, our survey shows that Islamophobia is above all present amongst those who did not march" (Rouban 2015). Space precludes an examination of Todd's unconscious or that of the culturalist left, but one wonders what interests motivate their ideological agendas and those of their adversaries. *Je suis Charlie's* identity may be a mystery, but perhaps he was more *Charlie* than Todd presumed.

Catholics themselves were none too pleased either. Beyond objecting to the appellation "zombie", many cultural and religious Catholics objected to Todd's attempt to group them with those who vindicated the right to blasphemy and defended the absolutism of *Charlie's laïcité*. An equal opportunity hater, *Charlie* deplored Catholicism and indeed the one time that it lost a defamation case, it followed its decision to publish a caricature of the pope being beheaded. On the one hand, Catholics insisted that there were many species of zombie, including Jewish, Muslim, and Republican. On the other hand, they also asserted that they were not and never were *Charlie*. In the midst of the Todd effect, the Catholic newspaper *la Croix*, argued that "for Catholics, the valorization of the right to blasphemy and the suspicion of all religious discourse in the public sphere left one bitter. They are divided between a fear of Islam and a fear of *laïcité* . . . the religious, like many other Frenchmen feel less equal than many; perhaps the zombie of January 11th is the Republic" (La Croix 2015). Roland Hureaux would further draw attention to a growing "non-zombie Catholic fringe" who "identified in no way with *Charlie*" and understood January 11th as "not simply a subliminal rejection of Islam, but of all religions" (Hureaux 2015). And although in the crowds of January 11th, one spotted signs reading *Je suis Juif, Je suis Musulman, Je suis Catholique, Je suis Charlie*, the event was hardly an exercise in inter-religious dialogue. And what cannot be ignored was the simple fact that *Charlie's* own political pedigree, anarchist-communist-*laïque*, resolutely opposed all religions. January 11th thus also asked the question that continues to plague the Republic; is *laïcité* the condition for all religions, as it claims to be, or an alternative to religion which secretly desires to outflank and outbid "traditional religions". In addition, January 11th did not necessarily reconcile. Rather it produced its own demons in the "non-zombie" fringes epitomized in, for instance, Jean-Marie Le Pen's clever *détournement* of the slogan: *Je suis Charles Martel*.

Todd's myopic obsession with Arabo-Muslim absence/silence also refused to take into account the multitude of global Muslim voices who decried in January 2015, "Not in my name". It also repudiated, like the mainstream media (who can only enthrall through Manichean oppositions), the existence of an Arabo-Muslim Republican-*laïque* "fringe" who were *Charlie* and who deemed Todd's provocations and the rhetoric of "don't punch down" to be nothing short of a type of anti-racist racism, a racism with a

friendly face. Following from this, Todd unwittingly fixes a group of people in their "ethno-religious" origins and encumbers them with the identitarian and communitarian. Such a discursive elaboration participates in the exclusionary reifying practices that it seeks to combat, all the while scientifically barring the Arabo-Muslim from the symbolic and social processes of integration. The "social question" is corrupted by the "religious question". In short, in attacking stigmatization, Todd reproduces the performance of stigma in a paternalistic operation. Against Todd, in #Je suis Marianne, Lydia Guirous explains the political ethos of this other fringe as such:

Despite his nice feelings and his programmed revolt, he (*Todd*) cannot hide his condescendence to Muslims: a neo-colonial condescendence which drips in all his analyses . . . The hysteria of certain Muslims at the caricatures of the prophet do not, however, express the thinking of the majority. Todd wants to erect a defense of the indignant Muslim, refusing him to thus be treated as a free subject having the capacity for autonomy. For Mr. Todd, the Muslim is under-developed and cannot understand *laïcité*, the Republic, or liberty. In addition, Todd sees nothing wrong with religious fundamentalism, but rejects *laïcité* . . . "a new religion which constitutes a real threat" . . . He validates a communitarian and multicultural society. And while France has always been a multi-ethic society, it has never been multicultural (Guirous 2016, pp. 18–20).

Thus, a strange unspoken union may have also taken shape between the radical Islam and politically correct liberals like Todd. Such a silencing of critical voices, both internal and external to the religion itself, not only defers the possibility of a vital and necessary conversation, but freezes the Muslim in a purely religious identity and extricates her from the possibilities, both political and spiritual, promised by spirited public debate and critique/auto-critique.

3.3. The Tears of the Prophet

On January 15th, 2015, Soufiane Zitouni, a professor of philosophy at a high school in Lille and "firstly a French citizen and then someone of Muslim culture", published an article in *Libération* entitled "Today the Prophet is Also Charlie" (Zitouni 2015a). In a predominantly Muslim classroom, he opted to read the *Hadith* against the grain; he told the story of an inconsolable Mohammed whose distress is caused by the fact that he knows that, one day in the future, he will have to testify against his own community. The fable completes itself in February of 2007 where on the cover of *Charlie Hebdo*, the sobbing prophet, "overwhelmed by fundamentalists", appears again uttering "It is hard being loved by idiots". For Zitouni, it was Cabu, a cartoonist at *Charlie Hebdo*, who "relayed the Hadith". Noting that the ban on images of the Prophet is apocryphal, the professor went on to ask why, pace François Roustang, certain Muslims are incapable of laughter, why certain Muslims entertain a paranoiac rapport with their religiosity which prevents them from getting the joke—how to make a fundamentalist laugh? He concluded his brief allegory with the affirmation that "the prophet, caricatured, insulted, mocked, and, above all ignored, is, today, also *Charlie* . . . Mohammed cries with all the innocent victims of barbarism and ignorance . . . he asks Allah for forgiveness for all of the sheep who claim his religion without understanding the essence of his message (Figure 3)" (Zitouni 2015a). Zitouni found himself immediately ostracized by both his students and his colleagues.

Beyond the "tense ambiance" in the professor's lounge (where a copy of his article was ingloriously stapled to the wall), Zitouni was subjected to a programmed "counter-attack" by the director of the high school and Sofiane Meziani, a fellow professor of Islamic ethics and supposed Muslim brotherhood sympathizer (Zitouni 2015b). The latter accused him of cultivating the abject and the racist, stigmatizing Muslims, and demonstrating a blatant lack of respect for his own religion (Meziani 2015). Simultaneously, he was accosted by a barrage of anti-Semitic conspiracy theories by his students (Zitouni 2015b) who also charged him with "kissing the feet of the enemies of Islam" (Vécrin 2015). He concluded that the high school itself, where the texts of the brothers Ramadan littered the bookshelves, was complicit in transmitting Islamism to its own students. Fatigued by the swaths of accusations of ethno-religious treason and the subterranean Koranic atmosphere of the Republican

high school, Zitouni's "blasphemy" would bring him to resign his post, after which he was sued by the high school itself for defamation.

Amongst Zitouni's ripostes against the high school was the charge of "double speak" and the manner in which it publicly lauded Republican values and *laïcité* while accommodating and thus advocating the existence of Islamist currents in classroom and in the professor's lounge. Such double-speak is also broadly representative of the bad faith laden within the discourse of much of the culturalist left where, for instance, following the November 18th anti-terrorist raids in St. Denis, the municipality's mayor pled ignorance and remarked that St. Denis, hailed by Kepel as the Mecca of France, was a peaceful, multicultural *banlieue*, known for its great cultural diversity. Zitouni was pushed out of his post for his republicanism. He was pushed out of his post for his refusal to accept the overlapping of the religious and the political. He was pushed out because he pleaded for the blasphemed to tolerate the blasphemer and affirmed that cultural diversity must also be a political and intellectual diversity. His greatest error was his claiming of citizenship, derided by his detractors as "treason". However, the cultivation of strong forms of equality, and paradoxically the possibility of religious pluralism, may require a bit of treason—the forging of a political community may require the betrayal of (but never completely) one's class, race, religion, and myth of origins (and this goes for France as well).

Figure 3. The Tears of the Prophet.

3.4. Charlie Coulibaly

The Todd effect was more or less delimited to intellectual debate and the French mediasphere where, as is well known, elites reproduce themselves and attempt to direct the national conversation. However, the afterlives of January 11th were also typified by a host of underground voices and "dissident" fringes who shared Todd's fundamental theses while reshaping their veracity and provocation. What set the *Charlie Hebdo* "events" apart from other tragedies was the degree to which their significance was informed by, not simply what happened at *Place de la République*, but also what happened in the public sphere of the digital world. Unlike the material public sphere, the world of cyber-forums and social media is one of anonymity, distance, and "enabling". In these virtual folds, the ethical norms of embodied and face-to-face encounters are often dissolved. In the hashtag frenzy of *Charlie Hebdo*, one was therefore also plunged into various vindications for the terrorist acts, ranging from the complex of ambivalence connoted by #jenesuispascharlie to the fully fledged celebrations of how "they had it coming, they got what they deserved", expressed in #jesuiscoulibaly/#jesuiskouachi. And beyond these readings was also ISIS' own coding of the debate.

The attacks against *Charlie Hebdo* were not simply acts of jihad designed to avenge the prophet, punish blaspheming "miscreants", and bring the war for the new caliphate to Europe. They were also intended to exacerbate the already existing tensions between secular Europeans and Muslims with a view to laying the socio-affective foundations for a highly anticipated civil war. They were further motivated by the desire to establish an internal struggle within Islam which would purge the *ummah* of moderate elements and those Muslims who adopted European values and protested

against Salafism's regressive tendencies. Stated otherwise, "Charlie" was also about redefining Islam. The specular double of *jihad* is *fitna* (see Kepel 2004), the internal purging of the enemies of Islam.

In the February 12th, 2015 edition of ISIS' glossy "jihadology" rag, *Dabiq*, one glimpses two elderly imams holding *Je suis Charlie* signs, under which the caption reads: "From Hypocrisy to Apostasy: The Elimination of the Gray Zone". Islam's lack of central command is what informs the plurality of its religious practices, but it is simultaneously that which animates the drive, often paranoiac, to establish one definitive recension of the religion, one reading of the one book, and one dogma. An exercise in terror-porn, *Dabiq* is a recruitment vehicle and also an ideological arm for *fitna*, intended to organize the geopolitical arena into two well-defined camps and recode the social, political, and religious in terms of a cosmic war between the righteous and the infidels. And the infidels are also those Muslims who condemned the Charlie Hebdo attacks. After *Charlie*,

> the time had come for another event—magnified by the presence of the Khilāfah on the global stage—to further bring division to the world and destroy the grayzone everywhere. One of the first matters renounced by the hypocrites abandoning the grayzone and fleeing to the camp of apostasy and kufr after the operations in Paris is the clear-cut obligation to kill those who mock the Messenger (sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam) . . . (to kill those) who raise banners and slogans with the words "Je Suis Charlie" on them. There is no doubt that such deeds are apostasy, that those who publicly call to such deeds in the name of Islam and scholarship are from the du'āt (callers) to apostasy, and that there is great reward awaiting the Muslim in the Hereafter if he kills these apostate imams . . . (ISIS 2015, p. 58)

Defenders of freedom of speech, regardless of their faiths, are dismissed *tout court* as heretics who, lost in the gray zone, secretly defend the "satanic newspaper" *Charlie Hebdo*. What is often neglected by media on Islamism is the extent to which its rancor is directed at fellow Muslims, including those killed at *Charlie Hebdo*, on November 13th, 2015, and July 14th, 2016. And underneath the play of *jihad* and *fitna* is the disquieting truth that they are processes defined by both religious convictions and self-aggrandizing tendencies, processes which do not hesitate to accumulate Muslim deaths for the accumulation of theo–political capital. Hence, as Tariq Ali remarks, "we now know that the assault on *Charlie Hebdo* was the outcome of intra-Wahhabi rivalry. The attack has been claimed by Ayman al-Zawahiri as an al-Qaida initiative, organized by its section in the Yemen . . . . His organisation has been outflanked and partially displaced by the Islamic State and a global act of terror was needed to restore its place as the leading terror group" (Ali 2015). *Charlie* was a stratagem and the journal's sordid reputation in the Islamist world, a mere by-product of a thriving grievance industry designed to serve the needs of dueling muftis.

In unison, #JesuisCharlie would breed its dark dialectical other. French Comic Dieudonné would be amongst the first apostatic voices to "blaspheme" the spirit of January 11th and the civil religion it purported to erect. Fellow traveler of the reformed communist come Le Penist, Alain Soral, who was notorious for his unbridled anti-Americanism, anti-Semitism, and anti-americo-Sionisism, on the evening of the 11th, would post on his Facebook page: "know that tonight, what interests me, is that I feel like *Charlie Coulibaly*". Within a mere 30 min, the post would receive 1938 likes and be shared 137 times (L'Express 2016). Dieudonné was well aware of what he was doing and deliberately opted to tests the Republic's own tolerance and engender a debate on the hypocrisies of freedom of expression. In the process, he also knew that his remarks would serve to protract the "fractures". The Republic was cornered. Would it let the remark pass or "take the bait" and apply its own law forbidding apologies for terrorism. It chose the latter and Dieudonné's facile provocation, "*un parole de paix*", would oblige many who occupied the gray zone to become full-fledged members of the anti-Charlie camp. For some, the Republic's sanction of "Charlie Coulibaly" served as proof of the existence of double standards in its policy and its latent Islamophobia and pro-Sionism. Moreover, the subtlety of the phrase and the post lie in its problematization of who the real victim was. But the obvious recurring question that perplexed was why *Charlie* had the right and not Dieudonné. According to Cypora Petitjean Cerf, following the scandal, some students in the *banlieue* did indeed, "glorify Amedy Coulibaly . . . the

young fans of Coulibaly could easily appropriate his anti-Semitism . . . as for the recurring question . . . it is not malicious if we understand the hyper-sensibility of infants and adolescents to injustice" (Cerf 2015, pp. 56–57). However, this hyper-sensibility also reproduces itself as hyper-sensibility to the imagined virility and violence bound in the mythos of *Charlie Coulibaly*, one which offers a compensatory salve to many youth who cannot define their masculinity in terms of the normative pathway of school, work, family etc. *Charlie Coulibaly* was thus a mythical sign in which the experience of alienation and exclusion were magically transformed into triumph and belonging. On the other hand, we should also recall that the entire sequence may simply be just another episode in puerile adolescent rebellion.

Soon, the cyber-world was overcome by variations on a theme: *#jenesuispascharlie*, *#jesuiscoulibaly*, *#jesuiskouachi*,*#che* (well-done!) etc. All of these iterations, occupying a spectrum between playful bad taste and real menace, registered en vivo the chasm between the two Frances. Some tweets rendered homage to the heroism of the terrorists and elevated them to the status of celebrities, while others simply noted that *Charlie*, racist and Islamophobic, had gone too far and this is what happens when . . . And there were of course a plethora of "Third ways" and mixed feelings epitomized in the tweets, graffiti, and posters which read "I am not Charlie, I am not a Terrorist, I am Muslim". The two (or many) Frances would collide in the virtual world in a nexus of posturing, shaming, and sarcastic bloviating. And in between the celebrations of *Charlie's* demise and the super-ego that chided them, a shadow quickly formed over January 11th transmuting its civic religion into an exercise in cynical disavowal. Yet the voices that sought to call into question the purported sanctity of the event were by no means unanimous, homogenous, or entirely Muslim. According to Romain Badouard, there exists three paradigmatic articulations of anti-*Charlie*: a "*JesuisCharlie*, mais", which readily criticized all rhetoric of the national Union and saw through the state's attempt to recuperate French emotion for its own political purposes. This critique generally came from the left and deplored the Republic's usage of *Charlie* as a reason to ramp up national security and reduce civil liberties; the second iteration was a conservative and sincere "*JenesuispasCharlie*" coming from, amongst others, "Catholic Zombies" and the extreme religious right; and the third version was that of "ordinary Muslims" who rejected *Charlie* on the grounds of racism and Islamophobia (see Badouard 2016). The former two paradigms were eclipsed by the mediatized preoccupation with the third whose viral-ness was actually negligible in comparison.

3.5. Don't Laïk . . .

Nevertheless, one must also remain attentive to the nascent waves of fundamentalist and Islamist political cultures in the *banlieues* and in France, in general. Although a minority, the radicalized and the radicalizing exist. Regardless of the fact that their "prison Islam", "internet Islam" or "Islam for idiots" is not representative of the complexity of the religion, it must be recognized as a perverse current of political Islam whose mutations require the greatest of vigilance. It is not without consternation that on a stroll through St. Denis or Aubervilliers, one hears a disconcerting refrain: here Frenchman let you know "you're no longer in France, you're in the 93" and in their recoding and reterritorialization of the banlieue as "their's", they construct their identities as *banlieuesard* and often as Muslims against "eux, la française". Indeed, the world of social media may not be the only map of the complex constellation of faith and feeling that reverberates in the hexagon, home to Europe's largest Muslim population.

In other words, *Charlie* has to also be read in synchrony with the larger aesthetic and cultural constellation of the *banlieue*, including the halalisation of its landscape and the hip hop that forms its soundtrack. Here one sees the "crystallization" of the syncretic, on-line, and modernized Islam of adolescents who fuse the imagined virility of Islam with hip-hop culture and create a unique and, to pastiche Olivier Roy, "de-cultured" version of 'street Islam'. This new religion is bereft of tradition and transmission. It is obsessed with dogma, not theology. It basks in strict social and political interdictions and leaves no room for fluidity or multiple interpretations. Often it plays between the disparate universes of hip-hop consumption and indulgence (jewelry, cars, dreams of harems of

groupies—this is often coupled with anti-Semitism, misogyny, and homophobia) and a religiously militant or "consciousness-based" secondary-coding that responds to the position of second generation Muslims in France. It is the latter that participates in the radicalization process, precisely where the ordinary delinquent becomes a heroic warrior for God. This is the Islam of "generation Grand Theft Auto".

The French hip hop community was never fond of *Charlie*. For the soundtrack to the 2013 film *Le Marche* which commemorated and told the story of the 1983 March for Equality and Against Racism (later dubbed the Marche des Beurs), a French rap collective, including legends such as Akhenaton and Kool Shen, contributed the track "Marche". And here, Nekfu would rail against those "theorists who wanted to silence Islam" and "demand an autodafé for those dogs at Charlie Hebdo". The staff of *Charlie* was simply confused and failed to understand how a group of rappers could take a page out of the play book of the extreme right and use the release of a filmic homage to anti-racism to lash out, *in a communitarian manner*, at the historically anti-racist *Charlie* (Le Monde 2013). Following January 11th, the same rappers condemned the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks, but did not retract the criticisms expressed in "Marche".

On January 1, 2015, another rapper, Médine, would release on Youtube the first single from his new album entitled "Don't Laïk". A devastating and acerbic critique of French secularism and its proponents, when asked about the song' significance, the rapper cleverly equivocated: "Don't Laïk is to *laïque* fundamentalists what the *Charlie Hebdo* caricatures are to religious fundamentalists" and the previous author of "Blockkk Identitaire" would castigate those other "laïque identitarians" who "march on the streets of Paris next those ultra-laïque movements who decry 'Islamisation' (Médine 2015). And while the rapper may have claimed to be symbolically inverting the spirit of caricature that defined Charlie (Médine 2015), there was nothing funny about the clip and the lyrics where self-proclaimed "Islamo-racailles (thugs)" who stared menacingly into the camera as Médine called them to: "crucify the laïcards like at Golgotha . . . If I apply Sharia law, the thieves won't be able to put their hands up when the cops come . . . I am cutting down the tree of *laïcité* before they put us on the ground . . . your veil, my sister, in this country its Don't Laïk . . . laïcité is only a shadow between the light and the illuminated, we are the scarecrows of the Republic, the elites are the proselytizers and the ultra-*laïque* propagandists, I'm good with Allah, don't need to *laïcise* myself . . . we're all going to paradise, only if you believe". The *racaille*, previously a lowly delinquent, has now been recast into an anti-republican and anti-secular militant. He is a soldier of God in a celestial war that plays itself out in the streets of European cities. For Médine and his cohorts, religion is "cool:" it is less an order of oppression than something that gives the oppressed the agency to take on their oppressors—a political hermeneutic and powerful place of authority deployed to assail those who are perceived to have excluded you and profane all that they hold sacred. Iconoclasm vs. Iconoclasm in a spiral of provocation and retaliation. The song would become an anthem for many of the disabused who were *JenesuispasCharlie*. Furthermore, as Kepel remarks, it would embolden the "profanations of the republican sacred" that circulated on and around January 11th, the evening of which it would receive 1000 viewers with a total of almost a million by the end of the month (Kepel 2016, pp. 290–91). As a sort of visual-aural supplement to *JenesuispasCharlie* and corrosion of the spirit of January 11th, it would counter-blaspheme. In the video's final moments, Marianne is seen eating tri-colored cake marked Halal (Figure 4).

Figure 4. "Don't Laïk".

4. In Search of the People . . .

4.1. The Universal and the Really Concrete

The divergences evinced in and around January 11th weakened the generally perceived permanence of the Republican vulgate. They also posed the question of whether the crisis of solidarity, now exacerbated by the erection of new identitarian borders within the Republic, could be remedied with appeals to that same vulgate. In addition, the event also illuminated the paradoxes laden within the Republic's historical attempts to institutionalize social mixity and simultaneously supplement the realities of economic and social inequity with appeals to symbolic integration and the routine re-invocations of classical Republican ideological tropes. In the post-January 11th reckoning, references to "the people" and "fraternity" were repeated, by people and "zombies" alike, to abreact the traumas. Of course, the repetition of such categories does not magically bring about their realization. And the tensions between the abstract and in particular, between the universal and the concrete, seemed to reach a querulous crescendo. "The People", already a contentious category, was again subject to interrogation, but this time, in terms of the concept's use and limits in engaging with and explaining pluralist societies. If "the people" have historically functioned as a transcendent threshold where particularities dissolve, following January 11th, many asked, with varying degrees of irony, "what color are the people", "what class are the people?", "where do the people live?", . . . "did the people really descend into the streets on January 11th?" etc. Insofar as Republican political theory is constituted by a set of overlapping and coextensive concepts and signifiers, debates concerning the existence and make-up of the people inherently damage the power of the vulgate *tout court*, including the wellspring of the Republican sacred, fraternity.

4.2. The Movement of January 11th: Of Fraternity and Conviviality

The civil religious conceptual supplement to the people is found in fraternity, an idea which was also revived and re-interrogated with vigor after January 11th. Republics understand the purpose of politics to be not happiness or prosperity, but rather solidarity and fraternity. Stated otherwise, unlike liberal democracies, the republican ethos is not an association of strangers who search for a means of peacefully coexisting and staying out of each other's way. Unlike liberal democracies,

republics are not simple institutional frameworks that provide the guard rails for the excesses of the state of nature. They are places of the common where citizenship is not simply a juridical category, but also the occasion for friendship and the creation of shared political passions. Fraternity is a type of political alchemy. It is a process where the individual will dissolves into the social—where freedom is not experienced as the pure articulation of self, but indeed grasped in the liberation from the self. On the one hand, it is fraternity which is wielded to compensate for the lacunae and contradictions found in the practices of liberty and equality. It is a symbolic buttress against the deficits laden in these categories and a means of gesturing towards solidarity in conditions of inequity. On the other hand, it is the highly ambitious project of mandating the dialectical play of the individual and the social with the latter functioning as the precondition of the former. In Durkheimian terms, it moreover assumes the codependence of social transformation (reform) and the transformation of consciousness (typified by effervescence). Above all, as something ephemeral, as something bound in the mystique of the nation, fraternity participates in the republican sacred. And according to Régis Debray, "as all of our great moments of fraternity make reference to a mythical order of the sacred (ancestors, ideals, nation), it appears necessary to begin by asking what the sacred wants to say concretely" (Debray 2009, p. 16).

This question was posed again following January 11th, most forcefully by the philosophers Patrick Viveret and Abdennour Bidar, who not only examined how fraternity and the Republican sacred interact, but, paradoxically, sought to institutionalize them on the level of policy and praxis. Acknowledging that "fraternity is the sacred", they were, amongst others, instrumental in the creation of the *Mouvement du 11 Janvier* which seeks to "make live and make bigger the spirit of January 11th" and battle against the possibility of waning effervescence and the cold return to the profane (see Mouvementdu11 2015). In addition, both would consecrate philosophical essays exploring the historical problem of "making the sacred last" without profaning it. Frustrated by the French Republic's longstanding status as rhetoric or a mere series of ideas, for his part, Bidar observed that the lack of social mixity in France, despite the Republic's best intentions, remained and impermeable obstacle to any realization of the fraternal. Following from this, he demanded that fraternity be treated not as a mythical horizon of republicanism, but something learned, practiced, and taught in schools and at home.

In the logic of political consciousness and merging, for Bidar, this also meant that France must now confront its old demons (colonialism, racism etc.) and Muslims "also have a meeting with theirs. We see know the most visible pure and simple perversions of Islam: terrorist hatred, jihadist ideology, rampant fundamentalism. But it is not the tree that hides the forest; rather there is a forest in a pitiful state. Here, in the Occident, in Muslim communities and elsewhere in the Muslim world, the same general ills; the same deficits of spiritual culture, degraded often by religious sub-cultures that forbid the exercise of intelligence, which separates religion and freedom, and translates the Arab word Islam as submission" (Bidar 2015, p. 49) Yet, in the collective auto-critique demanded by January 11th, the nation must realize that there can be no fraternity without Muslims just as Muslims must realize that there can be no nation without an Islam purged of extremist elements. Hence, January 11th inaugurates a process of battling with old demons which forms the precondition for any evocation of fraternity or the republican sacred. Beyond the simulacra of the sacred-social, the unconscious of both Islam and France need to be excavated. For Bidar, the "sublime drama of January", is the space from where a "Republican Islam of France can be born" (Bidar 2015, p. 59), and with it a "shared sacred" which competes neither with religions nor with atheisms (Bidar 2015, p. 63). In such an instantiation, a new genus of ecumenical fraternity can be erected which re-spiritualizes the nation all the while "republicanising Islam". Therefore, religions, which are neither permanent nor fixed can be brought to adapt to national contexts, rewrite their texts accordingly, and calibrate their tenets to moral frameworks of their "host" nations. They can reform themselves and simultaneously maintain their historicity and collective memory. And in these elaborate processes of rewriting, they can write themselves into the national narrative as partners in the construction of Europe and France. The question is precisely how to dialectically surpass the "war of opposing sacreds" and create a

shared sacred of peace (Bidar 2015, p. 92). The question, of course, is how to "rewrite", who does the "rewriting", and who performs the necessary "translations"?

To escape the rhetorical impasses of republicanism, Bidar proposes, amongst other things, the construction of a "ministry of Fraternity", the establishment of "spaces of fraternity" in neighborhoods and communes, the mainstreaming of "fraternal education" in public schools, the creation of governmental forums to reflect on Islam, and obligatory civic service (Bidar 2015, pp. 95–106). To these propositions, Patrick Viveret, in the name of "Fraternité, Laïcité ... Spiritualité", adds the need to "concretize the fraternal energy of the 11th" through regular fraternal exercises in public spaces, the construction of new associations, regular public debates with civil societies and the youth of the *banlieue*, and the concerted attempt to resist the political instrumentalisation of *Charlie* through a public denouncement of cultures of hyper-security (Viveret 2015, pp. 162–64). Despite the epistemic force of Bidar and Viveret's vision of a new fraternal sacred, there, nevertheless, are a series of obstacles to getting there which cannot be removed through simple institutional and collective-action practices.

Nonetheless, we cannot demand those who live in abject, sordid, or unequal conditions to revel in the spirituality of fraternity. Indeed, the symbolic dimensions of fraternity and the inclusion and overcoming that it promises may serve to parry the shocks of social and economic injustice, but it does not get rid of them. Here the question appears to be how fraternity, *laïcité*, and material conditions interact and overlap in the formal construction of the free and equal. This would require that fraternity not simply be the ritual performance of the myth found in the vulgate, but an all-encompassing strategy that works in synchrony with economic and anti-discriminatory policy measures—not as a salve, but as a project. Here we observe the basic dilemma found in French Republicanism, namely the assumption that, through institutional measures, it can transform character, make political beings, and through education and the symbolic, create virtuous citizens. The supposition that citizens are malleable or raw material to be formed by Republican dogma, is problematized by the existence of and the non-malleability of post-modern identity formations for whom religion and ethnicity remain vital empowering strategies for contestation and selfhood. How can one bring modern forms of fraternity and citizenship to confront these post-modern expressions of the rooted, embedded, and encumbered subject? How can one bring fraternity and citizenship to embrace the multiple and the mosaic in a manner that does not divest these ideas of their efficacity vis à vis the sacralisation of the political and the romance of the nation?

Top down approaches to diversity and, in this case, fraternity are rarely successful. We need to then ask, not necessarily how to produce fraternity, but *in what conditions* does fraternity and Republican culture "happen". This inquiry necessitates that we evade the great paradox of so much "thin" cosmopolitanism and diversity politics, namely the simultaneous deployment of the singularity of identity and its complete disavowal. If fraternity indeed signifies the gesture towards the concrete universal, it must seek a manner to escape such a paradox or render it more supple and dialectical. Hence, in lieu of the monolithic virtues of abstract notions of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, we may want to engage with the conditions for "ordinary virtues" where forms of common decency express, on a modest level, the will to fraternity. We glimpse this in Paul Gilroy's theorization of convivial cosmopolitan life where one finds "processes of cohabitation and interaction that have made multiculturalism an ordinary feature of social life" and also "the point where multiculturalism breaks down", introducing "a measure of distance from the pivotal term 'identity,'" and engendering a "radical openness that ... makes a nonsense of closed, fixed, reified identity and turns attention towards the always unpredictable mechanisms of identification" (Gilroy 2005, p. xv). In convivial technologies of sociality and "distancing", cosmopolitan citizenship finds perhaps the foundations for an effervescent republican cosmo-polis and spaces of *phronesis* that injects itself into the public political life through ordinary forms of interaction and openness. And, as Gilroy continues, conviviality is also a bastion for a universal ethics or rather "a 'vulgar' or 'demotic' cosmopolitanism" where the "cosmopolitan attachment finds civic and ethical value in the process of exposure to otherness" and "glories in the ordinary virtues and ironies—listening, discretion, friendship—that can be cultivated

when mundane encounters with difference can be rewarding" (Gilroy 2005, p. xv). Simultaneously, we must not fall into the trap of opposing top-down "recipes for good governance" to an ethics of the ground and recognize that fraternity is not a mystical crystallization either, but the product of an ethical, political, and geographical coalescence that can *only* flourish within certain spatial and governmental arrangements. And here we also evince the other great dilemma of Republicanism, namely how to institutionally and juridically mandate mixity and fraternity—forced to be free, forced to be friends . . . .

4.3. Laïk . . .

January 11th was a political and social moment and "place" which allegorized the existence of a divided France, a divided left, and a divided "people". It cast doubt on the generally perceived eternity of the myths and rites described in the Republican story, while begging for it to be rewritten and heavily annotated. It precipitated a series of difficult psychic processes and purgings on both the level of the nation and within the worlds of a changing Islam. Above all, it reposed the question of the rapport between the sacred and the political in and around the totems of Marianne, the hashtags of *Charlie*, and the larger rubric of *laïcité*. In his response to *Charlie*, Debray would rhapsodize, "there can be no society without sacrality. *Laïcité* was the republican sacred. The sacred is non-negotiable and federating. When we no longer assume the republican sacred . . . hope gets placed elsewhere" (Debray 2015). But when besieged by rival sacralities and burdened by fractures that reveal only spectacles of solidarity, the Republican sacred must be understood as a fragile and tenuous construct whose "health" is only momentarily bolstered in ritual. Furthermore, we cannot simply assume the sanctity of neither the sacred nor *laïcité*. They are not givens, but part of our symbolizing activity and capacity to imagine the political and social health. Perhaps they are non-negotiable, but what we saw on January 11th and its afterlives is the need to labor in their name and continue to refine them as ideas, energies, and passions. The question is how to assure greater transparency in the deliberation where such refining occurs and also the inclusion of multiple voices which are, nonetheless, bound in the shared language of non-domination. *Laïcité* is the precondition of such a shared language and a shared life world. As such, it can be held sacred. This being said, we cannot say whether the victories won and the sacred unions forged in the name of the concept in 1905 can be won and forged again in a post-*Charlie* and post-November 13 national setting. The next chapter of the Republican story remains to be written and it is far from clear what shape it will take.

Stated otherwise, the republic, like "the people", is the name of a problem and a process. As such, can it truly be non-negotiable, or should it aspire towards a suppleness that may facilitate the completion of the revolution. Yet, amongst the problems we face here is not simply the risk of "liberalizing" the Republic or rather succumbing to the temptation to become like America (which, in many ways would be much easier), but rather the tragic reckoning with how comprising on or rendering less "thick" one Republican principle potentially collapses the entire Republican edifice, comprehensive as it seeks to be. Perhaps the sacred is a vital component for republican society; perhaps the symbolic is a necessary condition for collective life; however, they lose their aura and capacity to enchant when they appear as compensatory salves and ideological *obscura* designed to mask the hypostasized structural inequalities that further push to fracture to its breaking point. Hence, one is led to ask whether the ultimate health of the political sacred depends on the ultimate health of material conditions which, de facto, would engender greater mutual trust and solidarity, therefore allowing for the symbol to speak in a more robust and total manner to all citizens, as opposed to being the occasion to measure good citizens from not good enough citizens. Underneath all of this looms a much larger troubling set of issues, namely those concerning the normativity of "republican values", their imbrication in the larger nexus of "Western values", and, often, their selective deployments and instrumentalization in various imaginary dichotomies of conflict which all too easily get sutured in slogans like *Je Suis Charlie*.

However, no one can deny the importance of January 11th, 2015, perhaps not for its recasting of the Republican Sacred or rekindling of Civil Religion, but rather for how it functioned as a space of purging, agonizing, questioning, and wistful awakening to the realities of the new geopolitical landscape and the realities of the return of religion, including those which are far from being civil, let alone civilized. Some four years later, after a spate of more and more brutal terror, the commemoration and mourning have unfortunately become repetitious, fatigued, and absorbed, and have transformed into a mediatized spectacle. Another attack, another demonstration, another march . . . and we will do it again and again, in the name of the Republic and its sacredness whose virtuality we will endlessly strain to actualize. But, perhaps, this provides us with the occasion to think through not the problem of the sacred, but the problem of how the nation and the political, like the person, is haunted by a traumatic core, by the specter of irrationalism and violence. The nation too carries trauma and longs to return to normal. And there are those traumas that are ritually mourned and others whose names are dare not spoken.

Strangely enough, there was an exception and, perhaps, a true moment of the Republican Sacred and Civil Religion: Indeed, when France won the World Cup in July of 2018, the people descended into the streets again, but this time, not to mourn and cry, but to dance, carouse, and celebrate. In this "event's" unconscious, France was redeemed from the trauma of the recent cycle of terrorism and the reality of the fracture momentarily dissipated. But, World Cup victories are symbolic too . . . .

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religions

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Article

Taxpayer's Religiosity, Religion, and the Perceptions of Tax Equity: Case of South Korea

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of religiosity and religion on tax equity. Most prior studies have argued that higher taxpayers' religiosity reduces tax evasion and increases the level of tax morale. Various studies have also shown that tax evasion and morale vary with perceptions of tax equity, including exchange, horizontal, and vertical equities. However, the relationship between religiosity and tax equity has not been studied actively. Especially in Korea, there has been considerable debate about the implementation of taxation for clergies. Therefore, the relationship between religiosity and tax equity will be analyzed clearly using Korean survey panel data. The results of this study show that religiosity and religion do not affect exchange and horizontal equity; however, each religion affects vertical equity. This implies that economic and social incentives are more effective than religiosity and religion on taxpayers' tax evasion or morale.

Keywords: religiosity; religion; tax equity; exchange equity; horizontal equity; vertical equity

1. Introduction

Taxes are generally the most important source of financing public goods and services, and taxation is a powerful policy tool for income redistribution. Fostering voluntary cooperation is a major concern among policymakers for the tax system to succeed, especially when it depends greatly on self-assessment. However, if taxpayers perceive the current tax system as inequitable, they would have unfavorable attitudes toward taxes and might lose confidence in the system. Thus, taxpayers may respond to inequity by engaging in questionable activities to reduce their tax dues. Tax evasion refers to intentionally paying less tax than the law requires as a deliberate act of noncompliance by illegal means (Hessing et al. 1988).

For policymakers to establish an optimal tax system, it is crucial to understand the underlying motivations that may affect compliance behavior. Economists often view an individual's tax behavior as a rational choice to maximize his or her own material outcomes. However, behavioral scientists presume that individuals are motivated not only by economic incentives, but also by social and psychological factors. Behavioral approaches, in other words, emphasize how taxpayers' attitudes and beliefs toward the tax system are formulated. For example, in a comprehensive review of tax compliance research, Jackson and Milliron (1986) note that equity perceptions are associated with behavioral intentions regarding tax compliance. Similarly, Spicer and Becker (1980) suggest that taxpayers may choose tax evasion to adjust for perceived inequities.

Although social and psychological factors as well as tax justice may affect taxpayers' tax evasion, other previous studies have shown that religion or belief affects tax evasion. Additionally, in Islamic and Christian teaching, *sadaqah* (contribution) or tithing is highly encouraged to nurture the values of giving to the needy, which are then simply applied in contributing to the development of the nation by

paying taxes (Benk et al. 2016). Also, in Korea, religion is connected with politics and becomes a social issue (Hong et al. 2016) (e.g., the debate over legislation of clergy taxation).

Notwithstanding the importance of equity perceptions in tax compliance or tax evasion behavior, scarce research has been conducted on the factors that may affect taxpayers' different perceptions on tax equity. Therefore, this study attempts to discover the relationship between religiosity, religion, and taxpayers' perception of equity of the Korean tax system. In particular, using attitudinal data from a finance panel survey conducted by the Korea Institute of Public Finance from 2009 to 2016, we focus on taxpayers' judgments of exchange, horizontal, and vertical equities. Exchange equity refers to perceived benefits from the government in exchange for taxes paid. Horizontal and vertical equities refer to the equitable distribution of tax burdens among taxpayers of similar income levels and the differential distribution of tax burdens between those of different income levels, respectively. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of religiosity and religion on the perception of tax equity. There are three main categories of tax equity: Exchange equity is the equity between the taxpayer and the government, while horizontal and vertical equities refer to the equity between and among taxpayers, respectively.

The study contributes to academic research on religion and tax equity by highlighting the religion or religiosity of taxpayers' distributive equity perceptions. Although tax behavioral studies have determined the impact of socio or demographic variables on taxpayer compliance, they do not provide clear explanations as to why these differences exist. We posit that, based on social and psychological approaches that emphasize the role of taxpayers' attitudes toward the tax system, demographic variables affect taxpayers' perceived equity, as equity perceptions represent their judgments and beliefs about the tax system. This study investigates religion and socio-economic factors that impact taxpayers' perceptions of distributive tax equity, including exchange, horizontal, and vertical equity, to address the missing link between demographic variables and tax compliance. Therefore, analyzing whether religion or religiosity has a greater influence on recognizing tax equity than economic incentives will contribute to the view that religion and politics are independent, not confrontational.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows: Section 2 provides a review of prior literature on the perceptions of tax equity. Section 3 presents potential demographic determinants of equity perceptions and an empirical research design. The last section discusses the empirical results and their implications, with policy recommendations.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Literature on the Determinants of Tax Equity

The first economic analysis of taxpayer compliance behavior can be traced to the pioneering work of Allingham and Sandmo (1972), whose analytical model (henceforth, "the AS model") is a straightforward application of the "economics of crime" (Becker 1968) to individual income tax reporting decisions. It is assumed that taxpayers are motivated only to maximize their individual financial outcomes by trading the benefits of evasion for its costs. A taxpayer's decision to evade taxes is analogous to portfolio choices between a certain tax position, or honest reporting, and the risky prospect of evasion (Sandmo 2005). Thereafter, Yitzhaki (1974) modified the AS model by incorporating a realistic penalty structure, in which fines are proportional to the taxes evaded. The AS model partially modified by Yitzhaki (1974) is the ostensibly standard economic model of tax evasion, and produces comparative statistics to prove that state tax evasion is negatively associated with such economic deterrence factors as tax rates, detection probability, and penalty rate.

The standard model's predictions have been extensively examined, both empirically and experimentally (Kirchler et al. 2008). However, the standard economic approach fails to satisfactorily account for the high level of compliance observed in the real world. Considering a low detection probability and mild fines, a taxpayer's rational choice in the economic deterrence framework involves evading most of his or her taxable income. Alm et al. (1992) stressed that the tax compliance behavioral

puzzle may be the reason why people pay taxes, not evade them. The same researchers also provided experimental evidence that some people willingly comply with their tax obligations, even when no enforcement exists. Second, the negative relationship between tax rates and tax evasion is somewhat counterintuitive and is sometimes called the "Yitzhaki puzzle." Empirical findings on the effects of higher tax rates on compliance are inconsistent. Because economic incentives alone do not adequately describe tax evasion behavior, recent studies have increasingly focused on noneconomic factors that should be considered in the analysis of compliance decisions.

A significant paradigm shift has occurred from exclusively focusing on economic factors associated with individual decision making towards social and psychological factors (Alm et al. 1992). Many researchers underline the role of noneconomic factors influencing taxpayer compliance behavior, such as tax ethics (Alm and Torgler 2011), social norms (Wenzel 2004), equity perceptions (Wenzel 2003), and trust (Feld and Frey 2002), in solving the compliance puzzle. Individuals are not motivated by purely financial outcomes. Fiscal psychologists contend that noneconomic factors strongly influence taxpayers' compliance behavior. Frey (1997) asserts that individuals are endowed with civic virtue, which can be crowed out if the government violates procedural equity norms. According to Frey and Feld (2002), the relationship between taxpayers and the government can be modeled as an implicit, psychological contract. Similarly, the psychological tax contract suggests that tax inequity can crush taxpayers' "tax morale" or intrinsic motivation to pay taxes by breaching the contract.

Justice in social and psychological tax behavioral approaches is classified as distributive, procedural, and retributive justice (Wenzel 2003). They refer to equitable treatment by the government, by tax authorities, and of tax evaders, respectively. Tax scholars underline the importance of equity and justice considerations in taxpayer compliance decisions. For example, Wenzel (2002) claimed that taxpayers are more concerned about procedural and distributive justice than personal outcomes when they strongly identify with the nation. Frey and Feld (2002) believed that taxpayers' willingness to pay taxes will increase when tax officials treat them respectfully. If taxpayers perceive that rule breakers are not properly punished, they may no longer feel obliged to adhere to the laws (Rechberger et al. 2010). Among these three dimensions of justice, we concentrate on the demographic factors that shape distributive equity perceptions.

Distributive tax justice refers to the equitable exchange of benefits and costs, and the equitable distribution of tax burdens among taxpayers. Three distributional dimensions of exchange, horizontal, and vertical equities exist. Exchange equity refers to taxpayers' perceived benefits in exchange for taxes paid. Horizontal equity requires a similar treatment among those who are equal, whereas vertical equity requires an appropriate differentiation among those who are unequal (Porcano 1985). Similarly, Jackson and Milliron (1986) concluded in their review of tax compliance studies that tax equity seems to involve at least two dimensions: The equity of the trade—or the benefits received for the tax dollars given—and the equity of the taxpayer's burden relative to that of other individuals (i.e., taxpayers' perceptions of the tax system's horizontal and vertical equities).

Equity theory suggests that individuals who feel they are in an inequitable situation strive to eliminate their distress by restoring equity (Adams 1965). In a tax compliance context, taxpayers who perceive the tax system as inequitable are likely to report less income to restore that equity (Cowell 1992). One research strand stresses the strong link between the perception of distributive equity and tax evasion. For example, Bordignon (1993) contended that tax equity perceptions may be more important than the tax rate itself in influencing compliance behavior. Further, Roberts and Hite (1994) reported that taxpayers' perception of the tax system's equity plays an important role in noncompliance behavior. Kim et al. (2005) provide experimental evidence that both conventional economic forces and equity considerations are significant in reporting decisions. They assert that the compliance puzzle can be reconciled by incorporating behavioral factors, such as perceptions of exchange inequity, into the analysis. Drawing on the social psychology of distributive tax justice, the study begins with the assumption that perceived distributive tax equity can be measured using the three aspects of equity perceptions.

Recently, Kirchler et al. (2008) integrated economic and psychological factors into two comprehensive dimensions: the trust in, and power of, authorities. They established a conceptual "slippery slope" framework for tax compliance, which postulates that power and trust define different interaction climates between tax authorities and taxpayers. Tax compliance can be achieved either by exerting power or by strengthening trust. Tax morale, such as social norms and perceived equity, may significantly enhance voluntary compliance, whereas audits and fines come into play in cases of enforced compliance.

2.2. Literature on the Relationship between Religiosity (or Religion) and Tax Morale

Religiosity has been commonly considered in previous research using two orientations—religious affiliation and religious commitment (Benk et al. 2016). Religious affiliation is the self-identified association of a person to a religion, such as being Muslim, Christian, or Buddhist. Religious commitment is defined as the degree to which a person adheres to his/her religious values, beliefs, and practices and uses them in daily living (Worthington et al. 2003). Religious commitment can be divided into two types, namely intrapersonal religiosity that originates from the beliefs and attitudes of an individual, and interpersonal religiosity that develops from the involvement of an individual with a religious community or organization (Benk et al. 2016). Church attendance, church participation, religious education, religious beliefs, importance of religion, religious guidance, and trust in the church to represent religious observance are some of the proxies used to measure religiosity commitment in prior literature (Torgler 2006).

However, these measurements are not linked clearly in prior studies, neither with intrapersonal nor with interpersonal religiosity, except for two studies by Benk et al. (2016) and Mohdali and Pope (2014), which investigated the impact of religiosity commitments (intrapersonal and interpersonal religiosity) on only one of the dimensions in the tax compliance inventory, namely voluntary tax compliance, which underlies taxpayers' behavioral intentions. In short, a significant positive influence of religiosity on tax compliance in prior research is solely based on general religious commitment. Thus, there is insufficient understanding on which religious commitment dimension has a real impact on tax compliance.

Moreover, religiosity has a minimal, but significant, positive impact on taxpayers' attitudes. Therefore, general religiosity explains approximately only 5% of taxpayers' willingness to comply with tax laws and only 4% of their enforced tax compliance attitudes (Benk et al. 2016). These findings support the causal relationships between religion and tax compliance. Religious belief is expected to provide an internal control for an individual to clearly distinguish between good and bad behavior. However, the limited study on the influence of religiosity on tax compliance was mainly conducted in developed countries using secondary data (Benk et al. 2016).

Additionally, Gupta and McGee (2010) studied the effect of religion on tax evasion perceptions in Australasia. In an Australian study, Buddhists were significantly less opposed to tax evasion than Roman Catholics, Protestants, or Orthodox Christians. Roman Catholics were significantly less opposed to tax evasion than Protestants. Differences in mean scores for other comparisons of religion were not statistically significant. Ross and McGee (2011a) studied the effect of religion and sociodemographic variables on tax evasion in Malaysia. They found that Protestants were most opposed to tax evasion, followed by Roman Catholics, Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists. In addition, those who were in the middle of the "God is important" statement spectrum were least opposed to tax evasion. Ross and McGee (2011b) also studied attitudes toward tax evasion in Switzerland. They found that respondents in the "Other" category, which presumably included atheists and agnostics, were most opposed to tax evasion, followed by Protestants, Roman Catholics, and Muslims.

The most straightforward impact might be based on whether a respondent believes in God. On the other hand, one can claim that belief in God might not be as important for a person to influence his or her behavior (Strielkowski and Čábelková 2015). For this reason, we include both the variable indicating the belief and the variable indicating how important God is in one's life. Another critique of these indicators might be the idea that what is important in religiosity is not only in how one believes, but also in what one does. We therefore included a variable to map how often one attends religious

services. This variable is also important in that one may suggest that the morality of the respondent is influenced to a large extent by the community to which one belongs and might be reinforced by the information one gets from the priest.

3. Research Methodologies and Data

3.1. Research Methodologies

In many studies on taxpayer's perceptions of a concept, discrete models have been used to pose factors affecting the perception level. Since the perception data are categorical in nature, some studies have relied on logistic regression, while others have used multinomial or nested logit models (Rifaat and Chin 2007). The main analytical subject of this study is the exchange, horizontal, and vertical equity, where the exchange and horizontal equity are 5-level ordinal scales whereas the vertical equity is 4-level non-ordinal scales, composed of a baseline level and qualitatively different three other levels. Therefore, we apply the multinomial logit model in the analysis of vertical equity and the ordered probit model in the analysis of exchange and horizontal equity.

Recognizing that the discrete perception of tax equity is ordinal in nature, some studies have considered the ordered probit (OP) model to be more suitable. This choice lies in the assumption of the distribution of errors (Rifaat and Chin 2007; Renski et al. 1999). The ordered logit model is based on the assumption that the errors are independently and identically distributed with the logistic distribution whereas the OP model is based on the assumption that the distribution of errors is a multivariate normal distribution. However, the results from the OP can be fairly similar to that of the ordered logit model (O'Donnel and Connor 1996).

Hence, the OP was suitable for use in this study and was therefore employed. The theoretical framework of the OP model, including the modeling, process, and method of evaluation, has been discussed thoroughly in many studies (Rifaat and Chin 2007). The general specifications and processes are described below.

The perception levels of tax equity are classified into different proportion categories in terms of respondent levels (Kim and Yoon 2017) (i.e., 1: Very low, 2: Generally low, 3: Adequate, 4: Generally high, and 5: Very high; however, in case of vertical equity, the classification is composed of a baseline level and qualitatively different three other levels, 0: "It is an equitable system that reflects income level," 1: "It favors high-income earners," or 1: "It favors middle-income earners," and 1: "It favors low-income earners."). These categories are typically considered as ordinal outcomes (i.e., from very low (1) tax equity to very high). Ordered discrete choice models are generally used to analyze such ordinal response data. Among these models, the OP is the most commonly used approach (Anarkooli et al. 2017). Let us assume that y_{ni} is the perception level of tax equity, n, by respondent i. The OP model assumes that the perception level can be represented by a latent and continuous variable, ($y_{ni}{}^{*}$), which is related to X_{ni} given as:

$$y^{*}_{ni} = X_{ni}\,\beta + \varepsilon_{ni} \forall_i \quad (1)$$

where X_{ni} is a vector of explanatory variables (religiosity, religion, or other control variables), β is a vector of unknown parameters to be estimated, and ε_{ni} is the random error term capturing the effect of unobserved factors, which is assumed to follow a normal distribution with a zero mean and unit variance (Anarkooli et al. 2017).

In the respondent's survey panel data presented in this study, the perception levels of religiosity or religion are scaled to 2 levels: dummy variable 0 or 1. The dependent variables (i.e., exchange equity and horizontal equity) are then ordered based on several categories. For the taxpayer's perception level, n, to occur from respondent i, the observed perception level, (y_{ni}), is related to an unobserved (latent) variable, ($y_{ni}{}^{*}$), and is expressed as follows:

$$y_{ni} = j \Rightarrow \mu_{j-1} \leq y^*_{ni} \leq \mu_j \Leftrightarrow \begin{cases} 1 \text{ if } y^*_{ni} = \text{“Very low”exchange or horizental equity} \\ 2 \text{ if } y^*_{ni} = \text{“Generally low”exchange or horizental equity} \\ 3 \text{ if } y^*_{ni} = \text{“}\textit{Adequate}\text{”exchange or horizental equity} \\ 4 \text{ if } y^*_{ni} = \text{Generally high exchange or horizental equity} \\ 5 \text{ if } y^*_{ni} = \text{“Very high”exchange or horizental equity} \end{cases} \quad (2)$$

where j is the number of taxpayers' perception levels (in this case, $j = 5$); and μ_1, μ_2, μ_3, μ_4, and μ_5 are unknown threshold parameters to be estimated. The predicted probabilities of the perception level, j ($j = 1, 2, 3, 4, 5$), can be estimated as:

$$P(Y_{ni} = j) = F(\mu_j - X'_{ni}\beta) - F(\mu_{j-1} - X'_{ni}\beta) \quad (3)$$

where $F(\cdot)$ is the standard normal cumulative distribution function. The model parameters (e.g., β and y_{ni}*) are estimated by the method of maximum likelihood. The marginal effects of the OP model with respect to explanatory variable l, (β_l), can be estimated as:

$$ME_{Jl|Xl} = \frac{\partial P(Y_{nl} = j|X_{ni})}{\partial X_{Il}} = \left[f\left(\mu_{j-1} - X'_{ni}\beta\right) - f\left(\mu_j - X'_{ni}\beta\right)\right] \cdot \beta_l \quad (4)$$

where $f(\cdot)$ is the density function.

Porcano (1985) asserts that from an equity perspective, taxpayers' need and ability to pay are the most significant factors that determine their perceptions of equitable tax structures. We include demographic variables in the models that can capture the taxpayers' need and ability to pay, such as a household's income level, income source, assets, consumption expenditure, number of dependents, house ownership and region. Additionally, the models also include a respondent's marital status, age, education, and gender as independent variables to confirm the group's diversity in equity perceptions.

A progressive tax system is unfavorable for high-income taxpayers with respect to exchange inequity because higher-income taxpayers face a higher marginal tax rate. They get no more benefits than lower-income taxpayers. Therefore, it is posited that they will perceive the exchange relationship with the government as more inequitable. Taxpayers in higher tax brackets gain more by evading (Porcano 1988) and, thus, if presented with opportunities to cheat, are more tempted to engage in tax noncompliance to reduce their tax dues. They are likely to judge the tax system as less favorable, compared to others in a similar income group because they are expected to be susceptible to a self-serving bias. Likewise, they will evaluate the tax system as more favorable to lower-income earners.

Those who are self-employed with business income would perceive taxpaying as more painful, considering the amount of time and effort involved (Kamleitner et al. 2012). Hence, they will reveal more negative attitudes toward exchange equity. Moreover, they have more opportunities to hide income that is not subject to third-party reporting. If they take this fact into consideration, they will evaluate the tax system as more favorable to them in terms of horizontal equity. Alternatively, if they believe much time and effort is required to earn their income, they will perceive taxpaying as a more painful loss and, thus, perceive the tax system as horizontally inequitable. This parallels studies on income source and tax behaviors, which suggest the amount of time and effort required to generate income affects compliance (Boylan and Sprinkle 2001). With income level and income source, we consider other demographic variables of interest that can capture different taxpayer categories. The multinomial logit model in the analysis of vertical equity (three cases of simple logit model) and the ordered probit model in the analysis of exchange (horizontal equity (Equation (2)) are applied. The regression models are illustrated in the following equations:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{ExchEq} \quad &= \beta_0 + \beta_1 RELIGIOSITY\ (RELIGION) + \beta_2 HIGH + \beta_3 BIZ + \beta_4 ASSET \\ &+ \beta_5 CONSUME + \beta_6 DEP + \beta_7 HOUSE + \beta_8 MAR + \beta_9 AGE \\ &+ \beta_{10} EDU + \beta_{11} GENDER + \beta_{12} METRO + \varepsilon, \end{aligned} \quad (5)$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{HorizEq} &= \beta_0 + \beta_1 RELIGIOSITY\ (RELIGION) + \beta_2 HIGH + \beta_3 BIZ + \beta_4 ASSET \\ &+ \beta_5 CONSUME + \beta_6 DEP + \beta_7 HOUSE + \beta_8 MAR + \beta_9 AGE \\ &+ \beta_{10} EDU + \beta_{11} GENDER + \beta_{12} METRO + \varepsilon, \end{aligned} \tag{6}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{VertEq} &= \beta_0 + \beta_1 RELIGIOSITY\ (RELIGION) + \beta_2 HIGH + \beta_3 BIZ + \beta_4 ASSET \\ &+ \beta_5 CONSUME + \beta_6 DEP + \beta_7 HOUSE + \beta_8 MAR + \beta_9 AGE \\ &+ \beta_{10} EDU + \beta_{11} GENDER + \beta_{12} METRO + \varepsilon, \end{aligned} \tag{7}$$

where,

ExchEq: Exchange equity denotes the five-point scale for the question, "What do you think of the benefits from the government compared to the tax you paid?" as follows: 1—"Very low," 2—"Generally low," 3—"Adequate," 4—"Generally high," and 5—"Very high."

HorizEq: Horizontal equity denotes the five-point scale for the question, "What do you think of your tax burden compared to that of counterparts with similar incomes?" as follows: 1—"Very high," 2—"Generally high," 3—"Adequate," 4—"Generally low," and 5—"Very low".

VertEq: Vertical equity denotes the answers to the question, "What do you think of the current tax system?" as follows: 1—"It is an equitable system that reflects income level," 2—"It favors high-income earners," 3—"It favors middle-income earners," and 4—"It favors low-income earners". This questionnaire consists of multinomial variables ranging from 1 to 4, but in the analysis of this study, there are three cases: neutral versus high-incomers favorable, neutral versus middle-incomers favorable, and neutral versus low-incomers favorable. See Table 1.

Table 1. Measurement of vertical equity variable: Binary scale.

		High-Incomers Favorable: It Favors High-Income Earners	**Middle-Incomers Favorable: It Favors Middle-Income Earners**	**Low-Incomers Favorable: It Favors Low-Income Earners**
		1	1	1
Neutral: It is an equitable system that reflects income level	0	[0, 1]	[0, 1]	[0, 1]

RELIGIOSITY: 1 if a household follows a religion; 0 otherwise.

RELIGION: It is classified as Protestant, Catholic, and Buddhist. In Korea, Catholicism does not oppose the introduction of clergy taxation, while Protestantism or Buddhism strongly opposes the implementation of this. Catholicism recognizes that it is natural that taxes are paid to the state, and that the priesthood activities of the clergy are also labor and taxable. Therefore, it is assumed that the effects of individual religions on tax equity will be different.

HIGH: 1 if a respondent's income is more than 40 million KRW; 0 otherwise. One USD is approximately equivalent to 1,100 KRW in our sample period.

BIZ: 1 if a household has business income; 0 otherwise.

ASSET: Natural log of the net asset per household (10,000 KRW).

CONSUME: Natural log of consumption expenditure per household (10,000 KRW).

DEP: Number of dependents per household.

HOUSE: 1 if residing house is self-owned; 0 otherwise.

MAR: 1 if a respondent is married; 0 otherwise.

AGE: 1 if a respondent is older than 40 years; 0 otherwise.

EDU: 1 if a respondent's educational level is college degree or higher; 0 otherwise.

GENDER: 1 if a respondent is female; 0 otherwise.

METRO: 1 if a household resides in the Seoul metropolitan region; 0 otherwise.

3.2. Data

This study's empirical analysis is based on a financial panel survey conducted by the Korea Institute of Public Finance (hereafter referred to as "KIPF" occasionally) in 2017. This finance panel survey has targeted households and their members since 2008 to analyze the policy effects of the tax system's revision. The survey data on taxpayers' various traits in the previous year has been published in the following year annually since 2009. This study's data was obtained by investigating household members' attitudes toward the tax system. As the survey subject, this survey defined the general households and their members who live in 15 provinces except Jeju Island in Korea as the population. The sampling frame for extracting sample households used 90% data provided by the National Statistical Office to the external statistical agency in 2005 (KIPF 2017). In addition, if the number of samples grows excessively, the non-sampling error occurring in the review process due to unreasonable survey progress can be rather large. Non-sample errors are often caused by the process of on-the-spot investigation, such as false answers of respondents, non-response or selection bias of interviewers, and unfaithful attitudes. So, it is very important to determine the appropriate sample size considering the purpose and circumstances of the investigation. The sampling unit of this survey is the primary sampling unit used in the Population and Housing Census, and the two-stage cluster sampling method was used to extract a certain number of households from the surveyed area. Therefore, the sample of this study is the credible data used by the Korean government, and it is very representative of the Korean people.

4. Results

4.1. Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Analysis

Table 2 shows the perceived tax equity and the metrics of religion. The total distribution of 104,913 respondents comprises 16,712 Protestants (15.9%), 4,552 Catholic (4.3%), 17,677 Buddhists (16.8%), and 65,972 atheists or nonreligious people (62.9%). Regarding exchange equity, 42.2% recognized that it was "Adequate," while 32.0% recognized that it was "Generally high"; 53.8% perceived horizontal equity to be "Adequate" and 34.3% perceived it to be "Generally low." As for vertical equity, 57.4% of respondents perceived the current tax system as "favorable for high-incomers." These results indicate that respondents generally perceive the tax system to be appropriate, with neither exchange nor horizontal equity being high or low; however, they have somewhat negative perceptions of vertical equity.

Table 2. Distribution of perceived equity by each religion.

Proxy	Question	Answer	Frequency				
			Protestant	Catholic	Buddhism	No Religion	Totals
Perceived exchange equity	Perception on government benefits compared with tax payment	Very low	710	227	565	2496	3998
		Generally low	1979	538	1926	7893	12,336
		Adequate	2618	756	2973	9911	16,258
		Generally high	815	176	973	3678	5642
		Very high	57	12	45	195	309
		Totals	6179	1709	6482	24,173	38,543
Perceived horizontal equity	Tax payment compared with taxpayer groups with similar levels of income	Very low	130	34	102	455	721
		Generally low	404	122	425	1556	2507
		Adequate	3387	926	3587	12,828	20,728
		Generally high	2008	545	2170	8495	13,218
		Very high	250	82	198	840	1370
		Totals	6179	1709	6482	24,174	38,544
Perceived vertical equity	Opinion on current tax system:	An equitable system	1091	293	1072	4112	6568
		Favorable for high-incomers.	2520	639	2673	10,132	15,964
		Favorable for middle- incomers.	494	102	720	2508	3824
		Favorable for low-incomers.	249	100	248	873	1470
		Totals	4354	1134	4713	17,625	27,826

Table 3 illustrates the variables' descriptive statistics. The respondents, on average, perceived the exchange and horizontal equities as inadequate and generally low, respectively. The mean of vertical equity, 2.007, implies that that the "current tax system favors the high-incomers." Less than 20% (or 18.8%) of the population belonged to a high income group, with an income of more than KRW 40 million. The sample comprised 27.6% of business income earners. The descriptive statistics of the remaining variables are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics.

	Mean	St. Dev	MIN	Q1	Med	Q3	MAX
ExchEq	2.635	0.883	1	2	3	3	5
HorizEq	2.688	0.727	1	2	3	3	5
VertEq	2.007	0.765	1	2	2	2	4
HIGH	0.188	0.391	0	0	0	0	1
BIZ	0.276	0.447	0	0	0	1	1
ASSET	9.413	1.905	0	8.889	9.749	10.436	14.534
CONSUME	7.904	0.868	1.792	7.361	8.062	8.533	11.545
DEP	1.171	1.356	0	0	1	2	7
HOUSE	0.652	0.476	0	0	1	1	1
MAR	0.636	0.481	0	0	1	1	1
AGE	0.743	0.437	0	0	1	1	1
EDU	0.273	0.445	0	0	0	1	1
GENDER	0.428	0.495	0	0	0	1	1
METRO	0.296	0.457	0	0	0	1	1

4.2. The Relationship between Religiosity (Religion) and Perceptions of Exchange and Horizontal Equities

Table 4 presents the estimated coefficients of the independent variables affecting exchange and horizontal equities, through a random-effect OP regression. First, RELIGIOSITY represents a positive coefficient, not with a statistically significant level. This result implies that religious beliefs have statistically insignificant impact on exchange and horizontal equities. The result also shows that that religiosity or religion is different based on prior studies argue that tax morale rises by lowering tax avoidance and that tax equity is not related to religiosity (Benk et al. 2016; Mohdali and Pope 2014; Worthington et al. 2003). This indirectly indicates that religiosity is not directly linked to tax equity, but leads directly to tax avoidance or tax morale. Furthermore, the results of nested models tests show that no significant increase in explanatory power of RELIGIOSITY happens for each dependent variable (LR chi-square values are 0.37 ($p < 0.5443$) and 2.64 ($p < 0.1042$)), respectively, while untabulated results of the test of homogeneity show that the distributions of each dependent variable are significantly far from being equivalent according to the value of RELIGIOSITY.

In addition, estimated coefficients for HIGH are -0.072 ($p < 0.1$) and -0.395 ($p < 0.001$), which are statistically significant for exchange equity and horizontal equity, respectively, indicating that exchange equity and horizontal equity are negatively associated with higher income levels. The estimated coefficient of BIZ for exchange equity is -0.094 ($p < 0.001$), indicating that respondents who run businesses, such as sole proprietorships, hold a negative view of exchange equity. Regression results of other variables are shown in Table 4.

Prior studies indicate that demographic factors, such as age, gender, and education, correlate with tax morale (Kornhauser 2009). Age and gender, despite being statistically weak, have a positive impact on horizontal equity perceptions. Generally, having knowledge of tax laws and fiscal policies can enhance positive attitudes toward taxes. However, this result clearly means that highly educated taxpayers in Korea perceive the current tax system as less equitable in terms of both exchange and horizontal equities. This implies that higher education is incapable of providing adequate tax knowledge; therefore, tax authorities should develop educational programs to mitigate negative attitudes toward tax.

Table 4. The effect of religiosity on perceptions of exchange and horizontal equities.

Variable	Exchange Equity			Horizontal Equity		
	Estimate		Std. Error	Estimate		Std. Error
RELIGIOSITY	0.020		0.034	0.049		0.030
HIGH	−0.072	*	0.039	−0.395	***	0.038
BIZ	−0.094	***	0.033	−0.034		0.031
ASSET	0.000		0.009	−0.041	***	0.009
CONSUME	−0.171	***	0.022	−0.305	***	0.020
DEP	0.048	***	0.015	−0.010		0.014
HOUSE	−0.003		0.034	−0.058	*	0.032
MAR	−0.145	***	0.026	−0.204	***	0.026
AGE	0.005		0.037	0.163	***	0.034
EDU	−0.096	**	0.043	−0.175	***	0.037
GENDER	0.109	***	0.043	0.058		0.038
METRO	−0.681	***	0.039	0.267	***	0.034
Log Likelihood		−46,386.226			−39,280.508	
Number of Obs.		38,543			38,544	
LR chi-square (nested model test for RELIGIOSITY)		0.37			2.64	
Chi-square		44.82 ***			21.36 ***	

Note: *, **, and *** indicate significance at the 10%, 5%, and 1% levels, respectively, for one-tailed test.

Table 5 shows the results of the analysis on the effect of each religion on exchange or horizontal equity. Regarding horizontal equity, PROTESTANT shows a statistically significant coefficient of 0.08 ($p < 0.1$), which means that the respondents are more likely to recognize the horizontal equity positively if they are a Protestant. However, CATHOLIC and BUDDHISM do not show statistically significant coefficients. Thus, unlike prior studies, the effect of religion on exchange or horizontal equity is not uniformly significant, suggesting that only Protestantism has a slightly positive effect. The coefficients of HIGH are −0.071 ($p < 0.1$) and −0.394 ($p < 0.001$), indicating negative attitudes toward exchange and horizontal equities, respectively. CONSUME also shows estimated coefficients of −0.172 ($p < 0.001$) and −0.307 ($p < 0.001$) at the statistically significant level, and the coefficients of MAR are −0.145 ($p < 0.001$) and −0.203 ($p < 0.001$) for exchange and horizontal equities, respectively. Thus, the regression results implies that both having a higher level of consumption and getting married have a negative influence on the perception of exchange and horizontal equities.

Table 5. The effect of religion on perceptions of exchange and horizontal equities.

Variable	Exchange Equity			Horizontal Equity		
	Estimate		Std. Error	Estimate		Std. Error
PROTESTANT	0.016		0.046	0.080	*	0.041
CATHOLIC	0.123		0.079	0.097		0.071
BUDDHISM	−0.003		0.045	0.007		0.040
HIGH	−0.071	*	0.040	−0.394	***	0.038
BIZ	−0.093	***	0.033	−0.033		0.031
ASSET	0.000		0.009	−0.040	***	0.009
CONSUME	−0.172	***	0.022	−0.307	***	0.020
DEP	0.048	***	0.015	−0.010		0.014
HOUSE	−0.004		0.034	−0.058	*	0.032
MAR	−0.145	***	0.026	−0.203	***	0.026
AGE	0.004		0.037	0.163	***	0.034
EDU	−0.100	**	0.043	−0.180	***	0.038
GENDER	0.109	**	0.043	0.057		0.038
METRO	−0.691	***	0.040	0.256	***	0.034
Log Likelihood		−46,385.173			−39,280.508	
Number of Obs.		38,543			38,544	

Note: *, **, and *** indicate significance at the 10%, 5%, and 1% levels, respectively, for one-tailed test.

4.3. The Relationship between Religiosity (Religion) and Vertical Equity Perceptions

Table 6 presents the coefficients of independent variables affecting vertical equity through the random-effect logistic regression. The logistic regression perceives independent variables' relative effects on one of the three inequity perceptions (e.g., high, middle, and low-incomers favorable), with reference to the baseline equity perception. Thus, compared to the base outcome—"It is an equitable system that reflects income level"—each column in the table represents the likelihood that independent variables will predict the tax system as more favorable for high-income earners (vertical inequity 2), for middle-income earners (vertical inequity 3), and for low-income earners (vertical inequity 4).

Table 6. The effect of religiosity on perceptions of vertical equity.

Variable	Vertical Inequity1 (High-Incomers)		Vertical Inequity2 (Middle-Incomers)		Vertical Inequity3 (Low-Incomers)	
	Estimate	**Std. Error**	**Estimate**	**Std. Error**	**Estimate**	**Std. Error**
RELIGIOSITY	0.021	0.032	−0.028	0.051	0.154 ***	0.065
HIGH	0.045 ***	0.045	−0.202 ***	0.070	0.175	0.085
BIZ	0.035 ***	0.035	0.052	0.054	0.091	0.071
ASSET	0.011 **	0.011	−0.022	0.016	0.061	0.025
CONSUME	0.024	0.024	−0.113 ***	0.037	0.089 ***	0.050
DEP	0.016 ***	0.016	0.160 ***	0.024	0.081	0.031
HOUSE	0.037 ***	0.037	0.148 ***	0.057	−0.016	0.073
MAR	0.035 ***	0.035	−0.312 ***	0.051	−0.675	0.066
AGE	0.038 ***	0.038	−0.385 ***	0.059	0.109 ***	0.078
EDU	0.039	0.039	−0.054	0.062	0.136	0.077
GENDER	0.040 *	0.040	0.015	0.063	0.016 ***	0.083
METRO	0.036 ***	0.036	−0.844 ***	0.061	0.372 ***	0.069
LR chi-square (nested model test for RELIGIOSITY)	0.86		1.40		3.86 **	
Chi-square	1.48		9.28 ***		5.28 **	
Log Likelihood			−29,232.87			
Number of Obs.			27,826			

Note: *, **, and *** indicate significance at the 10%, 5%, and 1% levels, respectively, for one-tailed test. Additionally, vertical inequity 1, 2, and 3 variables are defined as neutral versus high-incomers favorable [0, 1], neutrality versus middle-incomers favorable [0, 1], and neutrality versus low-incomers favorable, respectively.

First, the coefficients of RELIGIOSITY are statistically insignificant for the vertical inequity 2 (high) and 3 (middle) columns, but statistically significant at 0.154 ($p < 0.001$) for the vertical inequity 4 (low) column. Thus, it means that respondents perceive the current tax system in Korea favors low-income earners. These results support the findings that religiosity or religion affects vertical equity, unlike the insignificant effect of religiosity or religion on exchange and horizontal equity. Moreover, taxpayers who are wealthier, older, well-educated, and living inside the Seoul metropolitan areas are more likely to evaluate the tax system as equitable and, therefore, relatively more favorable to higher-income earners than to lower-income earners. Second, taxpayers who are less wealthy, unmarried, younger and poorly educated, and who have less expenditure, more dependents and a residing house are more likely to believe the tax system is relatively more favorable to middle-income earners than to believe that it is equitable. Finally, taxpayers who are highly educated, older, female and living in the Seoul metropolitan area are more likely to perceive the tax system as more favorable to lower-income earners than to judge it as equitable.

Similarly, the results of nested models tests, which are done under separate panel logit specification-for example, the test in the "Vertical inequity 2" column only uses sample data whose value of the perceived vertical equity is 0 (baseline) or 2 (high), shows that no significant increase in the explanatory power of RELIGIOSITY happens for Vertical inequity 2 and Vertical inequity 3 (LR chi-square values are 0.86 ($p < 0.3539$) and 1.40 ($p < 0.2363$)), respectively, while a significant increase in the explanatory power of RELIGIOSITY happens for Vertical inequity 4 (LR chi-square

value is 3.86 ($p < 0.0494$)). Furthermore, the untabulated results of the test of homogeneity show that the distribution of Vertical inequity 2 is equivalent, while the distributions of Vertical inequity 3 and Vertical inequity 4 are significantly inequivalent according to the value of RELIGIOSITY.

Table 7 shows the results of analyzing the effect of each religion on vertical equity. It shows statistically significant results only for Vertical inequity 4 (low).

Table 7. The effect of religion on the perception of vertical equity.

Variable	Vertical Inequity1 (High-Incomers)			Vertical Inequity2 (Middle-Incomers)			Vertical Inequity3 (Low-Incomers)		
	Estimate		Std. Error	Estimate		Std. Error	Estimate		Std. Error
PROTESTANT	0.021		0.043	−0.154	**	0.071	0.002		0.087
CATHOLIC	0.139	*	0.078	−0.085		0.136	0.276	**	0.138
BUDDHISM	−0.006		0.043	0.081		0.066	0.264	***	0.088
HIGH	−0.140	***	0.045	−0.204	***	0.070	0.172	**	0.085
BIZ	0.093	***	0.035	0.049		0.054	0.089		0.071
ASSET	−0.025	**	0.011	−0.024		0.016	0.057	**	0.025
CONSUME	0.026		0.024	−0.108	***	0.037	0.095	*	0.050
DEP	0.116	***	0.016	0.162	***	0.024	0.084	***	0.031
HOUSE	0.111	***	0.037	0.149	***	0.057	−0.017		0.073
MAR	−0.609	***	0.035	−0.313	***	0.051	−0.677	***	0.066
AGE	−0.168	***	0.038	−0.389	***	0.059	0.103		0.078
EDU	0.001		0.039	−0.038		0.063	0.149	*	0.078
GENDER	−0.079	**	0.040	0.019		0.063	0.022		0.083
METRO	−0.487	***	0.037	−0.817	***	0.063	0.388	***	0.071
Log Likelihood	−29,224.639								
Number of Obs.	27,826								

Note: *, **, and *** indicate significance at the 10%, 5%, and 1% levels, respectively, for one-tailed test. Additionally, vertical inequity 1, 2 and 3 variables are defined as neutrality versus high-incomers favorable [0, 1], neutrality versus middle-incomers favorable [0, 1], and neutrality versus low-incomers favorable, respectively.

First, in the Vertical inequity 2 column, only the coefficient of CATHOLIC is statistically significant at 0.139 ($p < 0.1$), which indicates that Catholic respondents are more likely to recognize that the tax system is more favorable for high-income earners. In addition, those who are younger and wealthier, and who have lower income, more dependents, and who runs his/her own business, have a negative perception of vertical equity.

Second, in the Vertical inequity 3 column, only the coefficient of PROTESTANT is statistically significant at −0.154 ($p < 0.05$), which means that the Protestant respondents are likely to perceive that the tax system is more favorable for middle-income earners. Furthermore, those who are older, and who have higher income, higher consumption, more dependents, are more likely to perceive that the vertical equity for middle-income earners is relatively good.

Third, regarding the Vertical inequity 4 column, PROTETANT is not statistically significant while CATHOLIC and BUDDHISM are significant at 0.276 ($p < 0.05$) and 0.264 ($p < 0.001$), respectively. This result implies that the Catholic and Buddhist respondents are more likely to perceive that the current tax system is more favorable for low-income earners. For other explanatory variables, those who are less wealthy, and who have lower income, more dependents, and who reside in the Seoul metropolitan region, are more likely to perceive that vertical equity for low-income earners is relatively poor.

5. Conclusions

The aim of this study was to investigate the link between taxpayers' religiosity, religion, and tax equity, including exchange, horizontal, and vertical equities. Prior studies argue that religiosity and religion affect tax evasion or tax morale. However, in Korea, there had been a debate about the clergy taxation before implementation in 2018, there is still a weak consensus in each religious and political community (Kim 2008; Song and Kim 2008; Lee 2011; Choi and Suh 2015). Therefore, this study intends

to prove that the relationship between religion and tax equity is different from that mentioned in prior literature.

The results of this study can be summarized as follows.

First, taxpayers' religiosity shows a statistically insignificant relationship with exchange and horizontal equity. This is inconsistent with the findings of prior studies, which showed that religiosity or religions are related to tax evasion. However, this result can be interpreted to mean that religion does not play a mediating role in the relationship between behavioral tax evasion and psychological exchange and horizontal equities. In particular, economic status variables—such as income, assets, consumption, and house ownership—and demographic variables have a statistically significant relationship with exchange or horizontal equity. This result implies that taxpayers' tax evasion can be caused by either economic or social incentives rather than by religion. On the other hand, taxpayers' religiosity shows a statistically significant relationship with vertical equity. In other words, taxpayers who follow a religion perceive the current tax system as being favorable to low-income earners, showing a negative perception of vertical equity.

Second, the relationship between religion and exchange or horizontal equity of taxpayers was statistically insignificant. Therefore, there is no difference in taxpayers' perceptions of exchange or horizontal equity according to religion. In contrast, Catholicism and Buddhism have statistically significant effects on vertical equity. That is, Catholic respondents perceive the current tax system as being favorable to high- and low-income earners, while Buddhist taxpayers perceive the current tax system as being favorable to low-income earners.

Third, taxpayers' economic features, such as income, assets and consumption, and demographic characteristics, such as number of dependents, age, marital status, home ownership and residential location, affect their perception of tax equity. This supports the results of prior studies and implies that economic and social incentives exist to determine tax evasion or tax morale.

This study can be contributive to provide important insights into the relationship between taxpayers' various characteristics and tax morale in that perceived equity may mediate or moderate their compliance behaviors.

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Religion and Politics in the People's Republic of China: An Appraisal of Continuing Mistrust and Misunderstanding

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Abstract: Western media reports on the relationship between state and religion in the People's Republic of China (PRC), American media especially often focuses on the anti-religious repression and violence in the Tibetan Autonomous and Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Regions on the western border of the country. These accounts shape a particular understanding of the PRC that fuels mistrust and misunderstanding. This essay seeks to understand elements that contribute to this journalistic orientation first by looking at government documents that outline the legal parameters for the practice of religion for both citizens and foreigners; second, by examining official U.S. oversight and critique of these; and finally, by considering accounts of accommodation and cooperation between the official institutions and religious practitioners and organizations. The PRC documents include two White Papers on official policies and a memorandum on religious charity work, "Provisions" for foreigners and "Regulations" for Chinese citizens. Also included will be critical analyses and commentaries from the U.S. Congressional-Executive Commission on China and the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor within the State Department. Finally, accounts of the evangelical Christian Gospel Rehab in Yunnan and various Hui Muslim communities and individuals in Dubai will illustrate the multiple strategies used by the government in handling religious groups. The records suggest that the mistrust and misunderstanding between the two powers grow out of vastly different assumptions, perspectives and interpretations of the situation. They show that the PRC and the U.S. are very far apart in their understanding of religion in mainland China. While the communist state understands itself to be fighting separatists and terrorists in the western border regions in order to maintain security, peace and stability in the country, the Americans see the Chinese as persecuting religious and ethnic minorities.

Keywords: religion and politics; People's Republic of China; Uyghurs; Xinjiang; Tibet

1. Introduction

Many western media accounts about religion in People's Republic of China (PRC) and the treatment of religious practitioners by its government, in particular Tibetan Buddhists and Uyghur Muslims, demonstrate well the mistrust and misunderstanding between the West and the Chinese. This is especially true for media in the U.S. This article aims to examine some of the elements that contribute to the mistrust by examining possible connections between both domestic and international politics and national policies on religious beliefs and practices in the PRC. Further, the misunderstanding between the West and the PRC has real consequences, as the tense 2018–19 U.S.–PRC trade talks and another recent prominent political-business case can attest.

On 22 January 2019, the U.S. confirmed that it would seek the formal extradition of Meng Wanzhou from Canada. Meng is a Huawei executive and daughter of Ren Zhengfei, founder of the multinational conglomerate that specializes in telecommunications equipment, consumer electronics and technology-based services and products: the corporation has been seen as both a security threat

and a challenge to American leadership in 5G (Fifth Generation) technology for over a decade. Meng was arrested at the Vancouver airport on Saturday, 1 December 2018 to face fraud charges for alleged attempts to evade U.S. sanctions on Iran while she was en route from Hong Kong to Mexico. Subsequently, four Canadians were reportedly detained and many believe that the arrests were made in retaliation to Canada's part in the Meng affair. I mention the incident here to highlight a simple reality: The People's Republic of China[1] does not trust that it or its citizens will be treated justly and fairly by the West and will take actions to stand up to what it perceives to be western bullying, even as Prime Minister Justin Trudeau assures that Meng will be treated with all the rights that accrue to her under the rule of law. "The West,"[2] in turn, believes that the Communist state is vindictive, authoritarian, beyond the rule of law with the inclination and power to command Chinese enterprises like Huawei to spy for them. Much of the North American media have reacted to the situation as if it were a clear expression of universal PRC deviousness just as the treatment of Tibetans and Uyghurs is often used to demonstrate the PRC's anti-religion stance and universal "fascism."[3]

Washington D.C.-based Richard McGregor, the Australian-born bureau chief of the *Financial Times*, for example, asks and answers his own question about the nature of the people of the PRC and specifically the Communist Party of China (CPC or CCP).

> Would a successful, richer, more self-confident China be less prickly with foreigners and more amenable to compromise in its territorial claims? I think the opposite is more likely. The core mission of the CCP, to recapture China's vaulted place amongst nations, would be invigorated the more it had the means to do so. There is nothing in the party's DNA, nor the public's, as far as one can tell, that suggests China would be more accommodating if it were more powerful and better armed (McGregor 2018).

Huawei's trouble with the U.S. and the government's demand that Meng be released and its perceived retaliatory measures in handling the extradition from Canada, appear to practically demonstrate its lack of finesse and or accommodation. The tension in the Meng Wanzhou incident is heightened because of the general mistrust: the apprehension and detention of entrepreneur Michael Spavor and ex-diplomat Michael Kovrig especially and the pressure that the Canadian government applied for the release of the Canadians by rallying allies into a bloc merely further fueled the strain.

This mutual mistrust and misunderstanding are rooted in multiple fundamental cultural differences that we are unable unfortunately to explore fully in this article. For our study of religion in the PRC here, Nanlai Cao (2018) and André Laliberté (2015) are surely correct in their shared insight that the PRC positional strategy is one that is based on historical practice: that is, it follows the traditional "state-lead, religion-follow" model and there is no indication that there is interest in adopting a monotheistic-originated, neo-liberal, western-democratic position. Richard Madsen, a sociologist at University of California San Diego, provocatively labels the PRC approach as "the neoimperial sacral hegemony" in The Upsurge of Religion in China (Madsen 2010).[4]

The Chinese and western analytical templates or lenses for the various relational dynamics between religious groups and between the groups and the state are undeniably divergent. I argue that the PRC's stated and actual approaches to religion are not adequately presented in their historical and sociological contexts and are consequently either poorly understood or not credibly received. Much

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1 I use the cumbersome People's Republic of China (PRC) rather than simply the Chinese government to acknowledge Taiwan's claim to be the Republic of China and that it represents at least a sizable portion of the Chinese population.

2 "The West" is not a homogeneous behemoth, in the same way that I argue that the PRC is not: I use this only to refer to a majority of the mainstream media.

3 I thank an anonymous reviewer for helping me to clarify this point.

4 Madsen argues that the PRC's categorization of the five state-sanctioned religions is based on a 19th century Protestant understanding of religion primarily as institutional. His analysis is interesting but space does not allow a discussion here. For details, see Document 19: The Basic Viewpoint and Policy on the Religious Question during Our Country's Socialist Period, published by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China.

work needs to be done here and I look forward to reading research and analyses that will help to bridge the "East/West" divide. Meanwhile, media reports about religion[5] in the PRC that necessarily draw theoretical and historical background from scholarly work, tend to capture the politics of conflict on the country's western border: Buddhism in Tibet and Islam in Xinjiang. On the part of the PRC, the recent 2018 White Paper on *China's Policies and Practices on Protecting Freedom of Religious Belief* (C3PFRB) may in part be an attempt to address this bias. In just under 5000 words in English, the C3PFRB repeats and explains once again that harmony is the state's ultimate goal. It highlights charitable work done by religious groups; gives examples of "collaboration" between the religious groups and the state; and outlines the legal parameters for both native and foreign believers with specific warnings against extremism (SCIO 2018).

The sources I include here, however, on many occasions show that the government of the U.S. and academics and social activists in the West have tended to concentrate primarily on the heavy-handed, severe and oppressive means the PRC uses to handle political actions inspired and carried out in the name of religion. The accounts seldom capture what Vivienne Shue terms the "great latitude (that) has de facto been allowed for officially unsanctioned, even officially forbidden, economic, cultural and other activities to be carried on … (Ones) that everyone knows about, but no one admits to or publicly comments on." More pointedly, the focus on the draconian means that what Andrew Nathan calls "authoritarian resilience" is often overlooked—that is, the "openness to improvisation (that) underscores the flexibility and adaptability of China's regime" frequently goes unnoticed (McCarthy 2017) Even Brent Crane (2014) who acknowledges the acceptance of the Muslim Hui by the state in contrast to the tight control over the Uyghurs describe the PRC as xenophobic, neglecting the fact that the Hui are made up of many different Middle Eastern, Central and South Asian Muslims from numerous earlier migrations. Moreover, journalistic and scholarly analyses have rarely included examples where state and religious actors cooperate.[6] But happily, Cao writes that a "small but growing literature has portrayed a dynamic, intricately compatible relationship between religion and nation building (that illustrates) how national and local religious leaders collaborate with China's nationalist modernizing and secularizing projects": a few examples will be reviewed here in a later section.

Many accounts of religion in Tibet and Xinjiang however do not seriously consider the impact of colonial history over the last two hundred years. For the PRC, this is no distant memory: there are still U.S. troops stationed in Japan, South Korea, Thailand, Singapore and the Philippines and on active duty in Afghanistan. It is not difficult to understand the mainland government's misgivings about "toxic" foreign influences, given such military presence surrounding the mainland. Ongoing Islamic threat and current U.S. armed service act as constant reminders of western involvement in the pre-1949 communist-era separatist movements and contemporary backed-by-the-West international diasporas: such as the British and then the Americans in Tibet; and Russia, the Soviet Union and once again, the Americans in Xinjiang. I have also found no substantive exploration of the historical cultural-psychological reasons for ethnic tensions between the Chinese—both state and people—and the members of the two minority groups. These tensions are in part rooted in the Manchu Qing dynasty

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[5] For example, Luqiu and Yang (2017) found that 84% of the western media coverage on Muslims and or Islam "involved conflict, terrorism or extremism." The authors note that the PRC relies on western new agencies for international news and that there is scant domestic coverage of Islam and the Muslims. Reports tend to focus on the preferential treatment received by racial minorities, including the Uyghurs: such as exemption from the one child policy and affirmative action in the education system.
In light of this, Cao is surely correct in his conclusion that "more collaborative research efforts are needed to help explore and reconcile the gap between official rhetoric and the multiple realities of Chinese religions on the ground … (These efforts will) eventually help transform 'religion' from a fetishized ideological object into a multidimensional empirical concept in contemporary Chinese (and I would add 'global') public discourse."

[6] Or what some, like one anonymous reviewer of this article, might describe as situations where religious groups are regulated and subjugated to the state.

as the "sick man of the East"[7] incapable of vigorous and effective defense against western incursion and the Han people as an effeminate, impotent and defeated people.[8]

Martin Jacques writes that the west continues to misunderstand the PRC and like New York University's Professor Zhang Xudong and American sinologist Lucian Pye, (Zhang 2016) Jacques (2011) argues that China is more of a "civilizational state" than a nation state. Perhaps one might even posit that the PRC does not understand the insistence for a separate country by some Tibetans and Uyghurs when material gains may be sacrificed; the irony is especially sharp for Xinjiang when Urumqi has become an economic hub for Central Asia.[9] So Zhang expresses anxiety about the clash of Islam with the West in his interview on China Central Television's *Dialogue* and he worries that some people "stand by and live within their civilizational identity" and are unwilling to surrender their faith for secular material wellbeing. In light of this, he finds too optimistic China's belief that material development will help to bring peace by replacing the "moral superiority" of the West that is based on "military strength and superior technology."[10]

This expression of moral superiority[11] is clear in the initial treatment of the Meng Wanzhou situation. The demand for the release of Spavor and Kovrig is based on two core ideals: the rule of law and human rights. These values which are central to western liberal democracies belong to a functionally-religious belief system that Graeme Smith (2008) describes as secular Christianity, one with which the West uses to evaluate and judge other nations. Bilateral misunderstanding can, in part, be traced this mismatch of Euro-American ideals imposed on PRC conditions. Michael Szonyi recognizes, astutely, that the framework of secularization, often used to study Chinese religion, "even in its more restrictive forms is a highly contingent process that will shape other debates as well." He

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7 Of western origins, the moniker "sick man of the East" was intended as a parallel to the "sick man of the West," the Ottoman Empire, which was also steadily declining both in power and influence in the 19th and 20th centuries.

8 For example, interviews with Uyghurs show that the Chinese are considered to be unclean since they do not observe rules of *halal* or what is allowed and *haram* or what is forbidden (Erkin 2009, p. 425); dirty and rude as expressed in the parts of Urumchi (the spelling follows the quoted author; also Urumqi) they live in and the way they conduct themselves (Schluessel 2009, p. 385); and untrustworthy because they are atheists (Finley 2011, 2007). Moreover, the Soviet message to Uyghurs during the mid 20th century was that "China was a colony of imperialism (and) Xinjiang was a colony of a colony" (Han 2011, p. 950). Contemporary Uyghurs continue to look west, away from the PRC, toward Islam and modern liberal democracies. The Han Chinese, on the other hand, see the Uyghurs as "lazy, unreasonable and poor—and potential terrorists" who are rightly blamed for "ethnic unrest and violence in Xinjiang." (Luqiu and Yang 2017). In Xinjiang, the prejudice, even among "well-educated urban Han Chinese" against Uyghurs can be acute; they are seen as "ungrateful, lazy, violent, knife-carrying, pocket-picking criminals." (Millard 2009).
Tibetans also look south and west away from the Sinosphere: historically to India, the birthplace of Buddhism; then to the U.K. for protection against the Nationalist Chinese in the early to mid 20th century; and now, as with the Uyghurs, to the west especially the U.S. Unfortunately, the full agenda of this article does not allow a more thorough examination of these elements.

9 For example, Erkin (2009) notes the irony wherein successful development and a more robust middle class has resulted in a sharper definition and a turn of Uyghur culture towards Central Asia and the Middle East and further away from China.

10 While I agree with Edward Said's (2011) assessment that Huntington's theory neglects the pluralistic nature within his set of "civilisations," a broad generalisation can be made—in varying degrees, for those who accept and aspire to an ideal of globalization and pluralism and those who do not, as expressed in populist movements worldwide. This important difference can be found within Islamic, liberal democracies, communist oligarchies and other forms of civilizational and politico-social cultures. Zhang's discussion of Huntington's hypothetical "fault lines" finds itself well illustrated not only with Islam in conflict with "The West" but also populist movements in conflict with "The Establishment" within the west: that is, the fault lines are both within each "civilisation" (Said) as well as across them (Huntington). I agree with John Wang (2003) when he writes that the clash of civilizations or religions does not replace but rather adds to conflict based on nationalism and secular ideology.

11 A refreshing change in the Meng Wanzhou case includes the recognition that the Huawei executive has a strong case against extradition and the voicing of complaints about the American disregard for Canadians. Vanderklippe (2019a) reports that John McCallum, Canada's ambassador to China, claimed that President Trump's remarks about using Meng in trade talks, extraterritoriality and Canada's different position on sanctions against Iran are all reasons why Meng may not be extradited. The Globe and Mail reported also that McCallum was not the only one who spoke to the belief that politics was involved in the taking of Meng. David McNaughton, Canada's ambassador to the U.S. had earlier complained about Washington, who he said "are the ones seeking to have the full force of American law brought against [Ms. Meng] and yet we (Canadians) are the ones who are paying the price . . . We don't like that it is our citizens who are being punished." On the same day, McCallum apologized and said that he "misspoke" and that Canada honours its international legal commitments; he was fired by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on 26 January 2019.

opines that western judgement of communist "state policy towards religion . . . is inevitably linked to how the legitimate exercise of power is constituted." Szonyi points out, however, that "In contemporary China, this standard (of legitimacy) is not (based on) respect for individual rights alone (as in the West) but also the pursuit of nationalism and modernization." That is, the PRC is as concerned about its geo-political integrity, the material well-being of all its citizens, as it is about individual rights.

The U.S. is especially enthusiastic in its missions for democracy—I use "missions" here intentionally for though western societies may be ethno-culturally diverse within their societies, the leaders of the West tend towards liberal democratic "mono-ism"[12] allowing little room for political and cultural diversity across civilizational and nation states internationally. The following are George W. Bush's words at the International Conference on Financing for Development convened by the United Nations, on 22 March 2002 in Monterrey, Mexico:

> We must tie greater aid to political and legal and economic reforms. And by insisting on reform, we do the work of compassion. The United States will lead by example.[13] I have proposed a 50-percent increase in our core development assistance over the next three budget years. Eventually, this will mean a $5 billion annual increase over current levels.
>
> These new funds will go into a new Millennium Challenge Account, devoted to projects in nations that govern justly, invest in their people and encourage economic freedom[14] (The Millennium Challenge Account 2003).

As a part of the process toward achieving this "compassionate" commitment Epstein et al. (2007) note in their *Congressional Research Service Report* that the ADVANCE Democracy Act of 2007, passed a year before the summer Olympic games,

> contains provisions to promote democracy overseas, calls for specific State Department actions and reports, aims to strengthen the 'community of democracies,' and authorizes funding for democracy promotion in FY2008 (notably the year of the Beijing Summer Olympics). Also, it identified 'governing justly and democratically' as a key objective of its foreign aid democracy promotion in 2008.

In the same year, Shinzo Abe lobbied to bring together Asia's "community of democracies" and was "actively supported" by the U.S. His proposal resulted in a five-nation naval exercise in the Bay of Bengal code-named "Malabar 07-02" in September 2007 that involved the "Quad" named below plus Singapore, where the U.S. has also stationed troops (Pant 2017). The group remained inactive, then disbanded after the PRC complained about collusion. But, in 2012 Abe again advocated for a free trade and defense arrangement comprised of Australia, India, Japan and the U.S. to safeguard the Indo-Pacific "maritime commons" against the PRC. By 2016, Lavina Lee in Australia was describing

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[12] The West has mostly dropped the "theistic" from their foreign policies and thus are no longer overtly "monotheistic" in their approach to international affairs but there is still a tendency toward the "mono"—hence "mono-ism."

[13] Here is an unmistakable illustration of the Judeo-Christian mentality of *tikkun*, fixing the world and standing as a beacon to the poor and suffering, fulfilling the injunction to "be ye a light unto nations" and perform its divine duty as the shining exemplar of "the city on the hill." That there are in the U.S. deep income disparities, social inequities and continuing violence against marginal populations appear to have escaped attention.

[14] After 9/11, on 14 March 2002 at the Inter-American Development Bank, President Bush called for "a new compact for global development, defined by new accountability for both rich and poor nations alike. Greater contributions from developed nations must be linked to greater responsibility from developing nations." This Millennium Challenge Account was to receive an annual increase in fund that would amount to $5 billion by 2005. In 2007, George W. Bush requested for the next fiscal year $1.5 billion dollars specifically dedicated to the promotion of democracy to be disbursed through groups like the Millennium Challenge Account (Epstein et al. 2007).
In Canada, 2013, then Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper, an evangelical Christian, established the Office of Religious Freedom to monitor and act as an advocate for persecuted communities internationally. A year after the election of Justin Trudeau as Prime Minister in 2015, the mandate of the office was expanded to the Office of Human Rights. (*Religious Freedom Office Replaced with New 'Office of Human Rights'* 2016)

Japanese efforts at democratic alliance as "Abe's Democratic Security Diamond and New Quadrilateral Initiative (Lee 2016)."

The critical American study of religion and state in the PRC, which will be discussed later, though carried out in the midst of these political moves, does not acknowledge them in their analyses. This lacuna suggests that the authors of the analytical reports believe that their work on religion in the PRC and the convergent political maneuvers belong in unrelated policy categories and that they are not connected in any essential or crucial way. That is, one might infer that the American analysts do not understand or consider international politics to have any explanatory value to the PRC's control over religion or that the latter might see the nascent military operations as provocative.

Unsurprisingly, such an atomistic and bloc approach to the study of religion in/of the PRC, apace with such overt American missionizing, can generate at least some if not a great deal of tension and conflict. Even as the PRC comprehends itself to be an aspiring democracy albeit with Chinese characteristics, its understanding of human rights for developing nations stands in stark contrast to the Democratic way. For the communist state, improving people's material lives without qualification *is* human rights: and towards this end, they take as a blueprint their own experience of lifting 700 million people out of abject poverty over the past forty years.

But even if the PRC no longer requires deep developmental funding from the West, its economy and technological development continue to be subjected to the insistence of "political and legal and economic reforms." This tension between the communist state and the U.S. will be examined by considering first, the legally stated place and roles of religion through two post-Document 19 White Papers on policies and a memorandum on charity work; "Provisions" for foreigners; and "Regulations" for Chinese citizens within the political climate both domestic and international. Second, to examine the use of religion as a guileful unstated means of evaluating the PRC as an "(in)humane" nation by reviewing American comments, analysis and critique of these rules and their execution. Third, to review the evolution of official Communist Party of China (CPC) policies towards religion, to explore the variable and actual execution of government policies and the collaboration between various religious groups, as well as the relationships between religious groups and individuals with the state.

2. Religion in the PRC: Government Policies Amidst Domestic and Global Politics

Religion appears to play little or no part in the PRC's long-term goals in domestic and foreign policies which focus mainly on achieving political stability and material prosperity through multilateral, global economic development. According to state reports and White Papers, for example, the domestic focus on poverty and left-behind children (State Council 2018a, 2018b, 2018c) and the international economic Belt and Road Initiative (BRI, also known as One Belt, One Road) are designed to bring earthly tangible abundance and peace and stability to China, her neighbors and her trading partners.

In 2015 Xi Jinping announced, in his speech at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, the establishment of an initial China-backed US$ 2 billion aid fund to support the eight Sustainable Development Goals to: "Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger," "Achieve universal primary education," "Promote gender equality and empower women," "Reduce child mortality," "Improve maternal health," "Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases," "Ensure environmental sustainability" and "Develop a global partnership for development." The PRC also promised to aim for an increase to US$12 billion its investment in the least developed countries, to forgive interest-free loans to the "least developed and small island developing countries" that were due at the end of 2015 and to "establish an international development knowledge center to study appropriate theories and practices for different countries."[15]

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[15] See http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sdgoverview/mdg_goals.html and President Xi Jinping's UN Speech in 6 Key Words (2015) The launch of China's Center for International Knowledge and Development (CIKD) was announced by Jorge Chediek, Secretary-General's Envoy for South-South Cooperation in Beijing, 21 August 2017 (http://en.drc.gov.cn/2017-08/22/content_30965414.htm). See also (Xi Jinping, Champion of the Poor 2018).

The CPC has been consistent in its focus on reform for peaceful development. Section 2 of the December 2018 White Paper on Progress in Human Rights over the 40 Years of Reform and Opening Up in China reiterates the Two Centenary Goals and the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation from the 2012 18th National Congress where

> the CPC set forth a master blueprint … to complete the building of a comprehensively moderate prosperous society and double China's 2010 GDP and per capita income for both urban and rural residents by the time the CPC celebrates its centenary in 2021; and to build China into a modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced and harmonious and reach the level of moderately developed countries by the time the People's Republic of China celebrates its centenary in 2049 (Full Text: Progress in Human Rights over the 40 Years of Reform and Opening up in China 2018).

Religion may not be prominent in the short and long-term PRC policies and goals but the government does recognize the ubiquity of religious phenomenon and the particular American interest in it.[16] It also understands both religion's strategic potential in helping to realize the common goals of the United Nations and the CPC and its potential in harming the attainment of these goals. In recognizing this, Cao (2018) writes, the state has set out the "disciplinary rule of 'party member should not have religious belief'" while promoting at the same time, the "pragmatic use of religion for 'national unity, social stability and regime resilience.'"

To frame and effectively manage this "pragmatic use of religion," three main categories of documents can be identified: those that offer a general policy framework, those that outline specific conditions of religious practice for foreigners while they are in the PRC and those that define the rules and regulations for citizens. There will be a focus on publications that have evolved from the foundational 1982 Document 19: The Basic Viewpoint and Policy on the Religious Question during Our Country's Socialist Period (MacInnis 1989). These documents collectively demonstrate well the concerns of the state which have remained constant: political security, social stability and material prosperity.[17]

Launched during his first year as president, Xi Jinping's initiative of One Belt, One Road aspires to build thoroughfares facilitating trade through the Asian-Euro-African land masses; it is crucial in helping to build "a comprehensively moderate prosperous society." The creation of new overland and maritime "Silk Routes" in the 21st century recalls the historical silk roads and these new Silk Routes have been and will be constructed through nation-states with governments of various religious political affiliations and with sizable multiethnic and diverse religious populations including Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, Christians, Jews and indigenous animists-shamanists.[18] The PRC is open to working with all of them without prejudice. In Africa especially, the PRC has taken care to note that economic and infrastructure aid will not be tied to requirements to demonstrate progressive

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[16] Perhaps Americans are projecting the experiences of their earliest settlers who were religiously persecuted in Europe.

[17] Included in the first category that offers a general policy framework is the 1997 Freedom of Religious Belief in China, a White Paper. The memorandum Opinions on Encouraging and Regulating Religious Circles' Participation in Public Welfare Charitable Activities (Opinions) was added in 2012 and sent to government officials to foster a focus of charitable work. Then in 2018, a new White Paper, China's Policies and Practices on Protecting Freedom of Religious Belief, was issued and it included the focus on charitable activities described in the 2012 Opinions. Second, there is for foreigners, the 1994 Provisions on the Administration of Religious Activities of Aliens within the Territory of Republic of China (Provisions); it was revised in 2010. Third, developed for PRC citizens is the 2005 Regulation on Religious Affairs; it was revised in 2017.

[18] In Asia, they include Islamic states in Central Asia like the "stans" (places), Buddhist states in Southeast and South Asia like Myanmar and Sri Lanka and the officially Hindu-secular India. Leaving Asia, there are majority Christian-secular states like Spain in Europe and majority Christian-secular states like Kenya and mixed-beliefs-secular (Christian-Muslim-Indigenous) states like Tanzania in Africa.

development in democratic institutions and human rights legislation, as with American aid[19] (Legarda and Hoffman 2018; Kenderdine 2017a, 2017b, 2018; Xi 2017).

2.1. 20th Century Approaches and Regulations for Domestic and Foreign Practitioners

This sensitivity towards the need for international cooperation and connection on the one hand but also a parallel need for local national control over foreign incursions on the other, is clearly demonstrated by the PRC's own experience in its political relationship with the U.S., especially in relation to the two autonomous regions on its western border: Tibet and Xinjiang. In summary, the U.S. has acted and continues to act as a court of appeal, advocate and defender of the two ethnic minorities.

In 1980, for example, then Party General Secretary Hu Yaobang was shocked by the poverty he saw in Tibet and consequently initiated an economic program that greatly boosted the economic well-being of many Tibetans. Ironically, this material progress simultaneously created an economic "spiral of dependency" that fed more rather than less unrest[20] (Crowe 2013; IOSC 2009; Sixty Years since Peaceful Liberation of Tibet 2011). As with the situation in Xinjiang, (Erkin 2009; Cultural Protection and Development in Xinjiang 2018) better material conditions for some but the disaffection of others brought a revival of traditional culture including religion, as well as a broader-based interest in independence. Unfortunately, party officials mistook the renewed interest in religion both as superstition that would hinder material progress and a challenge to state atheism and continued to press reform on Tibet. In response, the Dalai Lama appealed to the Americans: on 21 September 1987 he presented a Five-Point Peace Plan to the U.S. Congress' Human Rights Caucus. The plan demanded that Tibet be "transformed into a zone of peace"; that the transfer of Han Chinese into the area be halted;[21] that "human rights and democratic freedoms of the Tibetans be respected"; that the use of Tibet as a place for the manufacture of "nuclear arms and the dumping ground for nuclear waste" be stopped; and finally, that there be a start of negotiations for the future of Tibet. The PRC countered that the Dalai Lama's plan was nothing new and that "In essence, it continues the advocation of 'Tibetan independence,' which both the Chinese government and people resolutely oppose." The plan was described in a Beijing Review article as absurd because it came from the Dalai Lama, "a representative of feudal serfdom." (Crowe 2013)

2.2. The 1994 Provisions on the Administration of Religious Activities of Aliens

Against the backdrop of ongoing tensions with Tibet and the U.S., sixteen years after Deng Xiaoping initiated reform, fifteen years after Ayatollah Khomeini forged a theocracy in Iran, three years after the dissolution of the Soviet Union which resulted in the revival of Islam in Central Asia,[22] (Clarke 2010) and seven years before the attacks of 9/11, the PRC established of the China Committee

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[19] Kenderdine talks about some of the problems the Chinese face and have encountered such as the lack of experience in dealing with international projects for officials on the provincial level; the fear of Chinese economic dominance; and ideological differences in government systems across the Central Asian countries where China intends to realise their intention for One Belt, One Road connectivity.

[20] Many scholars take this complex phenomenon of socio-political inequity and unequal sharing of the many rewards of development as a main reason for unrest. The disparity is in part expressed by extreme wealth for some—Han, Uyghur and Tibetan alike but economic reliance on the state for many others. Most pernicious is perhaps the unequal distribution (perceived and real) of wealth along ethnic lines, especially in the Tibetan and Uyghur communities but also in the larger society. See Cao et al, Clarke, Crowe, Finley, Han, Lyons, Millard and Roberts for individual accounts. For an alternative understanding of politics rather than economics as a primary cause of unrest, see Andres Velasco, "Populism Is Rooted in Politics, not Economics."

[21] The transfer of Han Chinese is not unique to Tibet. This same strategy is applied to Xinjiang and Hong Kong. For the latter, a daily quota of 150 mainland Chinese are allowed to enter the previous British Crown Colony. See for example https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/article/1088378/hongkongers-want-fewer-mainland-immigrants. This movement of people is not unlike the historical migration of the Han population from northern China to the south during periods of instability from Central and North Asian invasions.

[22] Michael Clarke (2010) writes from 1999–2000 the Taliban consolidated power in Afghanistan and there was "intensification of the insurgency of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan in the Ferghana Valley" to the extent that the PRC was able to persuade the Central Asian countries to act against terrorism.

on Religion and Peace (CCRP) under the auspices of the State Administration of Religious Affairs (SARA)[23]—the top central government agency that deals with religious matters. The CCRP, with representatives from all five state-approved religions, attended the World Conference of Religions for Peace (renamed Religions for Peace in 2008) thereby joining international religious efforts towards peace in June 1994.[24] In the same year, the State Council promulgated the Provisions on the Administration of Religious Activities of Aliens within the Territory of Republic of China, which delimited foreign involvement in religious matters within its borders (State Council 1994).

In 1996, two years later, the Shanghai Five (S5) emerged out of talks dealing with issues of demilitarization and border demarcation that resulted from the disintegration of the Soviet Union: member states included the PRC, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. As the Islamist threat became heightened by the presence of the Taliban in Afghanistan and the Islamic Movement in Uzbekistan, the members of the S5 were motivated to take a stronger position against the "three evils of 'separatism, extremism and terrorism.'" (Clarke 2010). This was a boon for the PRC as there had been increasingly violent incidents in Xinjiang since the 1990 Baren Incident in Akto county, which borders Kyrgystan and Tajikistan. The incident was instigated by the Islamic Party of East Turkistan (IPET), a rebel group led by Zeydin Yusuf, who was allegedly backed by Afghanistan militia. The IPET "carried out a series of synchronized attacks on government buildings, ambushed police forces, seized weapons, took hostages and exchanged fire with the police."[25] (Han 2011).

In the same year amid mounting insecurity from the threat of radical Islamism, the CCRP registered as a participant of the Asian Conference of Religion for Peace (ACRP). Peace did not, however, grace Xinjiang. Bombs exploded on three buses in Urumqi during the next February. This violence coincided with a huge protest which turned into a riot to the west in Ghulja (Yining in Chinese) where some Uyghurs carried banners expressing religious sentiments, calling for equality for Uyghurs and supporting independence (Han 2011). In October of the same year, the White Paper on the Freedom of Religious Belief in China (FRBC) styled in point form, was posted to the website for the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the United States of America. It is sheer speculation to suggest that the timing is an unobtrusive reminder to the Americans to stay out of Chinese politics.

2.3. The 1997 White Paper on the Freedm of Religious Belief in China (FRBC)

The 1997 White Paper refers to the 1994 Provisions. It is remarkable for its admission that the horribly destructive decade of the Cultural Revolution had had a "disastrous effect" on Chinese society, including the religious aspects. It is aspirational and acknowledges the potential benefits of religions in helping to rebuild the devastated post-Cultural Revolution nation. It states that "(t)he Chinese government supports and encourages the religious circles to unite the religious believers to actively participate in the construction of the country." (White Paper 1997) The document restates Article 36 of the Constitution:

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[23] SARA, the State Administration of Religious Affairs, is charged with the oversight of the five state-sanctioned religious organizations: the Buddhist Association of China, Chinese Taoist Association, Islamic Association of China, Three-self Protestant Patriotic Movement and the Chinese Patriotic Association. See also (China Committee on Religion and Peace and State Administration of Religious Affairs 1994).

[24] A PRC government organization represented by the five state-sanctioned religions at an international conference of religions is unlikely, at least to my mind, to garner much trust or support. The informal relationships between the various religions and the CCRP would be fascinating to study.

[25] Han writes that there were two bus bombings in Urumqi on 5 February 1992; several explosions in 1993 from February to September in Yining (Ghulja in Uyghur), Urumqi, Kashgar and several other cities. After the 1996 S5 agreement to interstate cooperation against terrorism and separatism, violence continued. On 27 February 1997 bombs exploded on three buses in Urumqi, coinciding with a huge protest in Yining during which "rioters torched vehicles and attacked police and (Han) Chinese residents; their banners and slogans included calls for Uighur equality and independence as well as religious sentiments." Han attributes this violence to "strident repression" allowing "Uighur grievances and discontent" to simmer and grow.

> Citizens of the PRC enjoy freedom of religious belief . . . No State organ, public organization or individual may compel citizens to believe in, or not to believe in, any religion; nor may they discriminate against citizen who believe in, or do not believe in, any religion . . . the State protects normal religious activities . . . *No one may make use of religion to engage in activities that disrupt public order, impair the health of citizens or interfere with the educational system of the State* (italics mine) . . . Religious bodies and religious affairs are not subject to any domination.

The FRBC also reiterates concerns about instability and discord illustrating plainly that the legal, state-supported religious freedom is not absolute. It was issued nineteen years after reforms began, six years after the fall of the Soviet Union, a year after the formation of the S5 and amid the continued threat from both Islamists in Xinjiang and continuing unrest in Tibet. A central tenet in the 1994 Provisions is emphasized:

> The Chinese government resolutely opposes attempts to split the country along ethnic lines, and any use of religious fanaticism to divide the people, split the country or harm the unity among all ethnic groups or engage in illegal activities and terrorist actions under the signboard of religion.

It is unclear if the PRC government was addressing the February violence in Xinjiang. What is clear is that the CPC "resolutely opposes" and will condone neither foreign nor local, indigenous actions that would rupture the unity of the state and people. The Freedom of Religious Belief in China goes on to give a brief historical background on the five religions accepted by the state—Buddhism, Taoism (Daoism), Islam, Catholicism and Protestantism and lists some of the state-sanctioned "national religious organizations" and activities that are legal and acceptable. These range from setting up schools to publishing and the proffering of social services. It then states:

> In China all religions have equal status and coexist in tranquility. Religious disputes are unknown in China.[26] Religious believers and non-believers respect each other, are united and have a harmonious relationship. This shows, on the one hand, the influence of traditional Chinese compatibility and tolerance, and, on the other, the fact that since the founding of the people's Republic of China in 1949 the Chinese government has formulated and carried out the policy of freedom of religious belief and established a politico-religious relationship that conforms to China's national conditions (White Paper 1997).

2.4. The Continuing Threat of Islamism

Unfortunately, the threat from Islam did not end. According to PRC sources, Hasan Mahsum, the leader of the separatist East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM), in 1998 sent "scores of terrorists" into Xinjiang and inland regions to establish a dozen training bases, just one year after violence in Urumqi and Ghulja. Official reports indicate that more than 150 terrorists were trained in fifteen preparatory classes that included workshops for making weapons, ammunition and explosive devices. Most ominously, the international religious-political landscape post-Freedom of Religious Belief in China changed drastically with the Islamist attack of the U.S. on American soil, 11 September 2001. Over a year from late 2001 to 2002, all the Central Asian states except Turkmenistan had signed "military cooperation and base access agreements with the USA . . . receiving significant aid packages" in the process (Clarke 2010). On June 15 of the same year, Uzbekistan joined the members of Shanghai

[26] This claim is patently false and offers a good reason for western readers to dismiss offhand PRC publications as propaganda without taking more seriously the stated aspirations and ideals. Though there may not have been religious wars on the scale witnessed in Europe and the Middle East, there have certainly been disagreements, "disputes," conflicts and even persecution of Buddhism, Daoism, individual Confucians and foreign enclaves of Muslim traders or Christian missionaries. See endnote 48 for a somewhat more nuanced or "reasonable" reading of this claim of "harmony." The 2018 White Paper on China's Policies and Practices on Protecting Freedom of Religious Belief on 3 April changes the wording to "have rarely been seen," signalling a new sensitivity to issues around religion.

Five to create the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation.[27] As American forces fought radical Islamist groups and captured combatants in Afghanistan and Pakistan, the PRC asked for the repatriation of Uyghurs who had been captured during the war against terror: the U.S. refused.[28] In 2004 under these new global conditions, SARA issued Regulation on Religious Affairs that went into effect on 1 March 2005 adding to the 1994 Provisions and 1997 White Paper.[29]

2.5. 21st Century American Interest in the Religious Ethos of the PRC

The PRC found itself (and continues to find itself) oddly squeezed by a strange band of actors, intent on imprinting themselves on it: these include passionate Islamists, committed Tibetan and Uyghur separatists, ardent human rights activists and eager secular-Christian missions of democracy from the West that are especially well-represented by the Americans. Considerable American resources have been dedicated to the study of the state of religion in the PRC as the three following Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC) documents show. The reports reveal a special interest in the perceived failure of the state to uphold the rights of the faithful, lending support to Szonyi's observation that western judgements, especially American ones, are often linked to issues of human rights—that is, "how the legitimate exercise of power is constituted"—while ignoring the Chinese concern for nationalism and modernization (See p. 5 of this article.) The allocation of resources by the U.S. government, its detailed analysis and intention to influence the situation in a foreign nation demonstrate an unwavering commitment to the principle[30] of religious rights and freedom above all else. Disconcerting, however, is the fact that this commitment appears to be accompanied by an insensitivity or a lack of attention or an absence of insight or a dismissal of the possibility that the U.S. is (or may be perceived to be) infringing on the internal affairs of a sovereign foreign country and acting illegally according to the law of the land (or perceived to be doing so).[31] The American disregard for Chinese policy and law dealing with the different facets of religion in the PRC, which the CECC documents and U.S. experts characterize as vague and inadequate; its support, both financial and political, of diaspora Tibetans and

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[27] Here are the stated goals of The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation: "The SCO's main goals are as follows: strengthening mutual trust and neighbourliness among the member states; promoting their effective cooperation in politics, trade, the economy, research, technology and culture, as well as in education, energy, transport, tourism, environmental protection and other areas; making joint efforts to maintain and ensure peace, security and stability in the region; and moving towards the establishment of a democratic, fair and rational new international political and economic order." See http://eng.sectsco.org/about_sco/. India and Pakistan became members in 2017 bringing to eight the member states alongside Russia, the PRC, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan.

[28] Clarke writes that in 2004, Secretary of State Colin Powell declared that Uyghurs would not be repatriated to China from Guantanamo. Further, a Washington DC circuit judge ruled that the remaining men should be freed and resettled in the U.S. However, this did not happen; instead the men were settled in various countries like Albania and Bermuda and at least one remained stateless. See Henriquez (2015) on the Guantanamo 22: a story of how a group of non-combatant Uyghur men were "captured" then sold as terrorists by the Pakistanis to the Americans, imprisoned in Guantanamo and eventually proven innocent.John Wang, writing about the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) on the other hand, states that 500 Chinese Uyghurs were captured in Afghanistan and no mention is made about the non-combatants. According to Wang, ETIM was intent on creating an Islamic state and was responsible for more than 200 terrorist incidents in Xinjiang from 1992 to 2003. The organization is described as being a part of an international network including the East Liberation Organization, East Turkistan International Committee, United Committee of Uyghurs' Organizations (Central Asia and Xinjiang) Central Asian Uyghur Hezbollah in Kazakhstan, Turkistan Party (Pakistan), Eastern Turkistan Islamic Resistance Movement (Turkey) and Eastern Turkistan Youth Leagues and other smaller groups like the Shock Brigade of the Islamic Reformist Party.

[29] See the report for a brief comparison of the 1994 and 2005 regulations.

[30] This principle is based on a western historical understanding of religion defined in monotheistic terms. Political power has more often than not managed or controlled religion through dynastic China; and secularism, in the form of the government of the Ru or Confucians, has a long history. The quagmire of what constitutes religion and the place it should occupy in society is too complex to handle here. Suffice it to say that American interests often fail to consider the history of both Islam and Christianity in Chinese history and the rather unattractive model of western religious institutions and history as witnessed in the numerous intra- and inter-religious wars and the persistent persecution of the Jews.

[31] If the PRC were to examine any one of the following in the U.S.—the inequity in wealth distribution and tax laws, relentless quotidian violence and gun laws or the persistent prejudice against religious and ethnic minorities and equity laws in the U.S.—and then try to lecture the Americans about these issues and further try to influence outcomes in the same way that Chinese religious affairs are targeted in the U.S., I wager there would be a huge outcry in the West against such incursions.

Uyghurs; and its support for groups that champion independent states against the PRC unfortunately recall mid-19th and early 20th century extraterritoriality under the Manchu Qing dynasty.[32]

2.6. The U.S. Congressional-Executive Commission on China: "Human Rights Advocates Are Critical"

Archived on the CECC website under the auspices of Senator Marco Rubio as the Chairman and Representative Christopher Smith as the Cochair is the full text of Regulations on Religious Affairs (both Chinese and English Text) issued on 30 November 2004 by the State Council.[33] (State Council 2010). The priority given to this issue is further marked by the CECC announcement of the New National Regulation on Religious Affairs to Take Effect on 1 March 2005 on 15 February 2005 (Rubio and Smith 2005b). Under the section entitled Human Rights Advocates Are Critical, the report states:

> One Hong Kong expert predicted that the clearer rules would mean that there would be less room for unregistered groups[34] to maneuver. Taking another tack, Amnesty International pointed out that the new regulation does nothing to define the vague categories in earlier rules that have allowed the Chinese police a free hand in prosecuting—and persecuting—believers . . . .

The report then goes on to say that Chapter VI, Legal Responsibility, was the "most troubling to human rights advocates" because of the nebulous language and the growing list of forbidden activities. It focused specifically on three articles. Article 4 extends "prohibited activities" to include "the disruption of social order, harming citizens' health, obstructing the national education system, or otherwise harming the national interest, the public interest of society, and citizens' legal rights and interests." Article 40 deals with "the use of religion to carry on activities that harm national security or public security or violate citizens' personal rights and interests and democratic rights." And Article 41 lists "violations on registration, reporting, and independence of foreign interference." The notice for the new PRC Regulation is followed by a third webpage that is about an open March forum organized also by the CECC, one in a series of Issue Roundtables. The panel includes two academics, Dr. Carol Lee Hamrin and Professor Daniel Bays and a Senior Researcher from Human Rights Watch, Ms. Mickey Spiegel. Included at the end of the transcript are links to the testimonies for the roundtable and discussions on China's New Regulation on Religious Affairs: A Paradigm Shift?[35]

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[32] American policies and consequent actions do little to assuage a deep sense of insecurity in the PRC and consequently its perceived need to protect itself. The urgent charge to defend the country comes from a long history of being conquered and dominated by intruders: the most recent and obvious include the Manchus, Japanese, Europeans and Americans. This profound sense of anxiety is perhaps most evident in the lyrics of the national anthem translated below:
Arise, we who refuse to be slaves;
Let us with our flesh and blood
Build our new Great Wall!
When the Chinese people arrive at the most perilous time,
Each and every one will be compelled to make a final roar.
Arise! Arise! Arise!
Millions of us with one heart,
Braving the enemy's gunfire, advance!
Braving the enemy's gunfire, advance!
Advance! Advance! Advance! Forward.

[33] I have been unable to find an English translation of the 2005 Regulations for Religious Affairs on a PRC government website. The Chinese version can be found at http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/content/2008-03/28/content_6786.htm (accessed on 6 February 2019). The Congressional-Executive Commission on China includes both Chinese and English versions at https://www.cecc.gov/resources/legal-provisions/regulations-on-religious-affairs (accessed on 6 February 2019).

[34] This would include groups like Falungong (Discipline of the Dharma Wheel) that blend different religious beliefs and practices together and small ecumenical Christian groups.

[35] See especially Human Rights in China: "China's New Regulations on Religious Affairs: A Paradigm Shift?" available through a link at the end of the transcript (Rubio and Smith 2005a).

2.7. The Bureau of Democracy, Human rights and Labor: "The International Religious Freedom Report on China including Tibet, Hong Kong and Macau"

Finally, there was at the end of 2005 another report about religion in China published by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor within the Department of State. The International Religious Freedom Report (IRFR) on China including Tibet, Hong Kong and Macau[36] mentions the new regulations that took effect on 1 March 2005 too. Its account is remarkably balanced given the apparent U.S. antipathy to the PRC government and includes cases where the faithful have practiced unmolested even as the Bureau report reminds readers that the Secretary of State had since 1999 "designated China a 'Country of Particular Concern' under the International Religious Freedom Act for particularly severe violations of religious freedom." The IRFR also states that "The Department of State, the U.S. Embassy in Beijing, and the Consulates General in Chengdu, Guangzhou, Shanghai and Shenyang made a concerted effort to encourage greater religious freedom in the country, using both focused external pressure on abuses and support for positive trends within the country."[37]

The IRFR gives a credible account with descriptions of the detention of some citizens and foreigners while reporting that many religious adherents also communicated that they were able to "practice their faith openly in officially registered places of worship without interference from authorities." The document further notes that practitioners of "cults" like the Falungong and small Christian-based groups that are unregistered and excluded from the state definition of religion continued to be harassed. The conditions depicted for Muslims were likewise varied: in areas of ethnic unrest, they were subject to tight control, yet it is also reported that half of the 10,000 Chinese Muslims who performed the Hajj went with government-organized delegations.

2.8. 21st Century Contexts and Contents for the 2010 and 2017 Updates to the 1994 Provisions and 2005 Regulations

It is a moot point if American extraterritorial oversight exemplified by the ADVANCE Democracy Act of 2007, their critique of Communist policies and implementation of religious practice and their support of religious/ethnic separatist groups-in-diaspora exacerbates religious and ethnic conflicts in the PRC. Enze Han notes that even a "cursory comparison" between the Uighur and Tibetan cases will show that the two most politically active ethnic groups in the PRC are also the ones that have received "substantial external support from the beginning." Strategically, both ethnic minority groups have now "successfully internationalized their cause" by appealing to the democratic West: the Uighur nationalists and diaspora community in fact aim to emulate the "prominence" of the Tibetans (Han 2011). Writing about Xinjiang, Han includes in his analysis five elements that have not only failed to end violence but have likely further aggravated the continuing conflict: they are political repression,

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[36] See https://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/2005/51509.htm.

[37] See comment for endnote xxix. The report offers a statistical list of believers based on outdated PRC data: 100 million Buddhist, 20 million Muslims, 5 million Catholics (or closer to 10 million according to the Vatican), 16 million Protestants (or 20 million by the count of church officials or academics place the number between 30 to 100 million). While there are no official estimates of Daoists (Taoists) and practitioners of traditional folk religions, academics estimate several hundred thousand for Daoists and hundreds of millions of practitioners of traditional folk religions (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor 2005). These numbers have been updated to 200 million believers in the 2018 White Paper on China's Policies and Practices on Protecting Freedom of Religious Belief: 20 million remains constant for Muslims, an increase from 5 to 6 million for Catholics and more than double from 16 to 38 million Protestants. Acknowledging syncretic practices, no numbers are given for Buddhism and Daoism (Taoism) because "it is difficult to accurately estimate their numbers as there are no set registration procedures which ordinary believers must follow as part of their religion" (IOSC 2018).

economic grievances, cultural grievances, influx of Han migrants and history.[38] These five points are relevant and can be applied to the TAR too.[39]

Beyond the socio-economic, political and cultural reasons for discontent and unrest, there are also demographic and deep-rooted historical reasons. A massive influx of Han Chinese into Xinjiang means that the 1953 population tally at 6% for the Han and 75% for the Uyghurs (Kyrgyz, Kazakhs and other groups made up the rest) has in the year 2000 been upended to an almost even proportion of 40% Han and 45% Uyghurs. This strategy of mass migration is repeated in Tibet and also perhaps unexpectedly in Hong Kong, where 150 mainlanders are allowed entry daily for a total of 54,750 annually. The anxiety implied in the PRC's migration strategy can in part be found in the past, in the pre-1949 separatist movements in the two regions and the colonial history of Hong Kong. The 2014 Hong Kong Occupy Central (also known as the Umbrella Movement) was notably conceived and fomented by Christian leaders (Lodge 2014a, 2014b; Westendorp 2015; Metaxas 2016).

Running parallel to Chinese anxiety is American research data that amplify its distrust of the communist state. Beyond the support for the Dalai Lama, the CECC collected and posted information that contradicted statistics from the PRC. While the Chinese reported in 2002 that illiteracy in the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) was down from 95% to 4.7%, American findings reported that in 2003, 46% of Tibetans in the Region had received no schooling. In 2005 U.S. figures showed that Tibetans had the highest rate of illiteracy at 47.25% while the national rate was an impressive 9.08%. Crowe writes that this abysmally high rate for the Tibetans is profoundly problematic given the amount of resources that the Chinese state has invested in the region. He further notes that the situation is compounded by the practice of sending the best students to boarding schools out of the TAR region.[40]

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[38] See also (Cao et al. 2018). The authors believe that Xinjiang "currently poses the most imminent threat to the internal security . . . as the conflict becomes linked with jihadist groups in other security hotspots, like Pakistan and Syria." Their summary of possible causal factors in the continuing ethnic violence include: "economic inequality," "legacy of suppression of local cultural and religious life," "political repression and underrepresentation of ethnic minority groups in provincial affairs and political life," "excessive use of force by government agents," "growing Islamist sentiment . . . fuelled by radical Muslim movements in the neighboring Central Asian republics and in Pakistan and Afghanistan."

[39] First, Han writes that political repression was used against both groups in the initial 1996 "Strike Hard" campaign; and after 9/11, a home-grown anti-terrorism program targeted and linked indiscriminately Uyghur pro-independence movements and organizations with the Taliban and other terrorist groups. Second, he notes that economic grievances were an unintended byproduct of the implementation of the West Development Strategy, whose goal is ironically to bring prosperity to the western border region. The culprits are the lack of broad local indigenous participation and control over the two region's resources. For example, the control of oil development in Xinjiang by the central government, Han managers and workers with limited Uyghur involvement and the same unequal sharing of responsibilities and wealth in infrastructure projects like the Tibet-Qinghai Railway in the TAR, have been and continue to be interpreted both as favouritism for the Han and disregard for local interests and the displacement of traditional nomadic cultures.Third, Han points out, cultural grievances abound. In the Tibetan case, the state tried to displace the Dalai Lama, regulate the selection of the Panchen Lama and mandate the monks to study four textbooks from the series Explanations and Proclamations for the Propagation of Patriotic Education in Monasteries Throughout the TAR (Crowe 2013). In Xinjiang, there has been a chipping away at Uyghur-language education and since March 2004: the state declared that "all science subjects should gradually be taught in Mandarin-Chinese," as with all other subjects; and because of this, Uyghur school teachers must pass a Chinese proficiency test. Similar pressure against indigenous spoken languages apply to Han "dialects" too. Shanghainese, for instance, is now taught in private schools because Putonghua has displaced it even in most home. The Han "advantage" is that a common written Chinese language though continually evolving, has been more or less standardized for over 2000 years.

[40] Here is the thorny issue of Han "prejudice" against minorities. In practice, Chinese informants tell me that Han students from rural areas with inadequate number of middle and high schools and the strongest students from all elementary schools are routinely sent away to board at schools that are respectively too far for a daily commute or the highest performing schools in the country. More pointedly, even in charges of genocide both by Kadeer and the Dalai Lama (Crowe 2013), it is unfortunately true too that the Han can level the same charges against the state for the horrendous decade of the Cultural Revolution, as the 1997 White Paper admits. Also important is a recognition that the Han have themselves departed radically from their multiple traditional cultures in a bid to both "catch up" to and to protect the nation from the West. When the element of comparable treatment—however terrible and the logic of material advance and strategic defence are considered, the actions of the state might be interpreted within an instrumental logic as stated by the CPC itself: the goals of a broad prosperity and peace for the majority, if not all. That the country has not been seized by protests may be a testament to the majority's acceptance of the government's policies and actions.

2.8.1. The National Endowment for Democracy and the Funding of PRC Dissidents

The American government has not stopped at its gathering of alternative data and its critique of PRC policies and execution of "vague" and "nebulous" laws. In 2004, the National Endowment for Democracy set aside an annual provision of $75,000 to the Uyghur American Association (UAA), an organization that promotes independence for "East Turkestan"[41] (Clarke 2010). According to the *People's Daily*, Uyghur leader Rebiya receives much of her funding from the U.S. When she joined her husband in diaspora in the U.S. in 2005, she founded the International Uyghur Human Rights and Democracy Foundation (IUHRDF). Over the next year, she became the president of the UAA during its second General Assembly and was then elected to the World Uyghur Congress (WUC). In 2007, one year before 2008 Beijing Summer Olympics, a symbolic global coming-of-age of the PRC, the U.S. further financed ETIM-like groups such as the WUC and IUHRDF to the tune of half a million dollars at $520,000 ('East Turkistan' Terrorist Forces 2011).

2.8.2. Prosperity and Cultural Backlash: Rebiya Kadeer, the Muslim Dalai Lama and George W. Bush

With ample American support, Rebiya Kadeer is described by the Chinese media as "a Uighur Dalai Lama" who is "angling for a Nobel Prize." ('East Turkistan' Terrorist Forces 2011) Like the Tibetan monk, she is portrayed as a "political exile who has long been engaged in activities aimed at splitting China and undermining national unity . . . (and who) has organized armed forces, engage in violent activities and instigated disturbances." (100 Questions 2001) Kadeer is a prominent face and voice for the Uyghurs in diaspora (Rebiya Kadeer's Funding Sources 2009). Like the Dalai Lama, she has accused the PRC of cultural genocide, declaring that "China continues to oppress our people." (Crowe 2013; Protest Marks Xinjiang 'Massacre' 2007) This anti-Chinese rhetoric may seem surprising when Kadeer's past is considered. Remarkably, she was elected to the 1993 8th National Committee of the People's Political Consultative Conference (Unveiled Rebiya Kadeer: A Uighur Dalai Lama 2009). She was a successful business woman and listed as one of the wealthiest individuals in the nation, worth over 100 million yuan before she was taken into custody in 1999 for allegedly leaking state secrets and for tax evasion. Kadeer continued to receive much attention in the West too: in 2007, then-President George W. Bush met her in person, in Prague.

The next year, staying on message before the Summer Olympics, Bush referred to Uyghurs and Tibetans in a speech celebrating the 10th anniversary of the U.S. Congress' passing of the International Religious Freedom Act (Clarke 2010). The unfortunate reality is that despite substantially improved material circumstances for most of the population or some scholars posit that it is perhaps because of the socio-economic inequality generated from the success of reform-generated development, the western border has remained a region of continual violence since 2007/8—mired in cycles of riots and protests, followed by state suppression and repression (Cao et al. 2018; Han 2011). Velasco (2018) theorizes that "cultural backlash" is a stronger explanation than "economic insecurity" for confrontation and conflict and he contends that populism often occurs in countries that are economically strong: the experiences of TAR and Xinjiang appear to support his thesis as prosperity has done little to assuage Tibetans' and Uyghurs' call for independence and violence seems to have escalated with economic prosperity and perhaps American support. In this heartbreaking conflict, the mistrust and misunderstanding are made amply clear: there is on the one side, Americans who believe they are supporting persecuted religious minorities fighting for freedom; and on the other, communists who talk about battling "splittists" that are trying to tear their country apart.

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[41] The *People's Daily* logs a different number: it reports that when Kadeer arrived in the U.S., the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) sponsored National Endowment for Democracy "visited and offered financial support and annually grants US$200,000 to the UAA." ('East Turkistan' Terrorist Forces 2011); see also (Lobbying for the Faithful: Uyghur American Association 2018).

2.8.3. Violence in the Autonomous Regions of Tibet and Xinjiang and Its Spread Beyond

In March, the month that the PRC entered and overthrew the religious government of Tibet in 1959, five months before the start of the 2008 August Games, there were protests first in Lhasa, then violence in the Aba Tibetan-Qiang Autonomous Prefecture in southwest Sichuan. According to official reports, munitions, "propaganda material for 'Tibet independence,' devices for sending text messages to mobile phones and pornographic discs" were discovered at the Kirti Monastery in Aba County.[42] Then, in February of the next year, 50 years after the Dalai Lama fled the communists, the first of many self-immolations took place; 2012 saw the largest number at 80.[43] The immolations moved beyond the Tibetan Autonomous Region into Gansu, Qinghai, Sichuan and occasionally as far away as Beijing.

For Uyghurs, 2009 proved a deadly year too. On 26 June, in southern Guangdong province, Han Chinese workers turned on and killed Uyghur co-workers in a Shaoguan toy factory because of a rumor that they had raped Han women. On 5 July, Uyghurs in Xinjiang responded with "peaceful protest" in Urumqi that ultimately turned deadly. Joanne Finley (2011) writes that they were demonstrating against the perceived "ethnic discrimination" and "non-transparency of information, state censorship and rumor concerning the Shaoguan factory incident of 26 June." Continuing ethnic tensions surfaced with occasional outbreaks like the deadly attacks in the southern city of Kashgar. As with the Tibetan situation, violence spread across the country beyond Xinjiang with cases like a knife attack in a Yunnan train station in the southwest in 2011, a "fiery car crash in (Beijing's) Tiananmen Square that killed five and injured 40" in the northeast in 2014, (Associated Press in Beijing 2014) and a knife attack in the Guangzhou subway station in the southeast in 2015 (Hoshur et al. 2011). Elsewhere in the Muslim world, there were incidents of instability that the communist state works so hard to avoid.[44]

2.8.4. Opinions on Encouraging and Regulating Religious Circles' Participation: Evolution of PRC Policies

Amid ongoing religious conflict, the government's approach to religion continued to evolve and increasingly focused on beneficial aspects in religion. As Susan McCarthy puts it, charity allows religions to "spill over its designated boundaries," especially when activities prove their "social utility." Moreover, Vivienne Shue notes that "reformist practices can be embraced by the state and dignified with formal approvals." For example, when an earthquake devastated Wenchuan in southwest Sichuan in 2008, the Taiwanese Buddhist group Cizi (Tzu Chi or Buddhist Compassion Relief) best known for its medical aid work, took part in rescue efforts. They performed relief work in areas affected by natural disasters: offering both medical assistance and spiritual comfort—praying for the injured, the dead and their families. This recognition of the positive socially gainful elements in religion was formally expressed in 2012, in an inter-departmental memorandum drafted by six central government agencies (including SARA, the Ministry of Civil Affairs and the United Front Work Department that works with diaspora Chinese). The document was issued to party bureaucrats in different departments and at various levels, exhorting them to recognize and encourage charity work of religious organizations in the project of national rejuvenation and the building of a socialist society.

The memorandum, Opinions on Encouraging and Regulating Religious Circles' Participation, sets out the meaning and benefits of charity work, the guiding principles and goals, operational parameters, the expected shape of activities and government favor and support in the performance of work that benefit society. Acceptable activities include efforts

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[42] See http://en.chinacourt.org/public/detail.php?id=4303.

[43] For details see https://sites.tufts.edu/gis/files/2018/05/Chokki_Tenzin_GIS101_2018.pdf, https://freetibet.org/about/self-immolation-protests. For the response from the PRC, see https://www.eurasiareview.com/01122012-china-tibetan-immolations-security-measures-escalate/.

[44] The Jasmine Revolution was ignited in December 2010 when a Tunisian street vendor set himself on fire in protest against the arbitrary seizing of his vegetable stand and the revolution he started unseated the country's president. As the anti-government protests spread across much of the North African and Middle Eastern Islamic countries in west Asia, it was given the moniker "Arab Spring."

> to destroy the harmful and provide comfort; to help the disabled; to nourish the elderly and care for the young; to aid the poor and assist the needy; to donate resources for support of education; to provide health services; to protect the environment; to build public facilities for the social good; and other such legitimate and permitted beneficial charity work appropriate to religious groups and the congregations.[45] (SARA 2012; McCarthy 2017).

Opinions is so central to state policy on religion that it is mentioned in the 2018 White Paper on religion that will be discussed in a later section.

Beyond the domestic arena, the post-2004 period brought political change and ongoing concern over Islamist groups for PRC's Central Asian neighbors. The 2005 Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan brought about a change of government peacefully. Inspired by this, some in Uzbekistan aspired to a similar development but hopeful reformers met with charges of Islamic radicalism and violence: bloodshed in the city of Andijan was the result. Scholars disagree on the extent of Islamist involvement in Uzbekistan but the threat of radical Islam to the PRC was real enough when Americans reported Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) militants fighting alongside "al-Qa'ida and Taliban forces in Afghanistan during Operation Enduring Freedom (the military mission in Afghanistan after 9/11)." Mirroring the American funding of Tibetans and Uyghurs, the "close financial relationship of the Islamic movement with al-Qa'ida" was also worrying. So too was the finding that "ETIM fighters received terrorist training in Afghanistan, financed by al-Qa'ida and the Taliban." (*Globalsecurity.org* n.d.) According to PRC sources given in Wang (2003), the group was responsible for more than 200 terrorist incidents in Xinjiang from 1992–2003.

According to Wang, ETIM focuses on creating an Islamic state, a caliphate. On this issue, Aida Amanbayeva (2009) offers a different assessment: she cautions that nationalistic feelings and the wish to re-establish a caliphate does not turn a group or a community into terrorists and she believes that "no strong or viable relationship between Islam and terrorism in Central Asia has yet been formed." Wang, on the other hand, believes that the ETIM is part of an international network that operates mostly within the region of Central Asia, previously known as Turkestan/Turkistan.[46]

2.8.5. The 2010 Detailed Rules for the Implementation of the Provisions on the Administration of Religious Activities of Foreigners within the Territory of the PRC

Amid the growing Islamist presence in Central Asia, American support of separatist groups-in-diaspora and the failure of domestic Strike Hard initiatives and the jailing of Uyghurs and Tibetans to stem the violence, the Detailed Rules for the Implementation of the Provisions on the Administration of Religious Activities of Foreigners within the Territory of the People's Republic of China was promulgated in 2010 (Detailed Rules). Detailed Rules is an amendment to the 1994 Provisions on the Administration of Religious Activities of Aliens[47] within the Territory of the People's Republic of China. Article 4 in the Detailed Rules reiterates yet again the PRC's respect for the freedom of religious belief of non-residents:

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[45] Unfortunately, I have been unable to locate an English translation of the Opinions on Encouraging and Regulating Religious Circles' Participation in Public Welfare Charitable Activities. The translation here is mine.

[46] This area is bounded by Siberia to the north; Tibet, India, Afghanistan and Iran to the south; the Gobi Desert to the east; and the Caspian Sea to the west. Xinjiang as East Turkestan denotes both its geographic location—that is, "east" of West Turkestan (including Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan) and its ethnic kinship with Central Asia. The network of organizations that share common purpose include the East Liberation Organization, East Turkistan International Committee, United Committee of Uyghurs' Organizations (for Central Asia and Xinjiang), Central Asian Uyghur Hezbollah in Kazakhstan, Turkistan Party in Pakistan, Eastern Turkistan Islamic Resistance Movement in Turkey, the Eastern Turkistan Youth League based in Switzerland and smaller groups like East Turkistan Islamic Party, East Turkistan Opposition Party, Shock Brigade of the Islamic Reformist Party, East Turkistan Party of Allah and the Uyghur Liberation Organization.

[47] The National People's Congress Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) website for the China Committee on Religion and Peace, 1994, uses the term "Aliens" showing American influence but "Foreigners" is used in the 2010 amendment.

> The People's Republic of China respects the freedom of religious belief of foreigners within Chinese territory, and protects and administrates the religious activities of foreigners within Chinese territory in accordance with law.
>
> The People's Republic of China protects friendly contacts and cultural and academic exchanges of foreigners within Chinese territory with Chinese religious circles in respect of religion in accordance with law.

Article 5 goes on to note that "Foreigners may participate in religious activities at lawfully registered Buddhist monasteries, Taoist temples, mosques, churches within Chinese territory according to their own religious belief." The freedom to practice is obviously circumscribed as the Detailed Rules continues on with discussions about requirements at the various levels of government including the county level, the provincial level and autonomous regions or municipalities directly under the Central Government (SARA 2010) The gap between the avowed commitment to freedom on the one hand and the conspicuous effort to demarcate state-sanctioned "legitimate" belief and practice on the other can perhaps best be understood as the reality that the "party-state has increasingly integrated its religious work into the national system of state governance and party building" especially after the CPC Central Committee's Conference on United Front Work (2015) and the National Religious Work Conference (2016) and the incorporation of SARA into the CPC Department of United Front Work highlighting "the party's centralized and unified leadership over religious work." (Cao 2018).

2.8.6. The 2017 Regulations on Religious Affairs

Seven years after the Detailed Rules for foreigners, the 2017 Regulation on Religious Affairs, a revision of the 2005 Regulation, was issued. It sets out once again parameters for "acceptable" practices in Chapter I, General Provisions. Article 2 reiterates the freedom of belief and states that mutual respect is required to maintain that liberty: "Citizens shall have the freedom of religious belief . . . Religious citizens, non-religious citizens and citizens with different religious beliefs shall respect each other and live in harmony." This is further contextualized in Article 3 which cautions that there are limits and that the freedom is "administered under the principles of protecting legitimacy, stopping illegitimacy, containing the extreme, resisting penetration (by foreign influence) and cracking down on criminals (like terrorists)." (SARA 2017; Zhang 2017) Specifically, Cao and Laliberté's insight that the PRC assumes the primacy of the state over religion is irrefutably confirmed by Article 27 under Chapter IV Premises for Religious Activities. It reads:

> The department of religious affairs shall supervise and inspect the compliance with the laws, regulations and rules, establishment and implementation of the premise (such as temples, monasteries and churches) management system, modification of the registration items, religious activities and foreign related activities of the premise for religious activities. The premises for religious activities shall accept the supervision and inspection of the departments of religious affairs.

There is also Article 30 which controls even the aesthetics by prohibiting large, outdoor religious statues outside of temple and church grounds (Zhang 2017).

Set against the realities of state control over religious practice and ongoing tensions and occasional violence on the western border in the PRC, the "traditional Chinese (qualities) of compatibility and tolerance" lauded in the 1997 White Paper on Freedom of religious belief in China seem inaccessible to Tibetan monastics and radical Islamists. There is scant evidence of "equal status" at least for dissident groups and there seems to be an absence of coexistence in "tranquility" where "religious disputes are unknown in China."[48] (See White Paper 1997; State Council 2010).

[48] It is impossible to say what was in the minds of the authors of the White Paper but such egregious historical inaccuracies may originate from an uncritical reading of documents such as Carsun Chang's "A Manifesto for a Re-appraisal of Sinology and

2.8.7. Expanded Sphere of Practice and Increased Control Simultaneously: More Charity, Less Tolerance for "Disruptors"

This unfavorable impression of the contemporary reality is confirmed by "China's revised regulations on religion fend off foreign influences," a short article by Sheng Yang (2017) in *The Global Times* (*Huanqiu*).[49] Yang writes that the "latest regulations are more specific and stricter, which analysts say are aimed at solving the latest problems of China's religious affairs." He quotes Liu Guopeng, a researcher at the Institute of World Religion Studies in the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), who reports that through the influence of Wahhabbism, some Uyghur and Hui groups have become "increasingly conservative and aggressive … (And that) the balance between religions has (been) broken" in places like Xinjiang Uyghur and Ningxia Hui autonomous regions, to the extent that the "conflict between Islamism and other religions has even caused violence and bloodshed occasionally." Yang goes on to note that there have also been "incidents between Muslims and other people in some parts of China" like Tangshan in the northern province of Hebei. In the estimation of Cao et al., the Xinjiang region "currently poses the most imminent threat" to domestic security. But Islam is not the sole problem. Liu tells Yang that

> … according to our research, Protestantism has been growing very quickly in recent years in the Chinese mainland, and the believers are more conservative than other Christians and they have frequently attacked some religions like Buddhism and Taoism, and also had conflicts with Islam.[50]

Turning next to Chu Yin, an associate professor at the University of International Relations, Yang learns the unusually sensational account of two Chinese citizens who were killed by Islamic State militants in Pakistan. The new converts had been recruited by a South Korean missionary organization to preach in the Islamic country. Chu added that "South Koreans missionaries have been conducting underground missionary activities in China since at least a decade ago … Additionally, many missionary organizations are even sponsored by the [South Korean] intelligence agency, the National Intelligence Service."[51] Such changes in the religious landscape since the start of reforms 40 years ago calls for an updated approach outlined in the 2018 White Paper.

2.9. China's Policies and Practices on Protecting Freedom of Religious Belief: The 2018 White Paper

The 2018 White Paper is an updated framework to how the PRC intends to deal with religious issues within its borders. It replaces the 1997 version, includes the focus from the 2012 Opinions and is divided in five sections: I. Basic Policies in Protecting Freedom of Religious Belief; II. Legal Guarantees for Freedom of Religious Belief; III. Conducting Religious Activities in an Orderly Manner; IV. The Role of Religious Groups Has Been Fully Developed; V. Active and Healthy Religious Relations (IOSC 2018).

Reconstruction of Chinese Culture." (Chang et al. 2000) Under the section "What the West Can Learn from Eastern Thought," Chang writes that for the East (here the PRC) "'the whole world is like one family.' Though there are many nations now, mankind will eventually become one and undivided. Chinese thought has emphasized this attitude." Then under "What We Expect from World Thought," Chang writes: "The expansion of Western civilization has brought the peoples into close contact and unfortunately has also produced much friction … In order to achieve coexistence of the various cultures and world peace, one must first, through a transcendental feeling that goes beyond philosophical and scientific research, attain an attitude of respect and sympathy toward other cultures and thereby acquire genuine compassion and commiseration toward mankind in adversity … "

[49] Whether such articles are an attempt to balance and or counter western analyses and commentary is impossible to determine. The English edition of the *Global Times* was launched in 2009, sixteen years after the Chinese edition, *Huanqiu*. It is owned by the *People's Daily* and covers international issues primarily from the government's perspective. While this poses the question of credibility, Yang's article does offer an official explanation for the need for a revision.

[50] It is unclear what Liu means by "attack." Drawing from personal experience, I would guess that Liu is referring less to physical abuse and more to verbal attacks, likely including charges of superstition against Buddhists and Daoists, overzealous attempts at conversion and highly animated discussions about Christian doctrine.

[51] One wonders if South Korea is a proxy for the U.S.

China's Policies and Practices on Protecting Freedom of Religious Belief (C3PFRB) focuses on Xi Jinping's call for "law-based governance" and the "integrating (of) religious work into the national governance system."[52] The Preamble reiterates the core values of "freedom of religious belief," "religious and social harmony" and ends with a singularly consistent declaration as follows:

> Religious believers and non-believers respect each other and live in harmony, committing themselves to reform and opening-up and the socialist modernization and contribute to the realization of the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation.

Echoing Xi's predecessor Jiang Zemin, who admitted that "religion might outlast the CCP," the White Paper acknowledges that "Religion is an integral part of human civilization" and that policies and strategies must adapt to changing circumstances. It offers that the most pressing challenges currently are the proper "handling (of) religious relations" and the "curbing (of) religious extremism." Like the last sentence in the Preamble, the final sentence in the Conclusion is remarkably consistent and affirmative. (See Shi 2018)

> China will continue to respect and protect its citizens' freedom to religious beliefs, and strive to build the country into a modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, harmonious, and with a sound environment.

C3PFRB conveys clearly that the achievement of the freedom to religious beliefs is not an end in itself and that it is a part of the "realization of the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation." Its implementation will "uphold the principle that religions in China must be Chinese in orientation and (the state will) provide active guidance to religions so that they can adapt themselves to the socialist society." That is, for instance, Muslims are not free to develop a caliphate and Christians are not free to teach Creationism in their schools.

Collaboration between the state and religious groups and within different sects of the same religion is encouraged. There are exemplary accounts of such alliances for Buddhists and Muslims in section IV:3 "Conscientiously resisting extremism."[53] In December 2017, religious groups issued a joint proposal calling for "religious communities to enhance their abilities to distinguish, guard against and resist the encroachment of cults" in the interest of the central aims of the government: social harmony and stability from moderate prosperity achieved through modernization.

3. Variability in Governance and Collaboration between Religious Individuals, Individuals and the State

The joint December 2017 proposal issued by the state-sanctioned groups illustrates well McCarthy's discernment that "Legally approved religions are expected to 'mutually adapt' to the needs and interests of the regime, for example by helping to build the 'harmonious society' and combating 'evil cults' like Falun Gong." When they do not, she writes, referring to the work of her colleagues Kang Xiaoguang and Han Heng, groups that "challenge . . . official ideology" and threaten the state because they "focus on sensitive issues or (if they) possess strong mobilizing capacity" are subject to stricter controls. Using the work of Wu Fengshi and Chan Kin-man, McCarthy adds that NGOs may "interact, negotiate, and

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[52] See also Xi Jinping's message about religious work: (Xi Jinping Attends the National Conference of Religious Work 2016) and (Full Text. Xi Jinping's Report at 19th CPC National Congress 2017).

[53] In January 2014, Buddhists gathered and were counselled to teach "the correct outlook on life and (oppose) extremist behaviours such as self-immolation or the incitement of others to do so." In May of the same year, Muslims convened and were steered towards condemnation of "violent terrorist activities" along with the release of a proposal "Keep to the Middle Path and Steer Clear of Extremism." Then in July 2016, the China Religious Culture Communication Association and the China Islamic Association held an International Seminar on the Islamic Middle Path in Urumqi, "advocating the role of the Middle Path in opposing extremism." These efforts recall both the Buddhist notion of emptiness and the Confucian ideal of *zhongyong* or the "mean," evidence of sinicization or the implementation of "Chinese characteristics." (See also Tibetans: Communist China's unlikely Catholic Connection 2015).

resist governmental pressure in different ways" that might then affect the methods through which officials deal with them. Finally, with the work of Teresa Wright and Teresa Zimmerman-Liu, McCarthy indicates that "harsh treatment . . . frequently has little to do with intrinsic factors like theology or belief" and may have more to do with achieving current policy goals. In other words, religion may be peripheral to the broadly stated national goals but it is a factor that will alternately be considered a hindrance to and or an aid in the achievement of the ultimate goals of prosperity, security and harmony.

3.1. State Accepted Religious Groups: Socially Engaged Communities in the Hinterland

Through her dual focus on Gospel Rehab (GR) in southern Yunnan set up in 1999 and Gansu Province Association for Minority Nationality Cultural and Educational Promotion (GAMCEP) established in the central northern province in 2009, McCarthy offers evidence for Andrew Mertha and Vivienne Shue's theory that the "fragmentation of governance and the ability (of local officials) to deviate from the script allows more pluralism than one might expect of such a centralized, authoritarian system." Further, she agrees with Karre Koesel's assessment that charity in the PRC is a "tradable resource" that religious groups can use to "gain legitimacy and diminish suspicions toward their religious community."

Both the Evangelist Christian GR and Hui Muslim GAMCEP programs predate the 2012 Opinions on Encouraging and Regulating Religious Circles' Participation in Public Welfare Charitable Activities. Both anticipate and exemplify the spirit of the document. The Gospel Rehab was set up in one of the poorest provinces in the country and it dealt with problems like rural poverty, illiteracy, drug addiction and HIV/AIDS. It began as an unregistered drug treatment program in Yunnan that used "illicit" Christian "prayer and evangelism to treat addiction." Even though it lacked approval, it was allowed to continue and was eventually absorbed into a program that is overseen by the state-sanctioned Three-self Patriotic Movement and Chinese Christian Council.

Gansu, like Yunnan, is also one of the poorest provinces in the country. The Muslim GAMCEP is registered with the provincial Civil Affairs Bureau, is government-backed but it is independent of the CPC. Its stated goal is the fostering of economic and educational advancement among ethnic minorities including Hui, Uyghur, Kazakh and Kyrgyz. The director, Yu Guimin, is Hui and he joined the communist party in the 1950s and is a retired party official. He advocated consistently for Muslim interests. When he secured a contract with the financing necessary to develop some land in Lanzhou, as the deputy chief of the provincial Forestry Bureau in 1997, he approved the construction of a mosque within the forest management area for Muslim construction workers.

GAMCEP is dedicated to advancing Islamic belief, adherence, community and identity. Donations are made to poor communities during religious holidays; and grants of cash, food and household goods are distributed to the needy. On the linguistic-literary front, the group has financed tuition-free Arabic language programs for male post-secondary graduates interested in studying in the Middle East; supports literary competitions by Chinese Muslim authors; funds the magazine *Seeing Like Us*; and produces *Gansu Muslim* a television show. In 2014, GAMCEP purchased over 500 solar water heaters for Muslim communities in impoverished Gansu, Ningxia and Qinghai. Beyond working within Muslim communities, Yu also believes that imams and *ahongs* (religious teachers) should be a vanguard in building ethnic unity, in advancing "harmony among Muslims and between Muslims and non-Muslim Chinese" and in "promoting economic and educational advancement among Muslims, especially Muslim women." All these endeavors are reminiscent of activities lauded by the 2012 Opinions on Encouraging and Regulating Religious Circles' Participation in Public Welfare Charitable Activities.

But "educational and economic opportunities" may become restricted and the status of women undermined with the growth of Islamic fundamentalism and Lu Xin reports a litany of feminist charges against "extremist" men in *Global Times*: they "forbid the use of condoms"; do not care about their children; treat their wives like personal chattel; forbid their wives to work; insist their wives "wear robes and cover their faces" and "even beat" them (Lu 2018). But how credible is Lu's account? How widespread is the turn to fundamentalism? We do not know. What we do know, as McCarthy reports,

is that GAMCEP works to counter foreign fundamentalist influences, especially ones that erode gains for women.

3.2. Hui and Uyghurs: Same Religion, Different Treatments

What we encounter in Yu Guimin and other socially oriented Islamic community organizations like his, is what Brent Crane (2014) calls "A Tale of Two Chinese Muslim Minorities: 'Hui and Uyghur.'" The Hui have a long history in mainland China and have lived through various dynasties as a minority within larger Han populations. Their focus is not on independence but rather, revolves around worship as they are most concerned about the freedom to practice Islam. Referring to Hong Kong's South China Morning Post, Crane describes a Hui Sufi leader in Ningxia who spoke openly about speaking to Osama bin Laden and other radical clerics while he was studying in Pakistan and who by 2006 had established a "virtual religious state" with a million and a half followers "and a network of mosques and madrasas." This imam remained unencumbered, undisturbed by the CPC because he had expressed "unwavering loyalty" to the Party.

When the treatment of this Sufi teacher is compared with the situation for even ordinary Uyghurs, Crane concludes that "the difference in government treatment of the two Muslim groups rests not within religion but within the political realm." The state does not interfere with the Hui because they do not challenge the government on the twin issues of "territoriality and ethnic unity": as long as they neither want statehood nor differentiation from the Han beyond religion, they will be free from harassment.

The Hui see themselves as nationally Chinese, belonging to and citizens of the PRC. Wang (2018) writes that the Hui diaspora in Dubai draw on the "rich heritage of 'Hui Confucians' . . . to reconnect the (Arab and Chinese) peoples by emphasizing the universal humanistic concerns in both Islam and Confucianism." They are seen as "cooperative and patriotic"—though ironically, Wang notes, they also demonstrate a strong desire to remain in diaspora. The Chinese Muslims in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) "create more meaningful social exchanges beyond economic transaction" with "art, research, philanthropy, and medicine." By this process, they become a part of the soft power for the PRC as "Cultural Ambassadors." Since 2010, the Chinese consulate general has hosted an *Iftar*, the meal that breaks the fast at Ramadan, for all Chinese Muslim families including Hui, Uyghur and others. The success of the Hui in Dubai promotes "dialogues between Chinese and Islamic civilizations," auguring "harmony among civilizations" and chasing away any potential clash.

3.3. Diaspora Hui Representing the PRC: Two Exemplary Individuals

Wang offers two individual examples of establishment "Good Muslims"-in-diaspora: Dr. Ma and Madam Wu. Dr. Ma is one of the most successful Hui businessmen active in the UAE, though he sees himself as a "religious man and aspirant scholar, (and) making money is but a means to help him achieve his goal." In 2011, he established the first Confucius Institute on the Arabian Peninsula in Dubai while a few Muslim countries were in the throes of Arab Spring, including neighboring Bahrain. Islamic sensibilities are not offended by the "Confucius" in the institutes because Confucianism is conceived of as a philosophy and not considered a religion by the state.

Dr. Ma was born in a small Ningxia Hui village where his father was an *ahong* at the mosque. The patriarch taught his children Arabic and the *Qur'an* so that Dr. Ma was fluent in the language. For that invaluable skill, he was sent by the government to work in Cairo in 1992. Eleven years later, in 2003, he finished his study of the modernization process in Saudi Arabia for his doctoral dissertation. The philosopher's goal to "bridge the cultural gap and promote better mutual understanding between China and the Arab world" dovetails perfectly with the government's stated goal of harmony.

Madam Wu, like Dr. Ma, is a businesswoman. But unlike Dr. Ma, she was born into an influential secular Chinese Hui family and grew up in thriving post-reform Shanghai. After graduating with a degree in Arabic at the Shanghai Foreign Languages University in 1993, she started work with an American firm in Dubai. Highly motivated, she is self-taught in English and computer skills. In 1995,

she started work with Orbit Showtime Network, a Dubai-based TV network provider in the Middle East and North Africa. She appears to have become more observant and chose to wear a "black *Sheila* and black *abaya*" to the interview with Wang Yuting (Wang 2018).

In 2001, Madam Wu married a member of one of the local elite families and so expanded her social network organically. Her work is eclectic: she acts as a broker, makes introductions and arranges meetings between government officials from the PRC and potential associates, puts together important business deals and on one occasion even served as the "interpreter and business advisor for … a prominent businessman and member of the royal family when he visited Shanghai in 2012." The role taken on by Madam Wu and Dr. Ma is not unlike hyphenated-North Americans who act as bridges to others with similar ethnic backgrounds and thereby ease relations by offering common ground: Canada's ex-Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and the U.S. ex-President Ronald Reagan's special "Irish" bond is one example; and the British hiring of Mark Carney, who holds Canadian, British and Irish citizenship, as the Governor of the Bank of England is another.

4. Conclusions

At the writing of this paper in mid-2019, it remains unclear what situation Uyghurs face in Xinjiang even after diplomats from selected countries were invited to visit for highly choreographed tours of "detention camps" in March 2019. Rumors continue to swirl around the story that "(a)n estimated one million Muslims are being held in detention camps in Xinjiang"—camps that authorities in Beijing call "vocational training centers" to deter radicalization, where inmates are taught "language, culture and vocational skills." (Lyons 2018) As for the case of Meng Wanzhou, her legal team announced on 1 March 2019 that they are suing the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Canada Border Services Agency, alleging that members of the two government offices "breached her constitutional rights when she was arrested in Vancouver on December 1."[54] Two months later, on 9 May 2019 Mike Hager and Xiao Xu report in the Globe and Mail that Meng's lawyers have "successfully delayed formal extradition proceedings" and recommend that the charges be dropped because "her arrest was an abuse of process; the fraud charge she is facing in the United States is for a crime that doesn't exist in Canada; and the U.S. government's extradition request represents an 'abuse of power.'"

These new developments with the extradition case happen amid concerns of political interference in the judicial process in both the U.S. and Canada. The first calls out President Trump in his public musings that he could drop the request for Meng's extradition if he were to receive concessions in trade negotiations with the PRC. The latter catches Prime Minister Trudeau with four high level resignations—including two cabinet ministers, that resulted from his handling of accusations by his ex-Minister of Justice and Attorney General, Jody Wilson-Raybould. Wilson-Raybould alleges that Trudeau and members of his government put undue pressure on her to overturn the decision made by the federal director of public prosecutions, Kathleen Roussel, to prosecute the Montreal Quebec firm SNC-Lavalin for charges of corruption.[55] These two possible and alleged infractions imply or indicate clearly that the rule of law is not yet perfect in Canada and the U.S.

Perhaps the case for Meng Wanzhou's extradition might best be read as a cautionary tale on the blinding influence and power of mainstream narratives. Given the disproportionate focus on the authoritarian malfeasance against religious faithful and retaliatory actions taken by the PRC government, it is sometimes difficult to see clearly where the threat to the "multilateral rules-based order from

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[54] See for example the Canadian newspaper *The Globe and Mail* and the UK *The Guardian* respectively at https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/british-columbia/article-extradition-proceedings-delayed-for-huawei-executive-meng-wanzhou/, https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/british-columbia/article-huawei-executive-meng-wanzhou-files-lawsuit-alleging-breach-of/ and https://www.theguardian.com/world.

[55] SNC-Lavalin is by its own description "a global fully integrated professional services and project management company and a major player in the ownership of infrastructure." See http://www.snclavalin.com/en/ (accessed on 4 March 2019). For details about the Jody Wilson-Raybould story, see https://www.theglobeandmail.com/politics/article-more-than-half-of-canadians-say-charges-against-snc-lavalin-should-go/ (accessed on 4 March 2019).

1945" and global peace might come from. Vanderklippe (2019b) reports that Former UN Security Council President Kishore Mahbubani's close analysis of current international politics suggests that the greatest threat comes from the U.S. It is the U.S. that has in recent years withdrawn from multiple multilateral agreements like "the Paris climate agreement, the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, the International Court of Justice, the International Criminal Court, the World Trade Organization Appellate Body, an optional protocol under the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations and a series of UN organizations, including UNESCO and the Human Rights Council." (2019).

Unlike the peremptory claims for the rule of law in the U.S. and Canada, accusations that the PRC persecutes its religious faithful is blunted in a broader examination. When the conditions of the Uyghurs are considered against the treatment of Hui and evangelical Gospel Rehab for example, the PRC government's actions do not look as comprehensively cruel as often depicted and assumed from media reports (Vanderklippe 2018a, 2018b). At the National Conference of Religious Work in 2016, Xi Jinping lauds the "stronger emphasis on a legal approach to religious work" but spoke also of the "need for improving the quality of the rule of law in dealing with religion," acknowledging that the country still has some distance to go. He continued to say that the state "must persist in the separation of politics and religion and insist that religion does not interfere in politics" while conceding to a need to "improve the understanding of the principle of the rule of law." Xi's words suggest that the CPC is very much aware of the challenges in dealing with religious problems going forward.

In fact, Xi sees religion as a "very serious question" that has "special importance (because it) affects the relationship between the party and the lives of the people, affects harmony within society, affects the unity of the nation, (as well as affecting) the peace of the country and the integrity of our ancestral land."[56] (Xi Jinping Attends the National Conference of Religious Work 2016) Thus the Communist Party of China recognizes that religion is going to stay and that it can aid in or hold back the building of a safe, prosperous and equitable society. Given the importance that religion has gained, Cao's observations are notable: he discerns that China's religious policy is "generally perceived to be restrictive if not antireligious in nature" but he adds that it "appears deeply contradictory and inconsistent," establishing a variety of religion-state relations that can be described as "symbiotic," "adversarial" or "indifference." The diversity that Cao recognizes can be found in the practical strategies taken by officials: the first category is represented by the experiences of the GAMCEP in Gansu, Gospel Rehab in Yunnan and Hui in Dubai; the second is demonstrated by the tense and sometimes violent encounters with the Uyghurs, Tibetans and Falungong; and the third include the many popular Buddhist/Daoist groups and practices that are not counted by national statistics and which have not been included in this article.

It bears remembering here that communist China is a geographically huge, densely populated, ethnically diverse, culturally multiple, historically ancient, politically young and still developing country. The acute geopolitical conundrum that is Tibet and Xinjiang points to a knotted complex of imperial history of conquering Manchus and westerners and potentially "unfriendly" encounters on the borders of the PRC: Russia to the North; American presence on the east coast in Japan, South Korea and Philippines; American support for dissidents in Tibet and Xinjiang on the western border; American funding for the development of India's nuclear power in the southwest (Grey 2016); American wars in modern East and Southeast Asia; American collusion with the U.K. for displacement of indigenous populations from Diego Garcia for the construction of a military base in the Indian Ocean (Vine 2015); and radical Islamism in the Western provinces.

International politics aside, quotidian experiences would defeat hegemonic accounts of religious practice and associated domestic polices in the PRC. If there were more studies of ordinary citizens, doing ordinary religious things, in ordinary places, the varieties of worship—both sanctioned and proscribed, would be obvious. I believe that the mistrust of the PRC's treatment of its many and diverse

[56] This website for *China National Radio* (*Yang Guang Wang*) is in Chinese and the translation here is mine.

religious communities in part arises from a misunderstanding of the aims of government actions: that is, actions are mistaken to be anti-religious when they are targeted against real or perceived political territorial threats like the separatist Uyghurs and Tibetan or harmful heterodox religious practices like the belief in magical cures through meditation as in the Falungong. As Crane notes, the state is not anti-Islam, nor is it anti-Tibetan Buddhism—it is pro-unity and pro-security and these objectives would be plainly recognized if the evolution of state policies and strategies were analyzed within current political realities, both domestic and international.

Communist China has lifted most of its citizens out of abject poverty and promises to continue until all its people are fed properly, clothed well, gainfully working and given education. But it has failed to understand the depth of cultural and religious feelings of some of its minorities, most notably the Uyghurs and Tibetans. It has assumed that what has worked for the majority Han population would work for all other ethnic groups. This misunderstanding, it seems to me, requires education and not recrimination. On one hand, scholars, activists and journalists in the West might more seriously examine the differences in how the relationship between religion and politics has developed and is understood in West Asian as compared to East Asian traditions. On the other hand, scholars and party apparatchiks in the People's Republic of China might profitably investigate the psychological aspects of the willing faithful, even those belonging to "evil cults" such as the Falungong; as well as study foundational notions of commandments and orthodoxy, the singularity of revelation and divine inspiration and the centrality of free will (evolved into personal freedom) needed to realize the ultimate sacred act of imaging the divine in the Judeo-Christian-Islamic tradition. It would be a boon to all if both sides would consider how different presumptions and priorities could be accommodated. There is much work to be done toward banishing mutual mistrust and misunderstanding.

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Article

Moderate Southeast Asian Islamic Education as a Parent Culture in Deradicalization: Urgencies, Strategies, and Challenges

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Abstract: Radicalization is a terminological conflation of the two meanings in the context of extreme beliefs or behaviors adopted by individuals or groups as a justification for the use of violence to achieve the objectives. Since radicalization primarily emphasises on, and departures from, the understanding and cognitive processes, the role of peaceful and moderate education in this case can be effectively utilized to serve as a considerably relevant means to prevent it. In addition, radicalization is also limited by the social, political, and economic contexts of a particular region, and combined with the degree of individual autonomy in the search for identity. Accordingly, the deradicalization efforts actually necessitate the consideration of the sociopolitical culture as the basis for policy makers. It is based on the consideration that the radicalization of Islam, even though strongly characterized by transnational movement, contains local elements leading to the radicalization as occasionally random and ununiformed violence in the Muslim world. The findings suggest some valuable strategies to deconstruct the idea of radicalization that can be implemented in several ways, including building and empowering local characterization of Indonesian education of Muslims in particular and of Southeast Asian in general, and reducing the Wahhabism extreme teachings and such highly irrational and ahistorical Arabization ideas and programs in Indonesian context.

Keywords: deradicalization; moderate education; parent culture; contextualization; Southeast Asia

1. Introduction

Terror threats and attacks by extremists in different parts of the world are very serious. Recent trends show a clear increase in the understanding of terrorism and violence associated with Islam, such as the emergence of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), Boko Haram in Nigeria, As-Shabab in Somalia, the Taliban in Pakistan and Afghanistan and Al Qaeda and its global networks (Berger 2014). Just recently, in early May 2018 several major cities in Indonesia suffered from simultaneous acts of terrorism, starting from the terrorist rebel action at the Brimob Command Headquarter in Depok, the bomb targeting the churches in Surabaya, the attack on Riau Provincial Police Headquarters, and several incidents in the fairly systematic, spontaneous but sporadic sequence. This reinforces the formation and focus of the radical group's strength in Southeast Asia (henceforth commonly cited as ASEAN), an irony regarding its strong perception as a peaceful and multicultural region, and has no historical memory of terror associated with Islam since its very early arrival on the Pacific Rim. Prior to the arrival of this new form of terror, the configuration of resistance of the Islamic-based struggle groups in Southeast Asia, albeit geographically scattered, basically has a clearly identified characterization. The Free Aceh Movement (*Gerakan Aceh Merdeka*/GAM), the South Thai People's Resistance, and Bangsamoro Movement in Mindanao, are politically identified as 'rebellions' which

are open and armed struggle targeting the central government's sense of injustice towards Muslims (Tan 2000; Kadir bin Che Man 1987; Tagliacozzo 2009). They declared that their struggle is in search for regional independence, or not affiliated with the global terror groups. This form of rebellion also occurs in areas that are assumed to be controlled by groups who consider themselves minorities, alienated, and marginalized, both in forms of religious, cultural hegemony and historical narratives, as well as economic equality and control over natural resources, which in this context, even GAM group in Aceh situated in a predominantly Muslim country, is also inseparable from this identification. Thus, the process of persuasion or counter-resistance by the central government is usually conducted openly and measurably only in a geographical region with a specific target. This region has only a memory of resistance to the Western colonial (Hadler 2008), until suddenly, albeit still justifiable and contextual, such affiliates of the Taliban, Al Qaeda, and even recently ISIS in Marawi in the Philippines, dominated Islamic terror news from ASEAN (Vaughn et al. 2005). Moreover, the involvement of some groups, like women and children in acts of terror should be of particular concern. It should be remembered that women have been long involved in religious radicalism and terror-based violence, in which they make up about a third of extremists (Roy 1996; see also, Roy 2007). This confirms that acts of terror are not solely due to external influences, but also to the existence of a basic internal process within personal psychology, i.e., the tendency to receive influence for being educated or uneducated matters related to radicalization. Education, henceforth, is the basic word for explaining how initiation of radicalization begins, and can strongly influence vulnerable groups like women, children, and the young (Niemi et al. 2018; Rokhmad and Susilo 2017). Nowadays, the millennials considered a group open to the latest technological developments and massive information that are also often involved in, and withstand to, this action, can be a relevant focus for deradicalization efforts (Roy 2008).

It is necessary to give a brief overview of typical Southeast Asian Islamic education and the problems it faces in connection with the growth of Islamic political activism through jihad by Salafi–Wahhabi institutions, which justifies the use of violence through terror actions. Historically, the arrival and spread of Islam in Southeast Asia is through the peaceful means of trade and education with Sufism emphasis (Ricci 2011). Out of a population of about 650 million, Muslims comprise 40 percent, or around 260 million people, making Islam the most widely embraced religion. Primarily contributed by the large adherents from Malay and Javanese ethnic groups, Southeast Asian Muslims mainly reside in Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, the Southern Philippines, and Southern Thailand, all of whom adhere to Sunni denomination with Shafi'i school of Islamic jurisprudence. Before the modern education and formal schooling was widely promoted, Islamic education in ASEAN had typically been institutionalized through *pesantren* or *pondok* (Islamic boarding) that have existed since the 14th century (for detailed discussion about this education system in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand, see Hefner and Zaman 2007; Hashim et al. 2011; Liow 2009; Porath 2014). Students gather in a dormitory owned, and guided by, a cleric along with his assistants. Teaching material rests on memorizing the Koran and the classical Islamic books, and is less concerned with modern literature. This educational method is very typical of Southeast Asia, considered effective to teach and disseminate peaceful and tolerant Islamic materials to socioreligious differences in a pluralistic society (Susilo and Syato 2016). Public schools were only introduced by the Dutch in the 19th century. However, until the 1980s, most clerics emphasized to students to only study in boarding schools, making them not interested in attending public schools. Specifically in Indonesia, in 1977 the number of pesantren was only around 4195 with a total of about 677,394 students. Until 2016, the number had rapidly grown to 28,194 with 4,290,626 students (Muhyiddin 2017). All of them are private and have a high degree of independence towards the state. Most Islamic boarding schools are affiliated with the moderate Islamic organization, Nahdlatul Ulama. Until the 1980s, little attention was paid to the relationship between Southeast Asian Islam and extremism. The Soviet–Afghan War (1979–1989) and the Iranian revolution (1978–1979) have been two important factors in the growth of Islamic political activism with the Salafi–Wahhabi character in ASEAN. Many of the former combatants returned home and spread their teachings. Uniquely, looking at the effectiveness and appropriateness of Islamic teaching in traditional pesantren and its

rooted influence in society, the Wahhabi–Salafi clerics seek to imitate and adopt Islamic boarding school learning models. Some examples are like the Pesantren Al Mukmin Ngruki in Solo, and Al Islam in Lamongan. Very rigid dogmatic teachings have succeeded in indoctrinating students, some of whom were involved in acts of terror either at home or becoming combatants abroad. These pesantrens have a very strong attachment to global terror groups (Van Bruinessen 2004; Wildan 2013). The rise of ISIS and the declaration of the Caliphate in 2014 were addressed with allegiance by several key figures from these institutions (BBC 2016). The rapid development of this group culturally and ideologically has clearly threatened the moderate teaching tradition offered by Islamic institutions that have already existed in Southeast Asia. Because the Salafi–Wahhabi group took a similar institutional model and teaching method in the form of pesantren, in the end these two institutions were opposite vis-à-vis in gaining influence hegemony (Abuza 2003).

Anywhere, an Islamic radical group continually regards groups outside them, especially the West, as enemies to be fought. Similarly, the rapid growth of Salafi–Wahhabi teachings and institutions in Southeast Asia followed by many terror attacks in recent years was such that ASEAN has participated in a vortex of perception as one of the terrorism front bases. Although, this concern is not entirely new as it seems to have started to emerge since the 2002 Bali Bombing, their base in ASEAN further alienated Islam as a religion of peace and honor, since there is almost no Muslim-majority region that is free of terror (Gershman 2002; for more broader perspective on the Western involvement in combating terrorism in Southeast Asia, see also Mauzy and Job 2007). Although, it is noteworthy that today, the Southeast Asian terror groups prefer to target their own nation, law enforcement officials, mainly police and the other groups such as Christians, Shiite, and Ahmadis, compared with their Middle Eastern counterparts focusing against invaders and occupation. This further reinforces that the base and focus of terrorists, and in a more general, of radicals, in ASEAN, is not based on strong social support, and is very vulnerable to external influences. In this context, in essence, Southeast Asian societies generally have a strong historical and cultural experience and narrative for deradicalization: a typical moderate education, which has survived hundreds of years in the region. This paper seeks to explore the drivers of radicalization and social factors that can push an individual to commit to radicalism and terrorism action, explores the various viewpoints of the definition of radicalization as well as its theoretical implications, the characteristics of radicalization in the Muslim world, as well as the analysis of an important part of literacy, the moderate education models of Indonesia in particular and ASEAN in general. Although, unfortunately, moderate education in this region is also facing the threat of radicalization with the emergence of Islamic educational institutions that tend to provide extreme understandings. After analyzing the forms of radical intrusions in Southeast Asia, the last part of the study attempts to describe the specific characteristics and strategical efforts that can be made in the field of education in Indonesia. For three aforementioned parties, i.e., women, children, and the millennial young, the emphasis of this study in examining the capability of moderate education is directed and is expected to be fruitful. By examining diverse views, this study is expected to provide a new horizon in explaining the role and urgency of moderate education as the most effective preventive effort in radicalization. Moreover, the study also explores the important role that millennials can play either as an object of radicalization or through their active participation by presenting capacity they have in combating radicalization.

2. Focusing the Definition of Radicalization

There are many meanings of radicalization and there is no satisfactory explanation of the definition precisely. Lentini (2009), in his study of Islamic radicalization, explains that radicalization is an ideological, subcultural, and militant expression in joining in an understanding and interpretation of Islamic theology and jurisprudence, forming social organization and interaction, which encourages one to be an active agent in the global radical transfer of ideology, theology, imagination, and narration. Radicalization is a process of supporting or entering activities that others perceive as threatening important social norms. According to this paradigm, the definition of radicalization requires some

justification. The first is the degree to which behavioral support for violence reflects a degree of self-engagement in actual violence. Second, it represents a subjective judgment attached by anyone to anyone who violates the perceived norm (Kruglanski et al. 2014). As an implication, the process of radicalization can lead to many directions, including nonviolent resistance. Radicals can enter into nonviolent behavior without intentions that can be perceived as radical (Veldhuis and Staun 2009). For example, it is a rapid radicalization in *da'wah* (Islamic propagation) activities or in the earnestness in religious practice. For some, being more diligent in practicing the teachings of religion is a practice that can bring happiness, tranquility, and personal peace. However, for extremists, diligent in worship also means abstaining from the cultural practices and alienation of religious environments that can lead to radical and extreme behavior. Hence, self-alienation to the environment is one of the fundamental reasons for the emergence of radicalization. Moreover, although religious radicalism is often associated with fundamental understanding, in fact fundamentalism is more of an ideological thought than radicalism which requires concrete action. This difference will determine the extent to which a person is willing to be involved in religious violence. Fundamentalism refers to strict adherence to certain doctrines which are considered to be the most original and most ideal. In the context of religion, fundamentalism means the high degree of someone to refer to and use sacred texts to answer a particular problem. Fundamental beliefs basically exist in every adherent of religion along with the function of the sacred text as a basis for one's beliefs. However, the degree of belief in fundamentalist will be higher than that of open-minded individuals in the same religion. (Munson 2006, p. 255) provides more emphasis to fundamentalism which does not only include 'traditional religiosity', but rather a religious response to the ideas of modernity and secularization (see also Marty and Appleby 1991). Because fundamentalism is more solely on the willingness and conviction to only refer to the most sacred text, axiologically, fundamentalists do not necessarily lead to radicalism that promotes the need for revolutionary political reforms and social structures in a comprehensive manner (Zeidan 2018). Supported by fragile social conditions, radicalism advocates change in various social structures of existing values, traditions, and institutions. Radicalists are very likely to use fundamental ideas of a particular ideology for carrying out concrete actions to restore and improve social and political conditions. In addition, although radicalization is driven by backwardness and inferiority, it does not mean that radical actors must have such character. The profile about radical actors in the Muslim world shows that they are frequently not a poor and backward group, but only the combination of religious, fanatical, or desperate characters with social conditions that suppress relative deprivation, such as extreme poverty and political oppression, which have made them radical (CBC Radio 2016; see also Beski-Chafiq et al. 2010). Juergensmeyer (2006) explained that the personal rewards taught in religious doctrines such as heaven and virgins, the existence of supporters and organizational networks based on religious institutions are some of the motivations of individuals or groups to engage in religious violence. It only required external political factors which were deemed deviating from the beliefs of radicalists as a moral justification for actual violence. In many cases, opposition to secularism and the contradiction between God's law and man-made law are some of the most obvious sources of fundamentalism (Juergensmeyer 2002; Munson 2006; Madan 2009).

According to Veldhuis and Staun (2009), radicalism includes every ideological act or expression, including incitement, radical material distribution, recruitment, and persuasion to attain radical views that potentially pose a threat to security either by directing terrorism or by threatening integration and facilitating the spread of radicalization, potentially threatening an ideology (see also Sageman 2004; Christmann 2012). For an expert like Marc Sageman (2008), radicalization is a process of transforming ordinary people into extremists in the sense of violence in the political sphere. The definition from Sageman (2008) necessitates the use of violence as the final goal of politics as a consequence of the process of radical transformation of unexceptional and ordinary beginnings into terrorists. Radicalization involves a change in beliefs, attitude, and behavior in referring to the sectarian violence to justify the expense of defense in the group (McCauley and Moskalenko 2008). Conflict identification, personal transformation, and willingness to engage in violence are more

widely connected with significant social, cultural, and political transformation. Radicalization is a process whereby a person builds, adapts, and disseminates political attitudes, and modes of behavior, which diverges substantially from a value or all values, behaviors, and institutions of political, social, economic, cultural, and religious aspects which have been established or legitimated in one particular society. Radicalization also involves advocacy to change or attempt to alter the status quo through infringement of legitimacy or accept a pursuit-mode political power as elections, civic organizations social protest over the sanctions, and resistance-smooth or nonviolent civil disobedience, and the most threatening one is the use of violence to property or people, either privately owned or state to implement the structure, values, leadership, and the new elite that will usher in a new order of society. Whether their personal use is justifiable to conduct violence or even denying violence entirely, radicalization is advocating significant disruption, displacement, and the most dangerous one is destroying established political, economic, social and social norms and social structures (Lentini 2009).

3. The Ideological Character of Radicalization in the Muslim World

There are more than 50 million Muslims living peacefully and enjoying the prosperity of the West. Data from Pew Research Center in The Future of the Global Muslim Population (Pew Research Center 2011) showed that there are about 44 million Muslims in Europe, accounting for 6 percent of the population, and 5 million in the United States. Terror groups do not seem to realize the importance of Islam as the second largest religion in the world, as well as the second largest religion in the West. Although this position should make Muslims have high bargaining power and political, cultural, social, and economic value-added, the bad behavior displayed by this small group will be detrimental to Muslims as a whole, and will be increasingly troublesome to being Muslim, either in the West or the home, in this disrupted age. In the Muslim world, the lack of knowledge about the values of the West and Western attitudes toward Islam has resulted in an extreme attitude and outlook in understanding the effects of Western culture against Muslims. Although, in reality, Muslim extremists reflect a minimal degree of self-identification and are not at all synonymous with Islam substance and the majority of Muslim worldviews, the escalation of anti-terrorism campaigns by Western countries, in addition to the massive terrorist attacks by Muslims in home and Western countries, has led many to believe that Islam is a violent religion that has no place in Western societies and would not be compatible with their cultural, social, and political issues (Roy 2006).

The main goal of religious radicalism is to impose divine law, in public life, and thus replace the worldly rules. The movement of religious radicals began with the idea that the prevailing system is no longer referring to God's law as the only source of legislation. Here, the conception of the existence of deviations from the main sources of divine law, and consequently for the disorder and injustice that exists in society, is strongly attached as the basis of moral justification for making social change through revolutionary action (Juergensmeyer 2015). Specifically in the history of Islam, radicals have existed since the early days of Islam, where the Kharijite adopted anarchism with a very fundamental way of thinking to force the purest divine law and questioned the application of Islam by the Islamic Caliphate at that time (Esposito 1999; Lahoud 2010; Watt 1973). The basic rule is that anyone who does not apply God's law is infidel. Consequently, anyone who is assumed different, does not want to accept, and oppose them will be considered an enemy worth fighting. Although apolitical in the sense that they did not try to establish a rival government, they actively rebelled the government and attacked sporadically other Islamic groups that were considered different from their thoughts. Until now, Muslim radicalists have had the same main goal, even though the methods and nature of application widely vary for each group and region. Some groups, such as the Muslim Brotherhood and its branches, accept party systems and are willing to participate in elections, while other groups such as Al Qaeda and Boko Haram are more inclined to armed violence and reject any symbols of democracy. Hizb ut-tahrir also rejected democracy and actively sought to uphold the Caliphate, but it was more compromising by not adopting violence as a means to an end. Re-establishing the Caliphate, as practiced by ISIS, is another way to achieve this goal. Because of differences in these methods,

Islamic radical groups are not in one agreement and in some cases, dispute the methods of other groups, and blame and attack each other.

In philosophical discussions, there are at least some characters of radicalism. First, radicalization in Islam is based on resistance to external forces that are perceived as enemies, such as colonialism, liberalism, democracy, globalization, capitalism, multilateral and international agreements, treaties and bodies, even technological advances (De Leede et al. 2017). Second, it is highly affiliated with modern Salafi–Wahhabi puritanism and transnational Islamic organizations. Many researchers argue that almost every contemporary Islamic militant movement is part of, or at least influenced from, the culture of Wahhabism and Salafism (Stemmann 2006; Sagramoso 2012; Wiktorowicz 2001; Tyson 2011). Radical groups in some Southeast Asian countries are also departing from this deadly ideology that is supported by a large financing and operation of a transnational movement system, also functioning as local agents (Abuza 2003; for a discussion about the funding of terrorism in international sphere, see Shapiro and Siegel 2007). The Taliban in Afghanistan and Al Qaeda, for another instance, which has been waging terrorist acts in the world for the last two decades, officially adopted this ideology. There is a strong tendency to resist, to tear down, and to replace established systems of government. This classification is consistent with the definition of terrorism on the assessment of the Council of the European Union as an intentional action conducted for the purpose of intimidation seriously in a group of people, a government, or an international organization to show any action, to destabilize or destroy fundamentals of political, constitutional, economic, or social structures of a country or an international organization (De Leede et al. 2017; see also Cassese 2006). In this sense, the fight against modern social structures and institutions that have been established is the main character of radicalization (Veldhuis and Staun 2009). These radicalization-causing factors form the character of radical movements in the Muslim world. From factors like a combination of poor social conditions, motivational impulses, individual experiences, the radical movement then emerged as an antithetical political establishment that was deemed incapable of bringing satisfaction, but tended to lead to popular dissatisfaction with the ongoing system. By seeing themselves as a representation of the people in the fight against injustice, they exploit the discontent and vacuum of the legitimacy of authority by filling it with radical thinking that seeks to remedy or even eliminate the political, economic, and social status used in a country or region. Although the solutions offered are very simplistic, in fact, radicalization attempts not only to replace authority with new personnel, but also to break them down, such as disbelief of democracy and plurality, which is thought to have caused poverty and moral decline.

Radicalization has a tendency to take forms in religious, political, paramilitary, terrorist, subcultural, counter-cultural, and ideological movements as well as performing acts through violence to take action to achieve goals through violence. In this meaning, there will be an assumption of parent culture as a driving force, which is considered to embody the behavior that is born because of its existence. The parent culture will then give birth to specific subcultures. Subcultures are subdevices or subsets of smaller, more localized, and differentiated structure, in one or more of the wider cultural networks. The subculture should project a fairly distinguishable form and structure to make it easily identifiable from the parent culture. Subcultures should focus on the activity, value, use of material artifacts, certain and distinct spatial spaces that significantly differentiate from broader cultures. However, because the subculture is a subset, it must also be elaborated and articulated significantly from its parent (Waldmann et al. 2009). Put simply, in this context, Islamic radicalization is a movement driven by a politically motivated religious ideology of Islam that carries out action through violence and the realization of a state based on a law dictated by a selective literal interpretation of the Qur'an and Al-Hadith. Islam henceforth is a parent culture, and radicalization is among one of its subcultures. Radicalization reflects a high level of commitment to achieve religious ideological goals. In the most frequent cases, it also does violence as a meaning to achieve that goal. Each subculture is the instant representation of a solution to a set of specific conditions, and the particular contradictive problems. Although there are some relationships, the subculture is not the same as the counter-culture. Counter-culture is of nonaffiliated culture being so radically formed from the mainstream assumptions

in a society that rarely considers itself part of a culture, but takes its presence as a guide/alarm of foreign intrusion (Cronin 2010). The characteristic of the subculture of Islamic radicalization is at least visible from the literal characters of the scripturalists which are different from the moderate and contextual parent culture of Islam. The fundamental characteristic of radical groups in the literalistic interpretation is evidence of the dominance of the desire to achieve the traditional goals of Islamic beliefs such as the Caliphate (Lentini 2009). These characteristics also coincide with a reduction of commitment to alternative goals and any value understood by them. Conversely, deradicalization as a counter-culture represents a restoration of attention, and reduction of commitment, to achieve ideological goals as the antithesis of radicalization (Kruglanski et al. 2014).

4. Intrusion of Radical Thought in Moderate Southeast Asian Islamic Education

The people of Southeast Asia are characterized as inclusive and moderate. Different from its partners the Middle East, in which the minority has no sufficient place in society, Indonesia partially is a home to millions of Christians, Hindus, Buddhists, and other minorities (Kraince 2009). The secular state of Indonesia and the support of the progressive and moderate attitude of Islamic community and organizations have since independence played a vital role in promoting the formation of the nation state and have committed to promoting mutual understanding and respect among faiths since generations (see more detail in Brown 2000). As an implication, education in ASEAN reflects diversity and has played a central role in shaping and transmitting different traditions in the region. Furthermore, these matters have provided a unique character to education of Islamic institutions, that generally put more emphasis on the diversity and mutual understanding. At least until the 20th century, one of the most important characteristics of Islamic Southeast Asia as a whole is its relative absence from Salafi and Wahhabi extremism culture. Furthermore, Islamic education in ASEAN preserves the incredible diversity that is a reflection of the fact that the majority of Muslims throughout the region can find the best relationship with the local culture, ethnicity, and tradition. This tendency, which is called traditionalism in Indonesia, has been enough to move out the spirit and practice of Wahhabi's danger and intolerance (Woodward et al. 2010; Malik 2017).

Particularly, Islamic higher education in Indonesia also plays an important role in restoring interfaith relations as one of the main goals. Passing through the establishment of formal lessons on democracy, citizenship, and initiative of a different curriculum, Islamic universities promote the concept of citizenship that emphasizes the inherent plurality and inclusive society. The rich discourse on Islamic compatibility and democratic pluralism is the main activity in Islamic universities. For instance, unlike conservative Salafist groups, Indonesian modernists in Islamic universities believe in adjusting sharia law in contemporary society (Feener and Cammack 2007). In the view of Muhammadiyah, Islamic law needs to be reformed because in many cases it is no longer contextual for modern conditions. In recent years, there has been a convergence, at least within the scope of the Nahdlatul 'Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah elites in religious attitudes and practices. Several NU members studying at Middle Eastern universities have become more resilient to the principle of *ijtihad*, which is the central discourse for Islamic modernists in Indonesia. Muhammadiyah has also initiated some significant transformations. Although in the past, Muhammadiyah was against Sufi practice, now some Muhammadiyah members practice it (Rabasa 2005; see also Rabasa 2014). Apart from the convergence, some important differences between these two groups persist, especially in their model of political engagement. Muhammadiyah focuses on promoting religious renewal through education and social services, while NU focuses on traditional education in pesantren. This convergence is the two pillars of moderate and progressive Islam in Indonesia in opposing extremism. In addition, the religious system at Malaysia is more affected by traditional practices and beliefs, although in modern times Malaysian is more homogeneous and more orthodox than Indonesian as a result of the centralization of religious authority. Muslims in the Philippines are also heavily influenced by pre-Islamic beliefs and practices. In Indonesia, some pesantren curricula include instruction in secular lessons, beyond the main objective of religious teaching based on reading and memorizing the Qur'an

(Rabasa 2005). In other parts of ASEAN, the structure and curriculum of private religious education is quite different than that in Indonesia. In Malaysia, for example, the PAS Islamic party has a strong influence in the education and curriculum of Islamic schools. Although the militancy level of the Malaysian Islamic educational system is far from the level of Islamic education militancy as it did in Pakistan, in fact, it also maintains a religious political fundamentalist movement (Othman 2006; for a perspective regarding of this matter in gender spectrum, see for instance in Ghofur and Susilo 2015). In the *pesantren* cottage in southern Thailand, the national curriculum is taught with additional Islamic subjects. In the past, boarding schools in Thailand helped to maintain the local dialect of Malay and Arabic (Ungpakorn 2003; Bull 2010).

However, the tradition of tolerance in Indonesia and ASEAN was under threat of religious extremists (Kraince 2009). It is worth noting that, apparently, only contemporary radical groups really have a strong political attachment with the struggle, and fundamentalism in the Middle East even attempts to imitate and bring models of social, educational, political, and cultural systems of the Middle East to Indonesia. History proves that the Southeast Asian Muslim struggle is always independent, and scholars and religious leaders have high independence for, for example, propagating religion through religious preaching, culture, or literacy, with local models, although they are often graduates of religious institutions from and descendants from the Middle East. A small number of pesantren in Indonesia teach extremist education and connect with terror organizations. In terms of organization, the style displayed by this institution is extreme in Islamic teaching, which usually based its extremist ideology on the teachings of Ibn Taymiyyah (1263–1328), Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahab (1703–1792), and other Salafi clerics. The thoughts of anti-state political philosophy from Hasan al-Bana (1906–1949), Sayyid Qutb (1906–1966) and other Ikhwanul Muslimin activists emphasizing sharia-based governments, jihad and against all opposing parties to submit under sharia, are also taught in some pesantren. In this context, political change is only one of the broader agendas of the fundamentalist group. In the case of Indonesia, extremists seek to transform Indonesia's Islamic culture with Saudi Arabian culture and religious praxis as its model. Some fundamentalists do not accept the legitimacy of the Indonesian state and think that nationalism and the law outside of shari'a are infidel (Woodward et al. 2010). Islamic extremists in Indonesia are often associated with Arabic clerics; for example, Ja'far Umar Thalib, Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, Abdullah Sungkar, Muhammad Habib Rizieq and others. Some of the moderate characters of Indonesian Islam are in contrast to the characters displayed by the radicalization, often displaying Arabian culture in public as in Arab countries. The differences of perception and actualization by most Indonesians and extremists in interpreting the Islamic teachings have contributed to the growing perceptions among Indonesians who become two interdependent groups. In the discourse of Indonesian society, Wahhabism and terrorism are now becoming clearly connected. Wahhabi terminology is now often associated with fanaticism and violence (Aslam 2012).

The emergence of radicalization is also linked to education in Indonesian universities that have been used as a center for Neo-Wahhabism education by fundamentalist groups with religious and cultural orientation, referring to the Saudi model as a cultural guide and financial support. This culturally and religiously social movement is a complex combination of religious, symbolic, and ideological teaching when viewed from which individuals and communities take and choose different teaching systems and concepts with Indonesian cultural conceptions. However, it is worthwhile that although both are Wahhabi-based groups, the theological teachings presented by radicals are very different from Muhammadiyah. In Indonesia, Wahhabi terminology is used in very different understandings. While such terminology may refer to individuals and organizations that follow the theological teachings of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703–1792), Muhammadiyah is only purists in understanding by using this terminology in the field of purification confidence of those elements that are considered syncretic to restore the pure Islamic interpretation and not receptive to heterodox beliefs and cultural traditions, and it is very active in promoting societal reformation, economic development, and educational modernization with more reference to the theology and idealism of Jamal Al-Din Al-Afghani (1838–1897), Muhammad Abduh (1849–1905), and Muhammad Rashid Ridha (1865–1935)

(Woodward et al. 2010; see also for the influence of Muslim reformers on the Muhammadiyah in Shabir and Susilo 2018). In some cases, Islamic boarding schools in Thailand are used as a means of recruiting militants and separatist campaigns. In the Philippines, Islamic schools with a formal education system are generally moderate in character, and only a few of the radical characteristics are usually funded by Saudi Arabia. In Indonesia and Malaysia, a small number of radical Islamic schools serve as an incubator of radical movements, including regional terrorist organizations Jemaah Islamiyah and its political frontier, Majlis Mujahidin Indonesia (MMI). Other schools in Yala, Thailand, have a special relationship and are influenced by Wahhabi. In addition to their very small numbers, which indicates the low acceptance of Indonesian Muslim societies over the methods taught in radical institutions, radical pesantren show the disproportion of teachings that have been capable of influencing the radical formation and propagation (Rabasa 2005).

5. Urgency of Contextualization of Deradicalization Based on Local Education

Much effort has been made in deradicalization, and includes recent efforts through rehabilitation, with humanist, communicative, and participatory emphasis deemed unsuccessful. These efforts have at least less-developed a paradigm of emphasis on three unified aspects of education, moderatism, and localization. It is worthwhile to note that radicalization is also related to the context of social, political, and economic conditions in an area combined with the degree of individual autonomy in seeking identity, and thus the deradicalization necessitates consideration of sociopolitical and geographical culture as its basis. This is based on the reason that Islamic radicalization, despite its transnational character, contains local elements that make radicalization possible in one region and not appear in the other. Contextualizing deradicalization is based on the view that the basic teachings of Islam are constant, but its application is not monolithic. Islamic applications will be changed and moved across geographical borders and entry into new areas and varies with different fundamental difference. This variation is often the result of political influence, cultural, economic, and social issues in an environment where Islam is practiced. Furthermore, the degree of autonomy of an individual in control of the political system to exercise freedom of expression affects religious beliefs and practices. Character displayed by the understanding of the radical actors would be appropriate in certain contexts. Among Muslims, there are two different movements in addressing reform and modernity. The first group approved a pluralistic democracy that is based on tolerance, social justice, and civil society. The second group promotes Islam as a political ideology that aims to control the country on sectarian basis, a phenomenon that refers to Islamism. With the emphasis on moral reform, advocating Islamization of Indonesian society as a whole is through imposition of Islamic law on the basis of a large Muslim population, as well as by changing established social norms with typical Wahhabism teachings (Kraince 2009). Thus, in the case of Indonesia, the effective deradicalization should consider the characteristics of the culture and local sociopolitical conditions. Radicalization in Indonesia is a strange phenomenon, though still possible, because of inexistence of deprivative conditions that can bring radicalization. Relative deprivation refers to inequality of social structures in a broad sense, such as poverty, lack of access to education, unemployment, and poor housing. In many cases, relative deprivation is the fundamental cause of radicalization (Hegghammer 2006). Among the success of Indonesian Islam in the contemporary period is a positive recognition from international community as a most tolerant and democratic Muslim-majority country (Ramage 1997; for a detailed assessment of the compatibility of democracy with and modern Muslim society, see Voll 2007; Tibi 2009; Stepan and Robertson 2003). They also tend to be syncretic in terms of acceptance of cultural and religious minorities. Indonesian Muslims also tend to absorb the previous culture influenced by Buddhist, Hindu, and customary practices. Although the ultra-orthodox groups in Indonesia are very small, they have to take a stance on the authority of the secular opposition and threaten democratic values and the plurality by spreading and increasing militancy (Coulson 2004).

Hence, some characters of radicalization can be starting points of deradicalization. The most noticeable is that radicalization can form in the understanding or action that begins on the

transformation of radical ideas in education. In this context, the role of education is very relevant and urgent given that education and radicalization have a meeting point in the transformation of knowledge and understanding. Education has a role in the transformation of radicalization in the early stages and is a key element in forming the fundamental ideas of radicalization. On the other hand, moderate and inclusive education has also become the most considerable factor in deradicalization (LaRue 2012). Because radicalization can be merely an extreme form of understanding, then the transformation process of radicalization may not be associated with violence. Violent radicalization may be included in the process of adoption of the belief system that promotes violence, but this does not imply that the radical also would act violently. In many cases, people who were radicalized refrain from entering terrorist activity. Action on terror, as one of the worst possibilities and indisputable, is the result of understanding of violent radicalization. In other words, every terrorist is a radical, but not necessarily a radical terrorist. Moreover, education has a role as well as responsibility associated with the growing of both radicalization and deradicalization. Islamic educational institutions are sometimes used by radical groups to spread the ideas and beliefs of extremists to justify the verses of the Qur'an and other religious texts (Coulson 2004; Tighe 2011; Middleton 1987). Empirically, the importance of educational institutions in the deradicalization program is at least visible from a massive re-education of the radical ideas in some Muslim countries (Cronin 2010). The reduction of exclusivism and alienation as well as counter-discrimination in education is one of the reasons for teaching children as early as possible about the different cultures and religions to live harmoniously, build inclusive, tolerant, and respectful attitudes in facing the diversity. Youth, or millennial as the most important object in education, can sometimes be the target of terrorists because of their infancy and in a period of education and the search for personal identity included as a stage of the radicalization process (for an insightful and comprehensive analysis related to this can be seen in Hope and Matthews 2018; see also Liang 2015). They can or cannot find radical ideas based on the extent to which the education can provide sufficient understanding regarding tolerance and were looking for a personal identity. Because education is such a dominant role in the elimination of radicalization in the prevention stage, so many counter-terrorism policies target young people. For example, US policy in Africa is based on the reason for shortage of persistent education, provision of housing, and the opportunity of vocational education as well as the demands of marginalized populations. A similar policy is also executed in the Islamic countries in Africa such as Chad, Niger, Mauritania, Mali, Senegal, Nigeria, Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria as the main locations of the extremism (Aldrich 2014). Hence, teaching tolerance and respect for different religions and traditions has helped to reduce the experience of alienation. Many analysts agree that the alienation or discriminatory treatment is one of the fundamental causes of radicalization. Alienation becomes very obvious in analyzing the behavior of radicals that occur in the Western world, especially that conducted by Muslim actors with the example such as discrimination in immigration, Islamophobia, and rejection of the Islamic religion in general (see Maira 2011). It also may have positive implications in counterterrorism activities. The US Counterterrorism Commission, which makes the purpose of education as a means to counteract radicalization, mentions that teaching tolerance, sovereignty, and individual value, respect for the different beliefs, are key elements in the global strategy to eliminate radical ideas (Webber 2011).

6. Triple Helix in Deradicalization: Localization, Moderate and Education

For contextualizing, it is needed to elaborate some characteristics of Southeast Asian Islamic moderate education that need to be emphasized in radicalization. Historically, the development of Islam in Southeast Asia is considered to be spread by foreigners like Indian, Persian, or Arabs (Tarling 1992; Reid 1988). Afterwards, they established a typical pesantren with local content in Islamic education (Azra et al. 2007; Lukens-Bull 2006). Pesantren is very massive in teaching Islam, especially in the younger generation, and in certain times teaching taught to the outside community, many of which targeted parents, including mothers (Dhofier 1980). On the other hand, the spread of radical viruses is not directly derived from these typical local Islamic teachings, and specifically, none of

these traditional pesantren taught radicalization, in the absence of stakeholder involvement in this action. Thus, the inclusion and emphasis of further deradicalization actions on pesantren should take precedence. Second, the involvement of moderate organizations in radicalization by involving, in particular Indonesia, the two largest Islamic moderate organizations, Nahdlatul Ulama and the Muhammadiyah, that have members up to tens of millions of people. Their active involvement, of course, will be more effective in preventive efforts through education, in terms of the number of educational institutions held at all levels and models. Because the cutting-edge focus of radical groups in Southeast Asia not only stays in one place, but seeks to make this region as a whole as a forthcoming base, it makes the region generally vulnerable to attack (Acharya and Acharya 2007). Therefore, the dissemination and teaching efforts of pesantren and such teaching conducted by moderate organizations should be disseminated throughout the region, including with other countries, and with other religious educational institutions, including Buddhism, Hinduism, and Christianity as the other three major religions in the region. At the very least, this effort can serve as a basis for mutual cooperation, and mutual understanding among civil society and organizations in the fight against radicalization and its consequences.

Furthermore, even though debatable, the war effort with radically charged texts should be strengthened. The argument that this action is contrary to the principle of freedom of expression has, at least, been considered a failure in some countries, with strict censorship, blocking, and banning of radically charged material in cyberspace. This effort should not just stop, and be passed on to the virtual world, but also on to books, and printed publications. This is because radicals do not originate from a temporary understanding, but also cognitively initiated through the existence of radical teaching, which is processed continuously through readings and other cognitive aspects. Some recent evidence proves that radically charged material always accompanies in every act of terror. Furthermore, young groups and children deserve protection in every level of education from radical teachings, by strengthening the role of educational institutions in extracurricular activities. The evidence also shows that intracollege organizations are one source of the development of radical teachings, which have increasingly shown the involvement and approval of radical action since youth. These targets have long been an important subject by radical groups, and at the same time they are aware of the antithesis of triple helix of local-moderate-education, and move it on to global—extremism-education, as material taught to young groups. This further reinforces that in fact, local phenomena, in the context of ASEAN cannot be too successful in spreading radicalization. If terror occurs, the perpetrators have long admitted that there is injustice to Muslims at the global level, and that extremist organizations have long struggled against it. The narrative of enemies at this global level makes them very vulnerable to falling into radicalization. Then, localization becomes another very important aspect of deradicalization. With these various characteristics and strategies, it is hoped that the contextualization of deradicalization through moderate local Islamic education can show its urgency. Furthermore, with these all, these three elements can effectively become a unity in deradicalization, particularly in ASEAN, and will be able to serve as a theoretical and practical review as a parent culture in the deradicalization.

7. Conclusions

Radicalization in the form of aggressive and revolutionary occurred after the process of radicalization has the physical strength and weapons. However, before reaching the process, experts agree that radicalization is a gradual process, although it happens very quickly, which specifically does not have a prefix or suffix. For individuals, radicalization process is initiated by a combination of various factors of personal experience, culture, and social environment that makes people undergo a process of drastic changes in attitudes and behavior. As radicalization involves active understanding and thought, in this case, the role of education that serves as a transforming knowledge to prevent radical understanding is very relevant. Radicalization's greatest concern, especially in a political context, is terrorism and global enemies that have been used as a justification to fight political entity or social existing. Moreover, localizing the narratives of education is required, given that although

the basic teachings of Islam are constant, the application by its adherents throughout the world is not monolithic. Islamic applications will be changed and moved across geographical borders and entry into new areas and varies with different fundamental difference. An important example of radicalization in Indonesia in particular is their imitation of pesantren-based learning models. This reflects radicalist adoption of local values which are considered more enabling to disseminate the influence of their teachings on students and society.

To that end, to offer another practical strategy, an overall strategy to deconstruct the idea of Wahhabi radicalization in Indonesia should be implemented in several ways. First, the record needs to be set straight between Indonesian Muslim education in general and in schools and college in particular. Indonesian Islamic educational institutions, with few exceptions, did not support and promote extremism with their ideological orientation that tends toward syncretic character in the field of jurisprudence and Sufism. Traditional institutions of Indonesian Islam are the historical evidence capable of providing antagonistic reduction on the principles and actions of extreme Wahhabi. Reducing extremist teachings of Wahhabism is very possible, regarding that the relationship between Wahhabis and extremism is a correlational relationship, and not just causality. Sociohistorically, the deconstruction of the Wahhabi ideas is very possible given that the majority of the Muslim community in Indonesia and other countries that follow the Wahhabi doctrine do not perform the same action with the Wahhabi terrorism and reject all forms of violence as a basis of ideological-religious justification; basically, Neo-Wahhabism that has developed along with the radical understanding and Arabization programs become an irrational and ahistorical context of Indonesia. This is because, historically, Indonesia has experienced a period of renewal of Islam brought by the modernists in the organization of Muhammadiyah, which in turn can come together and play an active role in the context of cultural, political, educational, economic, and social elements in Indonesian modern state.

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Nigeria and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation: A Discourse in Identity, Faith and Development, 1969–2016

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Abstract: Nigeria is both a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society, with Islam and Christianity being the dominant religions. The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is therefore an institution that the Muslim segment of the country can readily identify with. However, there is the question of the secular posture of the country, which Christians within the polity use as an excuse to distance the country from an institution they perceive to be exclusively for Muslims. However, despite being an organization that emerged from Muslim solidarity, the OIC transcends faith to provide economic and political opportunities for member nations. The fact that Islam remains a rallying point within the OIC, however, made Nigeria's relationship with the organization tenuous for the most part. It is against this backdrop that the paper traces the origins and evolution of Nigeria's involvement with the OIC, identifying its cost and benefits. The essay argues that Nigeria will be the better for it if both the Christian and Muslim segments of the population embrace the OIC as a whole or are unanimous in discarding it. The divisive tendency that Nigeria's membership breeds, however, will be detrimental to the nation's unity and development.

Keywords: Nigeria; Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC); foreign policy; secularity; economic aids

1. Introduction

Few foreign policy issues have raised as much dust as Nigeria's full membership of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in 1986, a controversy that is yet to completely abate. The polemics can only be best understood in the regional, ethnic, and religious context of the polity. Nigeria is a densely populated country that has an almost equal representation of Moslems and Christians divided regionally, with the North being predominantly Islamic and the South mainly Christian. Such admixture has recurrently heightened political tensions. There is also a small fragment of the nation's population that practice indigenous religion. Due to this, the religious composition the constitution of the land is secular. Additionally, this particular fact partly explains the controversy the OIC issue generated; should a multi-religious society be involved in an organization that is steeply rooted in Islam? Despite the furor that the OIC palaver generated from certain quarters, the fact remains that Nigeria in 1986 became, and remains, the 46th member of the then Organisation of Islamic Conference (now Organisation of Islamic Cooperation). One important lesson learnt from this episode is that, in spite of the potency of public opinion in foreign policy conduct, ultimately, foreign policy decision-making in Nigeria lies in the hands of two institutions: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (then External Affairs) and the Commander-in-Chief; but, as we will find out, the latter has the ultimate say and can therefore opt to isolate the former in implementing certain preferred courses of actions.

The OIC's case, however, does not need to be discussed in isolation from existing historical realities. Islam has been one of the main political and social forces in many parts of pre-colonial

and post-colonial Africa, South as well as North of the Sahara (Kukah and Falola 1995). While the Muslim population in sub-Saharan Africa is more widely distributed and no state in this region regards itself as an Islamic State in the sense that countries in the Arab world do, black Africa may still be regarded as one of the major Islamic theatres of the world (Kokole 1984). The introduction and spread of Islam to Africa is well known. From 640 AD when Islam was introduced to Egypt it percolated subsequently to the south of the continent reaching West Africa and beyond by the end of that century. This was mostly through trade across the Sahara. The Usman dan Fodio jihad of 1804 was an emphatic consolidation of the religion in that region, particularly in the area that today constitutes the northern part of Nigeria—from where it spread less effectively southwards. The devoted Islam that dan Fodio had established had hardly survived half a century before colonial intrusion. The colonial period of course birthed secularism. It was only after political independence was achieved that African Muslims became more clearly aware of what the colonial 'interlude' had cost them; notably, the disruption of long nurtured institutions during the colonial period and the relative isolation of African Muslims from wider Islamic currents as well as the injection into their intellectual horizons of larger or smaller doses of western secular thought (Hunwick 1996, p. 232). This essay traces Nigeria's relationship with the OIC from its mere observer status to one of active membership. In-between, the debate that surrounded Nigeria's full membership is dispassionately captured as well as the ensuing attempts at resolution and conciliation. The paper further seeks to identify the benefits of the country's membership as well as the prospects of existing relationships with the OIC.

2. Nigeria's Relationship with the OIC before 1986

As earlier highlighted, the northern part of the country had for several years been Islamized before the advent of colonialism. As a consequence, after Nigeria's independence in 1960 the agenda of retracing their roots to the true worship of Islam and the fraternization with global coreligionist was rife among the northern elements. The government of the then Northern Region had in fact created links with Islamic regimes particularly in North Africa and the Middle East (Oded 1987). It was as a result of this connection that Sir Ahmadu Bello, the late Sardauna of Sokoto, became one of those charged with the responsibility of looking into the possibility of creating a permanent forum through which Islamic governments could interact frequently (Olukoshi 1990, p. 493). A great-great grandson of the founder of the largest Islamic empire in the Black World, Usman dan Fodio, Bello was committed to the legacy of his great-great grandfather (Enwerem 1995). For example, in his 16th May 1962 letter to the Secretary of the World Islamic Congress Ahmadu Bello, among other things, reminded his readers that, 'as you have known for two hundred years, my family have been associated with the spread of Islam and I only want to assure you [of] my fullest cooperation for continued effort to strengthen Islam day by day' (Paden 1986, p. 537). This is not to suggest, however, that the Sardauna was a religious fundamentalist; indeed he preached religious tolerance between Christians and Muslims in the North. In one of his Christmas messages, for example, he proclaimed that 'our differences may be great, but the things that unite us are stronger than the things that divide us . . . ' (Bello 1959, p. 1) Such was the Premier's disposition that he was also able to get along well with his major Christian allies in politics. He had merely wanted to forge a closer relation between his region and the international Muslim community.

Bello, however, could not do much in this regard as he was assassinated shortly afterwards, during the January 1966 coup. The dream of solidarity with the Islamic world, however, did not evaporate with the demise of the Sardauna. After the burning of the al-Aqsa mosque and the consequent assembly of Muslim leaders in Rabat in 1969, a delegation of Nigerian Muslims, led by Abubakar Mahmoud Gumi, attended the conference with the prodding of the Sultan of Sokoto, Abubakar III. At the conference, Gumi pledged the support of the country's Muslim population towards the cause of solidarity that was to birth the OIC a couple of years later (Olukoshi 1990, p. 494). The air needed to be cleared, however, as to the capacity in which Gumi and his delegates attended the Rabat summit. Were they there in an individual capacity or did they represent the interest and views of the nation,

Nigeria? It is important to note that during this period Nigeria was deeply involved in an ongoing civil war that was seen in some quarters as a religious conflict (Stremlau 1977). The war had pitted the minority Igbos in the southeast against the federal government of Nigeria, which was largely controlled by Northerners. In a bid to forestall an exacerbation of the conflict as well as not to give credence to the propaganda sold by the Biafrans that the civil war was in fact a religious conflict, Gen. Yakubu Gowon, the then Head of State, acted swiftly in making categorically clear that the presence of the Gumi delegation in Rabat was not a declaration of Nigeria's intention to become a member of an association of Islamic states since the polity was a secular state. Gowon went on to write an urgent note to King Hassan of Morocco, host of the 1969 summit, clearly stating that the Gumi delegation was a strictly private affair and did not represent the views of the Nigerian government in any way (Olukoshi 1990, p. 494). He, however, did not discourage such 'private' participation in later years. The direct implication of this is that when the OIC was fully constituted in 1971 Nigeria could not enroll as a member but remained relevant in the sense that delegates kept attending OIC meetings as mere 'observers'. Consequently, Nigeria was recognized by OIC countries as having an 'observer-status' within the organization, a status that remained unaltered by successive governments for the next fifteen years.

After the military ouster of the civilian government of Alhaji Shehu Shagari on December 31st, 1983 by Major-General Muhammadu Buhari things took a slightly different turn. Powerful Muslim groups in the northern and southwestern part of the country began a concerted and vigorous effort to make Nigeria become an active member in the OIC (ibid.). Some of these groups were commercial and industrial companies that had strong business ties with the Middle East. These groups began to lobby Buhari, who was already a devout Muslim that could readily relate with the importance of Nigeria joining such an organization (Ohadike 1992). Many Arab governments also mounted pressure on the new government to yield to this request, promising economic and financial assistance to the country should it become a full member of the organization. Such promises became particularly tempting in the face of a stalemate in the country's $2 billion loan negotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The stalemate also led to the blockage of lines of credit to the country by Western banks and the withdrawal by Western export credit guarantee agencies of insurance cover on exports destined for Nigeria (Olukoshi 1990, p. 494). These conditions had naturally caused inflation and economic hardship in the country.

Despite all the allure of the pro-OIC lobby group, Buhari still managed to exercise caution and make recourse to the Ministry of External Affairs for advice. He sent a memorandum to the Ministry of External Affairs requesting advice on the issue. The ministry was also to provide a feedback as to the advantage and disadvantage of such an association. Ibrahim Gambari, the then Minister of External Affairs, in his reply to the memorandum, strongly counseled against the alteration of Nigeria's observer status in the OIC because of her secular posture, as provided in the 1979 constitution. He also noted that it was an issue that could divide the country along religious lines (Gambari 1989). Buhari's response to this counsel is not quite clear, but from evidences available he did not appear to be in consonance with the minister's reply. In fact, there were allegations from certain quarters that Buhari had set in motion the process that will guarantee Nigeria's full membership in OIC and that his deputy, Tunde Idiagbon, had traveled to Saudi Arabia in mid-1985 to facilitate the process (Olukoshi 1990, p. 494). The full intentions of the Buhari administration concerning Nigeria's full membership in the OIC never materialized as he was ousted by Gen. Ibrahim Babangida coup of 27 August 1985.

3. Nigeria's Full Membership of the OIC

The OIC saga did not end with Buhari's ouster. Indeed, the new administration of General Babangida continued to be lobbied by pro-OIC groups. Their argument remained ever persuasive in the face of incessant economic problems and the hard stance of Western financial institutions like the IMF in issuing assistance. This warranted Nigeria seeking potent alternatives to these Western financiers in kick-starting the country's economic recovery. Consequently, like what Buhari had done,

Gen. Babangida sought the advice of the Ministry of External Affairs on the implications of Nigeria's full membership in the organization. Like his predecessor, the then Minister of External Affairs, Professor Bolaji Akinyemi counseled against such a move, citing similar reasons to those of Professor Gambari (ibid.). The Babangida administration, however, was not contented with the ministry's report and preceded to set in motion plans of enrolling Nigeria into the OIC on a full term basis. In the interim, the OIC secretariat in Jeddah sent an invitation to Nigeria in December 1985 to attend the organisation's ministerial meeting that was scheduled for 6 to 10 January, in Fez, Morocco. As was the practice, the Ministry of External Affairs asked the Nigerian Ambassador in Morocco to make arrangements to 'observe' the proceedings (Ibid.). The ministry had apparently been ignorant of the government's intentions. On 1 January 1986, however, Babangida arranged a Nigerian delegation to attend the ministerial meeting in Fez. The delegation contained prominent personalities that held important offices in government; and they were all—naturally enough—Muslims. It was led by Rilwanu Lukman (the then Minister of Mines, Power and Steel) and included Abubakar Alhaji (the then Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of National Planning), Abdukadir Ahmed (the then Governor of the Central Bank), Ibrahim Dasuki (the then Secretary General of the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs), and Abubakar Mahmoud Gumi, the former Grand Khadi of Northern Nigeria. The delegation arrived in Fez on 8 January and participated in the meeting for the first time the next day, after the Nigerian Ambassador to Morocco, who had been present from inception and had been oblivious of the impending arrival of the delegates, had registered his presence as a mere observer (Olukoshi 1990, p. 496).

It was during the first participation of the delegates at the meeting, on 9 January, that Nigeria's formal application for full membership into the OIC was made. The hierarchy of the organization was so profoundly delighted with this submission that they decided to waive some procedures that were statutorily required for admittance into the OIC. Rather than waiting a full probationary year before Nigeria's admission is communicated to her, the organizers of the meeting only requested that its application be sponsored by existing members: a task that countries like Syria, Sierra Leone, Pakistan and Senegal happily fulfilled. When it was time for the conference chairperson to make his remark, he spoke in glowing terms of Nigeria and lauded her decision to become full members of the association. According to him, 'your seat has always been reserved and we hope you will apply your zeal for the achievement of the aims and objectives of the OIC' (ibid). The leader of the Nigerian delegates, Rilwanu Lukman, thanked the chairperson and other members and pledged the country's support to the cause of the organisation. This exchange, therefore, marked the official entry of Nigeria into the OIC as full members. Years after leaving office, Akinyemi maintains that 'Babangida must have known that the Christians would kick against the decision. This is why all previous governments had worked out that compromise of our being an observer rather than a full member' (Akinyemi 2018). He also notes that it was from then on that religion became a tendentious issue in Nigerian politics (ibid.).

4. The Domestic Front: Actions and Reactions

It was the national French news agency that broke the news to Nigerians that Nigeria had somewhat clandestinely been admitted as the forty-sixth member of the OIC (Falola 1998, p. 94). Most Nigerians had hitherto been unaware of the organization and the news of Nigeria's membership almost went unnoticed had it not been the persistence of certain prominent clerics, notably Archbishop Okogie of Lagos, as well as the news media (Kukah 1993, p. 230). Clerics as well as Christian journalists made frantic moves to confirm from government if and why Nigeria had truly become a member of the organization. Christians became even more restive when it was discovered that top government officials like the Chief of General Staff, the Foreign Minister, Minister of Internal Affairs and the Minister of Information, who were Christians, were just as equally bemused and ignorant of the decision as the general public. For example, the second in command to the Head of State, Ebitu Ukiwe, publicly declared that he had been unaware of such a big policy decision. Indeed, many Nigerian Christians believed that it was this public utterance that led to his removal from office by Babangida

(Falola 1998, p. 95). In many ways, this entire episode played into the hands of those Christians that had all along held the view that 'there was a secret plan for the Islamization of Nigeria' (Ibid).

The immediate fallout of Nigeria's full membership of the OIC was that it deeply divided the country along religious lines. Both Christians and Muslims anchored their opposition and support on the interpretation of the secular status of the country. Christians demanded an immediate withdrawal from the organization because the 1979 constitution clearly makes the nation a secular one. Muslims, on the other hand, argued that the secular posture of the country had not been violated in any respect since the country was not adopting Islam as a state religion. Championing the Christian cause was the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), which was led by Archbishop Okogie. Its position was Nigeria's total and unconditional withdrawal from the OIC. According to Okogie, 'if it were a section of the Islamic Community that joined, there is no problem, but for Nigeria as a country, we hold the President responsible for this. The President alone does not make up Nigeria' (Okojie 1986, pp. 12–14). In response, the umbrella body of the Muslim community, Jama'atu Nasir Islam (JNI), argued that the call for withdrawal was part of the 'insensitivity of Christians towards matters that concern Muslims . . . if Nigeria withdraws from the OIC, it will have to withdraw diplomatic relations with the Vatican' (Jama'atu Nasir Islam 1986).

Other debaters who were not as extreme in their views as the CAN and JNI tried to defend their positions in more concrete terms. For example, those that favoured Nigeria's association with the OIC argued that Christians had exaggerated the negative implications of the OIC, pointing out that some Christian heads of state like Uganda, Rwanda, Gabon, Kenya, Cameroun, Sierra Leone and Benin Republic were members of the OIC; and therefore, the organization was not essentially a religious one, but something in the mold of the United Nations (Lawal 2018). This group of people also emphasized the positive financial implications like monetary and technical assistance as well as the low-interest loans, which the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) provided.

Anti-OIC lobbyist met the Muslim responses point for point. They made the case that, unlike Nigeria, countries with significant Christian population that joined OIC did so because they were troubled nations whose leaders were seeking quick fixes to their problems. This group of persons was equally unimpressed with the so-called economic allure of the organization. They argued that OIC member countries that had obtained financial support from the organization were not faring better than Nigeria. They added that since (at that time) Nigeria was the seventh richest of the forty-six members, Nigeria was likely to sink more money into the organization than it would recoup from it because it would be expected to carry a large share of the financial burden of the organization. In this regard, therefore, the group concluded that the Islamic Development Bank was not a viable substitute to the IMF. Instead, it was necessary the country looked inwards (Falola 1998, p. 98). In response to the comparison with Nigeria's relations with the Vatican, a technocrat pointed out that 'the diplomatic relations with the Vatican have no religious basis, and will not have unless we enter into special concordat with the church. Such special relations are enjoyed by a limited number of countries whose state religion is Roman Catholicism (Jolaoso 1986, p. 9).

5. Resolving the Impasse

Seeing how heated the country was on the issue, Gen. Babangida acted swiftly by creating a committee to assess the implication of Nigeria's membership of the OIC as well as releasing to the public the official rationale for joining the organization. His reasons for admittance were anchored on both economic and political considerations. The Babangida administration sought to salvage the country's economy through the accessibility of interest-free loans that the IDB, one of the associated institutions of the OIC, provided. As at December 1979, the IDB had approved $943.32 million in interest-free loans that covered 114 projects in 30 member countries of the OIC (Piscatori 2000, p. 78). In a political sense, the head of state also considered the organization as one that will allow Nigeria to rally against racism and colonialism. He cited as evidence the fact that apart from Turkey, all OIC members also belonged to the Non-Aligned Movement. Additionally, many of the nation's neighbors

that were members of the Oraganisation of African Union OAU were also members of the OIC. Therefore, the organization, he argued, was a platform for members of the Third World countries to seek cooperation between themselves. The altruistic value of Babangida's actions has, however, been questioned. While believing the aforementioned to have influenced the decision of the head of state in enrolling the country into the OIC, Falola (1998) also believed Babangida to have acted in this regard in order to win over the powerful Muslim constituency for his own good. According to the scholar, he had not been regarded as a good Muslim by many members of this community. Therefore, joining such an organization will most probably better their image of him (ibid., p. 95).

On 28 January 1986, the committee saddled with the responsibility of examining the implications of Nigeria's membership in the OIC was set up and was inaugurated on the 3 February 1986. It was at this inaugural session that the head of state publicly revealed his aforementioned stance on Nigeria's involvement with the organization. The twenty-man committee was headed by the then Minister of Interior, Lt. Col. John Shagaya, a Christian from the north-central region of the country. Other ministers that made up the committee were Prof. Bolaji Akinyemi (External Affairs), Lt. Col. Anthony Ukpo (Information and Culture), and Prof. Jubril Aminu (Education). Other eminent members were Alhaji Ibrahim Dasuki, Dr. Joseph Adegbite, Archbishop Anthony Okogie, Alexander Bada, and Justice Ahmed Lemo. Others included Alhaji Iman Isiaka Idris, Alhaji Suleiman Onyeama, Prof. Nurudeen Alao, Alhaji Babatunde Jose, Bishop Rogers Uwadi, Rev. S.T Ola Akande, Elder G.A.M Otubu, Archbishop Stephen Ezeanya, Bishop Abiodun Adetiloye, Mr. Justice Bashir Sambo, and Prof. Dandatti Abdul-Kadir. If the composition was gender insensitive, it certainly had a religious balance with both Muslims and Christians having ten representatives each.

By 21 March, the committee had submitted their report to Gen. Babangida's second-in-command, Ebitu Ukiwe. While members of the committee fronted a harmonious relationship between themselves, it was evident that this was a mere charade. The report of the committee was not unanimous as both sides held on to two diametrically opposed positions. For this reason, the Federal Government never published a white paper stating the committee's position on whether or not to withdraw as full members of the OIC. Instead, the most tangible outcome of the panel was the recommendation of the need for inter-religious cooperation and the necessity to create a body to foster this. In presenting his report, Lt Col. Shagaya commented that,

> our terms of reference require us to set out the implications of Nigeria's full membership of the OIC. This we have done to the best of our ability. We have also noted in our report the hopes and fears as well as the suspicions and grievances of our fellow countrymen and women on religious matters. But we have against this stated our conviction that such differences as spring *(sic)* from these feelings will be adequately taken care of in the suggested, permanent consultative forum as time goes on. (Shagaya 1986, p. 1)

Following the presentation, Gen. Babangida decided to make the consultative body permanent and christened it 'the Advisory Council on Religious Affairs' (ACRA). While the membership of the new body was slightly increased, it was largely constituted of the same participants of the original panel. The choice of members of ACRA also remained the prerogative of the head of state.

The fact that the Shagaya committee ended in a deadlock, it did not come as a huge surprise. Apart from the fact that most of the members were deeply religious and uncompromising in their faith, they also resorted to forming sub-committees among their co-adherents through which they sought advice on what position to take during panel deliberations. For example the president of the Christian Council of Nigeria (CCN), Dr. Joseph Adegbite, who also served as a member of the panel, facilitated the formation of a sub-committee. The sub-committee was set up on 15 February 1986 by a meeting of church leaders at the Anglican Bishop's court in Marina and was charged with the responsibility of drafting the CCN's stand on the OIC affair. Such a move was perhaps in response to a similar action taken by the Sultan of Sokoto on the same day the Shagaya panel was inaugurated. The Sultan had announced the formation of a 12-man committee of his that was to advise him on the OIC matter. This is significant because there were a number of JNI members in the Shagaya panel who—naturally

enough—owed the Sultan allegiance. The implication of the creation of these sub-committees was the tendency to result in a hardline stance on the OIC issue during committee meetings, with members of both religions being determined to be absolute gainers. In fact, 'ACRA was never going to lead to Nigeria withdrawing from the OIC; it was just meant to dampen the tension' (Akinyemi 2018).

The Babangida administration in its wisdom calculated that rather than affirm Nigeria's membership or announce its withdrawal, it would be mute on the matter and allow sleeping dogs lie. Apart from the initial rancor and occasional agitation from the Christian segment of the Nigerian population in the ensuing months, the strategy appeared to work. The fervor with which the matter was taken seemed to wane by the following year. Throughout the Babangida administration, which ended in 1993, it was only during global events that affected the OIC—and Nigeria by extension—that the debate was revisited. One example was the publication of the highly controversial book of Salman Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses*, which was considered an apostasy by the larger percentage of Muslims globally (Haynes 2012). The matter was tabled at the 1989 OIC meeting and it threatened to divide the organization itself. While Iran under its supreme leader, Ayatollah Khomeini, advocated for Rushdie's death and total boycott of the West that allowed the publication of such a book, Saudi Arabian prince, Saud Al-Faisal reaffirmed that the OIC 'was not an assembly of jurisprudence', and therefore maintained a moderate position that, while the book and the publishers be banned from all OIC member countries, the call for Rushdie's head be dropped. Ultimately, it was Saudi Arabia's position that prevailed. But, tellingly, the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs that represented Nigeria at the meeting decided to vote for Ayatollah's position on the issue (Ofeimun 1989, p. 9). The matter again raised dusts, making some question Nigeria's agenda with the OIC, particularly because of Iran's influence on the organization (ibid.).

6. Post-Babangida Era and Nigeria's OIC Status, 1993–2016

By the time Babangida left the seat of power on 27 August 1993, the status of Nigeria's membership had been hazy. While, in a bid to satisfy Muslims, Nigeria had not officially withdrawn from the organization, it refused to play an active role or publicize its participation in the OIC so as to placate the Christians. This tightrope position was maintained in the country for at least the following five years. Indeed, during that time there were more pressing issues that concerned Nigerians. First, there was the controversial annulment by Gen. Babangida of the 12 June 1993 election that Moshood Abiola had convincingly won. The second issue was the consequent installation of Chief Ernest Shonekan as 'Interim President' after the head of state decided to resign in August. The twin events generated commotion and crisis that cumulated in the ouster of the interim president by Gen. Sanni Abacha in a military coup of November 27 1993. Abacha was infamously known for stifling freedom of speech and ruthlessly punishing dissent during his regime. Though the new head of state maintained the 'let-sleeping-dogs-lie' policy of the Babangida era, the fear of being ruthlessly repressed probably precluded further Christian activism on the OIC issue.

However, shortly before Abacha's death on 8 June 1998, the OIC debate resurfaced. Having just returned from an OIC meeting in Iran, the Sultan of Sokoto in April announced to members of the JNI the resuscitation of Nigeria's full membership status in the OIC (Dickson 1998, pp. 1–2). Like had been the case in the 1980s, the Sultan tried to assure Nigerian Christians that Nigeria's membership was not for ulterior motives but for economic benefits; and that membership should not generate any controversy as it had done when similar news was announced in 1986. As can be imagined, the pleas of the Sultan fell on deaf ears as almost immediately after the news some Christian groups started agitation against such a move. One of such groups was the 'Christian Ethics in Nigeria' (COCEN), Akure branch. In a communiqué released to the public, the group claimed that,

> The development is capable of engineering a religious war and no nation has survived a religious war and remained the same thereafter. We warned in clear terms that all Nigerian Christians within and outside Nigeria shall be mobilized by COCEN to resist at any cost, Nigeria's membership of OIC in any colouration. (Christian Ethics in Nigeria 1998, p. 4)

It is difficult to predict what Abacha would have done under the new circumstance since he passed on only about a month later. The succeeding head of state, Gen. Abdulsalami Abubakar was far more liberal than his predecessor and guided the country through a democratic transition on 29 May 1999. Many had anticipated that the new democratically elected president, Olusegun Obasanjo would end the OIC saga in favor of Christians since he was the first substantive Christian leader Nigeria had witnessed in twenty years. They were, however, disappointed as the new president did nothing to alter the existing status quo. In fact, he had been the one that paid the outstanding membership fees owed to the OIC that precluded the country from reaping rewards of membership (Akhaine 2008). Indeed, his foreign minister, Alhaji Sule Lamido, was a devoted Muslim, who used his office to facilitate Nigeria's involvement with OIC. In fact, no administration since Nigeria's return to democracy in 1999 has tampered with its OIC membership status; not even President Goodluck Jonathan, who was not only a Christian, but also a native of a region that is predominantly Christian. To be sure, when on 11 April 2008, the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) demanded to know whether Nigeria was still a full member of the OIC or not, the then Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Alhaji Tijani Kaura, answered in the affirmative only three days later (Kaura 2008, p.13). Up till 2012, there were pockets of agitation against Nigeria's membership of OIC from Christian clerics in particular. But, in general, such resistance has waned and reality seems to have set in that Nigeria's full membership status is permanent for the foreseeable future. It is worth noting that one of the reasons for the relative calm on the OIC matter during Nigeria's democratic dispensation is that Nigeria's return to civil rule roughly corresponds to the time the OIC underwent extensive restructuring. The reforms, which took place in 2001 entailed, among other things, a revised charter set out to promote human rights that was no longer defined solely on Islamic terms. Such a revision effectively replaced the 'Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam' with the 'Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international law' that was now endorsed by member nations. Such a gesture led to the belief that OIC was now more of a modern political institution rather than an institution based on Islamic solidarity alone. According to an OIC technocrat, 'such a change was to keep in touch with the dynamic changes in the world' (Lawal 2018).

7. Nigeria's Membership of the OIC: to What End?

Having been established that Nigeria is a full and active member of the OIC, the question follows: what has the nation gained? Since economic benefits were said to be the main reason for Nigeria's involvement in the group, it is only natural we channel our assessment along this parameter. In attempting an answer, it is first important to note that, since its inception, the organization has had tangible economic impact on some of its member states. This has come through its specialized and affiliated institutions like the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), Islamic, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (ISESCO), Standing Committee for Economic and Financial Cooperation (COMCEC), among others. Indeed, one of the earliest notable examples of the OIC influence is the raising of $10,000,000 among members in 1988 to help Palestinians, who were 'victims of Israeli oppression in the occupied West Bank and Gaza area' (Al-Gabid 1993). Also, towards the end of the year 1989, the OIC set up a 'food reserve scheme', which was to help member countries cope with emergency food shortages (ibid.). Under such plan, each participating nation would pledge one percent of its consumption of staple food to the OIC reserve to be kept in the country ready to be shipped anytime another member required it. Another example is the cancellation of the official debt owed by less developed countries (LDCs) that were members of the OIC by Saudi Arabia, the wealthiest nation within the organization. The most important benefit to members, however, can be attributed to the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), which is a subsidiary institution of the OIC. Apart from the several millions spent in the 1990s on Africa, an "IDB Cooperation Framework with Africa" initiative was further funded with a commitment of $2 bn for least-developed member countries in Africa over a five-year period (2003–2007) (COMCEC 2017). This was extended through the Special Programme for the Development of Africa (SPDA), which is a $12 bn investment programme in African countries for the period 2008–2013 (ibid.).

As a result of the tightrope Nigeria maintained in pleasing both Muslim and Christian constituencies in the country between 1986 and 2000 by being inactive in the organization, the tangible benefits of the nation during that time are at best obscure. The new millennium, however, seems to have ushered a new dawn. Having endorsed Nigeria's membership of the OIC, President Olusegun Obasanjo effectively enrolled Nigeria into the IDB in 2005 with the purchase of 0.03 percent of the overall capital of the bank (Ezeanokwasa 2007). This capital subscription was increased to 7.69 percent in June 2010, making the country become one of the nine permanent members of the Board of Executive Directors (ibid.). This also made Nigeria the fourth-largest equity subscriber to the IDB with 1384 million Islamic dinars (ID).

In reward for such commitment, Nigeria has been able to attract some economic benefits. For instance, in pursuance of the implementation of the transformation agenda of the government of Nigeria and IDB's Strategic Plan, an indicative 3-year Country Programming Framework (2012–2015) was formulated. Under the programme, the bank and its affiliates provided financing envelop of $2billion for the implementation of projects in the priority areas of agriculture, energy, transport, water supply and sanitation, education, and health. In fact, as of 2012 alone, a budget of about $700 million was considered by the bank for Nigeria. This included 8 approved projects to the tune of $200 million and trade financing for $205 million granted to prominent companies and banks in the country (ibid.). This is not to mention the $30 million for the 'Food Security Program' that covered Gombe and Yobe States. In addition, there was the provision of facilities for the construction of 4 Model Science Secondary schools and 300-bed specialist hospitals in Kaduna State. Integrated Rural Development Project and Bilingual Education Program were also provided in at least 11 other states (ibid). The IDB, in addition, sponsored study visits of 13 Nigerian irrigation experts from seven states and Federal Ministries of Agriculture and Water Resources for two weeks to successfully implement/manage small-scale irrigation projects in Indonesia in April 2012 under the 'Reverse Linkage Program.' The aim of the visit was to enable the delegation observe best practices, provide short term training for trainers and fill the skill gap to train operators and training institutions in the operations and maintenance of small scale irrigation infrastructures in Nigeria. The ultimate goal of such technical assistance was to help Nigerian small scale farmers improve their agricultural production through adoption of best farming practices that could result in less dependence on rain-fed agriculture, and enhancement of productivity.

Another significant event occurred in the year 2012. In order to foster cooperation with Nigeria and enhance the bank's country presence and improve client's responsiveness, there was the establishment of a Group Gateway Office in Nigeria. States desirous of IDB financing for projects in the category of Medium Term Priorities were to apply through the IDB Governor for Nigeria (also statutorily Nigeria's Minister of State for Finance) along with a detailed feasibility study and the State's Assembly Resolution authorizing such borrowing (ibid.). In a case where the feasibility was not available, the Bank could consider financing it upon the request of the country. Private sector application for financial support was also accommodated through this medium, requiring only a direct application (accompanied with a comprehensive project report) to the IDB Governor. Adamawa, Gombe, Kaduna, Kano, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, Osun, and Yobe are states that have benefited from these interest-free loans. Most southern governors are yet to enjoy such benefits, perhaps so as not to offend the significant Christian population in their constituencies.

In January of 2016 the IDB came up with the 'Bilingual Education Scheme.' The program aimed at educating the jobless youths in both Islamic and Western education. This is significant because the bulk of these idle youths constitute the recruiting pool of the Boko Haram BH (Faseke 2013). This was done in a bid to reconstruct northern Nigeria after the BH onslaught had ravaged the region between 2009 and 2016. This arrangement was made when the IDB's President, Ahmad Ali, on 31 January 2016, received a high level delegation of 5 governors from the Northern Nigerian States Governors Forum, NSGF. The delegation was led by the Governor of Borno State, Kashim Shettima, and included Abdullahi Ganduje of Kano State, Nasir El-Rufa'i of Kaduna State, Umar Al-Makura of

Nassarawa State and Muhammad Abubakar of Jigawa State. Mr. Ali committed himself and the IDB to " . . . work(ing) together to come up with a comprehensive and constructive plan to support northern Nigeria". According to him "We will start with education, particularly bilingual education, and other areas such as job creation" (Tukur 2016). Within the next few weeks the IDB provided $98m for the Bilingual Education Program in Adamawa, Gombe, Kaduna, Kano, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, Osun, and Yobe, and also promised to support similar projects in other states of the country (Adetayo 2016). This development was very welcomed by President Muhammadu Buhari, who a few weeks later also welcomed an offer by the IDB to organize a financing round-table in Abuja to mobilize more funds for investment and development of infrastructure in Nigeria (ibid.).

The essay has not by any means exhausted all the benefits Nigeria profited from the organization as this is not the primary and sole focus of the work. It goes without saying, however, that there have indeed been developmental gains from Nigeria's involvement with the OIC through its separate agencies. For example, the fear that Nigeria will expend more money on the organization than the rewards it will gain has proved to be unfounded as member nations pay the same amount of annual subscription and take advantage of the full benefits accruing to them by virtue of being members (Shinkaiye 2018). One of the strongest critics of Nigeria's membership of the OIC, Bolaji Akinyemi, agrees that there were definitely economic gains from the organization. However, he also cautions that 'one has to keep in mind that at times economic gains may not be sufficient to counter strategic problems that you get yourself into by certain decisions' (Akinyemi 2018). He also opined that, though there are Christian countries in the OIC, these countries do not have the sort of religious tensions that existed in Nigeria.

8. Conclusions

The OIC matter is another issue that highlights the divisive tendency of religion, particularly in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country like Nigeria. To be sure, Nigeria's involvement with the organization is just one of a number of issues that have caused cleavages between Christians and Muslims in the polity. Perhaps, what makes this particular case more sensitive is the secrecy associated with it. This appears to have brewed suspicions and speculations, particularly among the Christian segment of the population. Foreign policy decision-making has indeed generally been a secretive bureaucratic affair that is restricted to the esoteric world of diplomats and politicians in power. Usually, when routine decisions are made, the secrecy involved—often justified on various grounds—does not raise public suspicion. However, the religious sensitivity in the OIC issue in many ways made people rethink the lack of openness in the country's foreign policy. Apart from the fact that openness could have prevented the heated passion with which the matter was received, Nigeria perhaps would have by now evaluated the cost and benefits of membership or non-membership more objectively and effectively too.

However, one must not fail to mention the place of Nigeria's membership of the OIC within the context of the country's secular posture. Indeed, the spirit of both the 1979 and 1999 constitutions brand Nigeria a secular nation, but what that exactly means is subject to interpretation. If, as we have identified, there are material gains in being members of the organization, then such membership should be embraced and the nation should seize every opportunity membership provides. On the other hand, the altruism of the organization also has to be tested. Are the material gains provided to member-nations strictly a means of bettering them economically or there is the agenda of promoting Islam and, perhaps, elevating the Muslim constituency over their Christian and indigenous religion counterparts in these nations? The fact that most states within the Nigerian polity that have accessed loans from the IDB are states with predominantly Muslim populations in the north raises concerns. The notable exception is Osun State, which, at the time of access, was governed by a very fervent Muslim, Rauf Aregbesola. It is important to point out, however, that it is unclear whether other states willfully decided against exploring the IDB option or there is an institutional lapse within the organization itself that precludes such states from partaking. The point to be made is that, in the

interest of Nigeria's nationhood, the OIC should either be embraced by all or be rejected by every; and the parameter for deciding which way to go should be the altruism of the organization. A situation where it is embraced by a particular constituency and rejected by the other is dangerous for the nation's continued existence.

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Article

The Spiritual Dimensions of the Permaculture Movement in Cuba †

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Abstract: Following the collapse of the Soviet Bloc, Cuba experienced an acute economic crisis in the 1990s known as the "Special Period". This crisis challenged not only the state's ability to provide for Cubans' material needs, but also the moral vision of creating a "New Human" within the Revolution's political framework. During the Special Period, a variety of new religious and civil society movements emerged to meet both the material and spiritual needs of Cubans. Permaculture, a holistic design system that arrived from Australia in 1993, promotes more harmonious relationships between human beings and nature through a set of three ethical principles: (1) Care for the Earth; (2) Care for People; and (3) Sharing Resources. Within the Cuban context, the growing permaculture movement is part of a larger set of religious and civil society revivals since the fall of the Soviet Bloc. Using qualitative fieldwork, this paper argues that permaculture is functioning as a religious-like movement in Cuba because it provides both spiritual and material benefits to individuals through networks of mutual aid and social solidarity. The permaculture movement also provides flexibility for individual perspectives about nature as sacred and having intrinsic value apart from usefulness to humans.

Keywords: Cuba; permaculture; nature spirituality; religion and politics; theories of religion

1. Introduction

Prior to the collapse of the Soviet Bloc in 1991, Cuba utilized a highly centralized, conventional model of agricultural production on large-scale nationalized farms. This model relied heavily upon high levels of imported agrochemical products, monocultural production systems, and a concentration of farmers in cities or rural towns (Funes-Monzote 2010, p. 206). When the Soviet Union fell and imports of subsidized material goods were suddenly no longer available, the conventional model of agriculture that Cuba had relied upon was no longer sustainable. Through various outreach and educational programs, the state began to encourage alternative forms of agricultural production, sustainable development projects, and the creation of on-site farms and gardens in residential and educational areas. In spite of these efforts, however, "the success of these strategies has been muted by a variety of factors, including the difficulty of adapting specialized large-scale agriculture to new practices, a lack of monetary resources and materials to enact these solutions, and a small workforce in the countryside" (Funes-Monzote 2010, p. 215). As the Cuban government has faced a decreasing ability to provide for Cubans' basic needs, a wide variety of civil society networks, including religious organizations, have emerged in order to address the spiritual and material needs of Cuban citizens (Crahan 2015, p. 92).

It is within this historical framework that we can analyze the arrival of permaculture to Cuba in 1993 from a "solidarity brigade" of volunteers from Australia and New Zealand (Cruz et al. 2006,

p. 7). The term *permaculture* itself is challenging to define precisely because of its holistic nature. Speaking broadly, it is a design system rooted within ecology that has historically "focused on land and nature stewardship as both a source for and an application of ethical design principles", and these principles are now being applied to a wider range of domains dealing with energy resources and the development of human communities (Holmgren 2002, p. xix). As a holistic design system, the ethics and principles of permaculture are built upon an approach that embraces systems-thinking. This approach views elements within a particular system (water, sunlight, soil, animals) as integrated, where (1) each element can perform many functions; and (2) each function is supported by many different elements (Holmgren 2002, p. 155). Within individual ecosystems, a variety of different relationships between elements can occur. These range from predatory and parasitic relationships on the one hand, to symbiotic relationships on the other, where "organisms become so interdependent that they cannot live without one another" (Holmgren 2002, p. 155).

There are three main ethical principles of permaculture (Care for the Earth, Care for People, and Sharing Resources through redistribution of surplus), as well as a set of twelve design principles that include observing and interacting, catching and storing energy, the use of renewable resources, valuing diversity, and using edges and valuing the marginal (Holmgren 2002). These ethical and design principles overlap with non-institutionalized spiritual worldviews and practices, and in the Cuban context, institutionalized religious belief. As Taylor (2010, p. 157) notes, permaculture is tied to some "countercultural branches of the global environmentalist milieu", and while the movement is grounded in ecology, it can also draw upon religious-resembling phenomena, such as animistic spirituality, rituals, and the recognition that nonmaterial energies or spirits animate life forms.

In the Cuban context, the *cambio de mentalidad*, or "change in mentality", points to an internal process of transformation, where individuals fundamentally shift their way of thinking and learn to live in a new way with one another and with the Earth. This shift in perception echoes (Leopold [1949] 1987) concept of the land ethic, which involves a perceptual shift in how individuals see themselves in relationship to the natural world. For Leopold, "the land ethic changes the role of *Homo sapiens* from conqueror of the land community to plain member and citizen of it" (Leopold [1949] (1987, p. 204), and it "enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants, and animals, or collectively: the land" (Leopold [1949] (1987, p. 204). Taylor (2010, p. 9) argues that we can analyze Leopold's land ethic as a form of what he calls dark green religion, where "nature is sacred, has intrinsic value, and is therefore due reverent care". Despite this appeal to dark green religion that Taylor argues is inconsistent with green religion found in traditional religions, in practice these themes have united Cuban permaculturalists with different backgrounds and relationships to institutionalized religions.

Through an analysis of qualitative interviews with Cuban permaculture activists, this paper explores the connections between spirituality and permaculture. According to Taylor (2010, p. 3), ecological movements that encourage deep, affective connections to the natural world can be understood as spiritual, because spirituality involves "gaining a proper understanding of one's place in the cosmos". For Taylor, humans need to recognize that they are a part of creation rather than being apart from it. This perspective challenges assumptions about human uniqueness as compared to nature that inform modern agricultural systems. Taylor (2010, p. 4) further argues that "unless one considers belief in divine beings or forces to be essential to a definition of religion, most contemporary spirituality can easily be considered religious". This type of religion, which he calls "dark green religion" (in which nature is sacred, has intrinsic value, and is therefore due reverent care) is often in tension with "green religion", which is found in world religions and posits that environmentally friendly behavior is a religious obligation (Taylor 2010, p. 10). Looking at the ideological, material, and cultural context of Cuba illustrates that permaculture allows space for both ways of thinking (dark green religion and green religion), through a flexibility in perspectives about nature as sacred.

The ethics and principles of permaculture seek to break down assumptions regarding the separateness of humans from other animals and from the natural world in which they are embedded. Although the recognition of limits to consumption of earth's resources is a part of global permaculture

ethics, this is particularly emphasized in Cuba because individuals have, out of necessity, learned creative ways to *inventar* (invent) solutions to problems with access to few material resources. Gabriel and Leidis, for example, are Baptist permaculture activists in the city of Santiago who work with an ecumenical center, and they helped explain the importance of these themes. Within the Cuban context, the third principle of permaculture (sharing resources) is crucial because material resources are frequently lacking. Leidis stated that "this is a country where the resources don't cover very much. But resources can also be our work; that is to say, 'We're going to dedicate two hours of our day'" (personal interview, 26 March 2016).

Permaculture activists spend time working on each other's sites, and they share both seeds and experience-based knowledge of how to implement the principles and ethics of the movement. Seeds are neither patented in Cuba nor tied to corporations, so for permaculturalists the sharing of seeds with one another reflects the cultural value of social solidarity rather than producing wealth. Cuban permaculture emphasizes moral and ethical messages tied to a critique of consumption and highlights the need for sharing and redistribution of resources. This critique of consumption within Cuban permaculture has also been shaped by a political context that is critical of global capitalism.

Within Cuban permaculture, there is a particular emphasis on mutually beneficial relationships, such as cooperation rather than competition, and redistribution of resources. This too has been shaped by Cuba's material context, but it also rests upon an ethical and spiritual concept that seeks to reorient how human beings view themselves in relationship to the natural environment. Rather than seeing themselves as somehow separate from or superior to nature, Cuban permaculture encourages human beings to see themselves as part of a larger web of relationships *within* nature.

I asked Juan Manuel, a promotor of permaculture in the Los Pinos neighborhood outside of Havana, what he thought was one of the most important lessons that he learned from the movement; he highlighted two lessons. The first was the idea that one had to respect life because everything was integrated holistically; "every little animal has its own value". The second lesson was that "we have to change the social and ecological culture of people . . . because we are really doing damage to the planet" (personal communication, 9 March 2016). Cuban permaculture activists frequently emphasized that they saw themselves as "one more element" within their systems as *Homo sapiens*, and many expressed deeply held affective bonds with the plants and animals within their permaculture systems. Activists also highlighted the idea that permaculture wasn't just about learning to grow organic food; it was about the importance of interdependent relationships between human beings as well as humans and other parts of the natural world.

Besides being spiritual, permaculture in Cuba functions as a religious-like movement that is part of a larger set of religious revivals and social change in civil society since the fall of the Soviet Bloc. As the government's capacity to respond to people's basic needs deteriorated, individuals turned to religion as a source of comfort (Crahan 2009, p. 17). These new religious groups not only provided material comfort, but they also addressed spiritual needs. According to Crahan (2009), the sociologist Laureana Cruz attributed the recent religious revivals to the fact that the fall of the socialist bloc meant that the world that many Cubans trusted no longer existed. In other words, the post-Soviet rise in religious revivals involves more than a response to material scarcity. The Cuban Revolution did not just involve nationalizing land and businesses; at its root, it has been tied to a moral vision within a scientific atheist framework that is now secular in nature. Thus, when the moral vision to create a "New Human" within Cuban society was challenged with the collapse of the Soviet Bloc, a variety of religious and civil society organizations arose to help Cubans (particularly young Cubans) who were seeking existential as well as material answers.

Permaculture in Cuba also functions like other religious movements in Cuba, because it provides spiritual as well as material benefits through networks of mutual aid and social solidarity. The Antonio Núñez Jiménez Foundation for Nature and Man (hereafter "FANJ"), a non-governmental organization established in 1994, has been at the forefront of efforts to promote permaculture across the island through a network of local level and national leaders. When founding FANJ, Antonio Núñez Jiménez

felt that the ethical vision of harmonious relationships between human beings and nature would serve as the backbone of the philosophical foundation for the NGO that took his name. Best known for his epic journey from the jungles of the Amazon to Cuba in a dugout canoe (which now sits in the FANJ museum in Sancti Spíritus), Jiménez declared in 1997 that permaculture could play a key role in the development of a "culture of nature" in Cuba. In this "culture of nature", human civilization is designed to be in harmony with its natural surroundings (Birnbaum and Fox 2014, p. 54). FANJ spread permaculture with these ideas through a highly contextualized three-part method, creating networks that united permaculture activists who have a wide variety of personal backgrounds, identities, and relationships to institutionalized religions.

2. Methodology

During March and April of 2016, I visited 19 different permaculture systems in three different Cuban provinces: Havana, Sancti Spíritus, and Santiago de Cuba. FANJ provided contact information for permaculture activists, and I used it to select these sites. The Cuban permaculture movement is not directly tied to the government, although the state has promoted agroecological methods of food production. The movement is, however, directly tied to FANJ and networks of permaculture activists and promotors across the island. From a legal perspective, all organizations in Cuba (including civil society and religious organizations) must be under the supervision of state agencies (Crahan 2015, p. 91), and this would include FANJ.

According to its website, FANJ has five programs dedicated to environmental education and the promotion of sustainability: (1) Geohistory and Political Ecology; (2) Heritage Preservation; (3) Sustainable Localities; (4) Nature and Community; and (5) Responsible Economies and Consumption. The third area (Sustainable Localities) is explicitly dedicated to the "contribution and the creation of sustainable localities from citizenship action and the promotion and implementation of permaculture". FANJ also has "delegates" within seven provinces that help organize the training of local leaders and activists. FANJ has played a critical role in the outreach and expansion of permaculture in Cuba, because it uses a participatory form of learning tied to the farmer-to-farmer sustainable agriculture movement brought in from Mexico in the early 1990s (Holt-Giménez 2006). Villi, a permaculture activist in Santiago, referred to this method as "80% practice, 20% theory" during an interview on 3 April 2016. In other words, the promotion of permaculture in Cuba focuses on "learning by doing", rather than focusing on permaculture principles in the abstract. Cuban permaculture activists also worked on each other's permaculture systems regularly.

When I visited permaculture systems, I conducted analysis using two methods: (1) observation and (2) qualitative interviews. In the observational portion of the research, I noted the name of individual systems; the types of permaculture strategies and principles used; the varieties of specific fruits, vegetables, and medicinal plants grown within the system; water collection and filtration strategies; and the use of alternative energy sources such as solar dryers, ecological "dry" bathrooms, and ecological kitchens. Cuban permaculture activists referred to their sites as "systems" rather than farms because permaculture is a holistic design system that is organized around five "zones" or concentric areas that relate to human intensity of use. Zone 1 represents the house, while zone 5 represents a "wilderness" area that relies upon little to no human input (Holmgren 2002, p. 139).

In addition to observation of individual permaculture systems, I conducted qualitative interviews using semi-structured research questions with thirty-five permaculture activists in March and April of 2016. Qualitative interviews lasted approximately an hour and a half in length. In addition to asking participants questions about how they first became affiliated with FANJ and the nature of their participation in that NGO, I also focused on participants' individual interpretations of the three main ethical principles of permaculture: (1) Care for the Earth; (2) Care for People; and (3) Redistribution of Surplus through the sharing of resources. What did these ethical principles mean to them within the Cuban context? Upon returning to the United States, I coded the qualitative interviews using sets of key terms in order to find common patterns across the interviews. During a particular interview, for

example, if the participant was describing the specific methods that FANJ used in order to promote permaculture (workshops, demonstrations), I assigned the code "FANJ organization/outreach".

My informants in this Cuban case study came from a wide variety of personal backgrounds, geographical locations, and walks of life. Within the informed consent process, informants were provided with the option of choosing to remain anonymous using pseudonyms; however, all participants in this study voluntarily selected the option of having their real names used in the study.[1]

The majority of informants in Santiago de Cuba self-identified as Baptists affiliated with the Eastern Baptist Convention. Others, such as Edinson in Sancti Spíritus, were tied to Los Pinos Nuevos (The New Pines) Evangelical Seminary. Some informants did not identify with any religion in particular; Isabel in the Los Pinos neighborhood, for example, is not religious but she comes from an Adventist family. In spite of these different backgrounds, permaculture activists frequently emphasized that they felt that they were part of a larger "family" of individuals to whom they could turn, during both good moments and moments of great difficulty. After the fall of the Soviet Bloc, Cubans experienced moments of great difficulty during an acute economic crisis known as the "Special Period".

3. The Cuban Special Period and the Arrival of Permaculture

In the summer of 1990, Fidel Castro announced the implementation of the *Período Especial* (Special Period), or a series of contingency plans involving austerity measures and rationing schedules in order to adjust to the loss of trading partners from the former socialist bloc. The "Special Period", as Reguant (2009, p. 1) notes, was not just an historical construct; it was also a "defining category of experience" during the 1990s that followed Cuba's loss of Soviet trade and support. The Council of Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) had previously accounted for nearly 85 percent of all of Cuba's trade, and Soviet oil and petroleum by-products had accounted for approximately 90 percent of Cuba's energy needs (Pérez 2015, pp. 304–5). The effects of this tremendous loss of material resources from the former Soviet Union were broad reaching and devastating. Pérez (2015, p. 306) stated that during the Special Period, "life settled into a grim and unremitting cycle of scarcity, in which shortage beget shortage and where some of the most basic daily needs of daily life in their more ordinary and commonplace form could be satisfied only by Herculean efforts".

There developed a set of quotidian sayings among Cubans during this period: *resolver* (to resolve) and *inventar* (to invent), which basically refers to pursuing whatever is necessary to get by on a daily basis, often through incredibly creative means (Pérez 2015, p. 308). Notably, these phrases have not disappeared from Cuban colloquial Spanish: I have been traveling to Cuba for more than fourteen years pursuing academic research, and I still hear these phrases daily when I visit. This underscores the fact that the *Período Especial* was a distinctive marker for the Cuban people, not only in terms of the loss of material resources, but in terms of culture and morality. As Pérez (2015, p. 310) notes, "new fault lines appeared on the moral topography of Cuban daily life and acted to reconfigure the normative terms by which Cubans entered the twenty-first century".

The *Período Especial* also set in motion the search for alternative methods of food production, in light of the sudden loss of petroleum-based pesticides and fertilizers. Prior to the collapse of the Soviet Bloc, Cuba had relied upon a highly centralized, industrial agricultural model using monocrop cultivation on large plots of land that had previously been nationalized through the Agrarian Reform Laws of 1959 and 1963 (Koont 2015, p. 399). This industrialized model caused several issues, both economic and environmental. First, the model relied exclusively upon imports from the Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc, which became unsustainable during the Special Period. Second, Cuba's industrialized model of agricultural production caused increasing damage to the soil (Koont 2015, p. 399).

As early as 1987, then Defense Minister Raúl Castro suggested the possibility of generalizing food cultivation without the use of petrochemicals, and armed forces facilities began installing *organipónicos*

[1] This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board of Iowa State University, Protocol #16-012.

(raised beds using organic material) to grow vegetable gardens (Koont 2015, p. 400). During the Special Period, the state, the National Association of Small Farmers (ANAP) and Cuban scientists "promoted and implemented a series of measures to maintain agricultural production in the absence of imported chemicals and machine parts. These included the recovery of traditional farming practices with low levels of external inputs, as well as the use of ecological methods developed by Cuban researchers" (Sosa et al. 2013, p. 23). The production of vegetables initially dropped dramatically between 1988 and 1994 but rebounded significantly after 2007 thanks to previous land decentralization efforts and the creation of 2,600 new small urban and suburban farms since the 1990s (Altieri and Funes-Monzote 2012).

The state also began to encourage individuals to grow food individually within local plot gardens. Sánchez, a retired army officer who converted a vacant lot into a permaculture "hotspot" for the Sevillano neighborhood outside of Havana (Birnbaum and Fox 2014, p. 12), told me that during the Special Period there was a nationwide call by Fidel Castro to urge people to plant food in their spaces "because those were hard times that arrived". Sánchez stated that "I began to plant in the little plot that I had, but the form that I used was from traditional agriculture" (personal communication, 11 March 2016). He began to plant bananas, squash, yucca, and sweet potato, but he had to wait a year to harvest and eat those things. FANJ approached Sánchez when they saw that he had a productive space, but he initially declined to get involved with the permaculture movement because at the time he had responsibilities as a delegate with the *Poder Popular*. *The Poder Popular* are Neighborhood Popular Councils mandated by the Cuban National Assembly. Residents from each neighborhood ward elect a delegate to represent their local concerns and issues to the Councils (Scarpaci 2002, p. 179).

The results of the Cuban government's efforts to promote more ecological methods of farming since the Special Period indicate both strengths and weaknesses. In terms of strengths, there have been notable successes with root crop production, other vegetables, fruits, eggs, and seafood (Altieri and Funes-Monzote 2012). Other food items, such as cooking oil, legumes, corn and soybeans, have much higher import rates than sugar crops, fruits, and vegetables. In addition, despite widespread government efforts to promote agroecological methods of farming, "interest persists among some leaders in high external inputs with sophisticated and expensive technological packages" (Altieri and Funes-Monzote 2012). These programs are focused on "maximization" of crop and livestock production and an insistence upon returning to monocrop agricultural methods, which is running up against the efforts of permaculture activists to rely upon fewer external inputs.

In addition to a focus on organic farming and avoiding the use of chemical pesticides and fertilizers, permaculture also emphasizes the need for humans to fundamentally reevaluate how they see themselves in relationship to the natural world in which they are embedded. FANJ is at the forefront of these efforts, and they are networking with other organizations in Cuban civil society to encourage this transformation.

4. FANJ and the Expansion of Permaculture in Cuba

Since the Special Period, FANJ has played a critical role in the expansion of permaculture in Cuba through a network of promoters and facilitators who are working within their local communities. Juan Manuel, who serves as a national promoter of permaculture through FANJ, stated in an interview on 9 March 2016 that "I think that there wouldn't be permaculture groups in the country if the Foundation hadn't had so many permaculture design courses". FANJ utilizes a "people-to-people" method of outreach and promotion that is based upon the *Campesino a Campesino* (CAC) movement, a grassroots agroecology social movement imported from Mexico during the Special Period (Holt-Giménez 2006, p. 32). The Cuban National Association of Small Farmers (ANAP) utilized the CAC methodology to promote a transition to agroecological methods of food production following the collapse of the Soviet Bloc. When FANJ was formed in 1994, it took the permaculture movement that was imported from Australia and combined it with the CAC methodology and the work of ANAP to promote permaculture across the island.

The process of incorporating permaculture into the Cuban context started within the *Institutio Cubano de Investigaciones y Orientación de la Demanda Interna*, where Australian volunteers constructed a permaculture demonstration site on the rooftop to provide vegetables for the workers of the *Instituto*. The *Instituto* would eventually disappear, and in 1994 Antonio Núñez Jiménez founded FANJ with the hope of promoting a "culture of nature" within Cuban society (Stricker 2007). The staff "took up permaculture as part of their organizational mission and philosophy", and FANJ began offering workshops and courses to individuals in the Havana area who were already practicing urban farming (Williams 2017, p. 40).

Several international organizations and NGOs, as well as Cuban organizations, have collaborated with FANJ: the German Protestant organization, Bread for the World; Oxfam International; the Cuban Ministry of Culture; the Cuban Ministry of Agriculture; the Federation of Cuban Women; and the Cuban Counsel of Churches, among others (Cruz et al. 2006, p. 8). Thus, FANJ has connections with both state organizations as well as international organizations, and it receives material aid from international NGOs for its projects. Cuban permaculture activists can in turn receive aid from FANJ; the large water collection tanks that I saw in several permaculture systems, for example, were from FANJ.

FANJ has been described as a non-governmental organization in the literature (Williams 2017). However, as Margaret Crahan notes, all organizations in Cuba, including citizen organizations, must be under the supervision of government agencies. There is wide range of organizations in Cuban civil society that operate along a continuum, with some groups that have a high degree of autonomy (Crahan 2015, p. 91). During qualitative interviews, permaculture activists who worked with FANJ frequently mentioned the material support from the international NGO Bread for the World, but the historical relationship between FANJ and the state was not highlighted. The founder of FANJ, Antonio Núñez Jiménez, was granted permission by Fidel Castro to start his own organization during the Special Period because (1) the two had developed a relationship of trust; and (2) the state began permitting Cuban civil society organizations to help with social issues (Johnson 2017). Organizations like FANJ are financially sponsored "by international NGOs from countries like Canada, Australia, Spain, and Italy, but are part of the Cuban state, and they uphold the principles of the Cuban socialist Revolution" (Gold 2015, p. 118).

Oscar, who has a permaculture system in Santiago de Cuba, stated that although the government had "talked a lot about agroecology", the interest in permaculture "had not taken hold much at the level of the government". Some individuals from the government had visited the system, and Oscar explained to them how permaculture functioned (personal communication, 30 March 2016). This was an interesting observation, because Oscar made a distinction between agroecology (the application of the ecological sciences to agricultural production) and permaculture. Notably, Oscar was not the only permaculture activist to do this; my interviews with other activists in Santiago de Cuba revealed similar themes. Williams (2017) found during fieldwork that one permaculture promoter, who had learned about agroecology from the local office of the National Association of Small Farmers (ANAP), claimed that they saw "in permaculture more opportunities than in agroecology. Agroecology gives you the opportunity to conserve soil, you see? It teaches you to conserve soil and seeds following the *campesino* tradition. But permaculture takes you above and beyond" (Williams 2017, p. 39). With the "above and beyond" statement, this activist was arguing that permaculture was a philosophy and a "way of life". This connects to the larger argument of this paper, which is that permaculture can be analyzed as a religious movement that shapes how people see and interact with the world.

FANJ's method of introducing and promoting permaculture involves a highly contextualized process that works directly through community groups at the grassroots level. *El Ranchón* is an *organipónico* located in the Sancti Spíritus province in central Cuba that incorporates permaculture ethics and practice into its system. Workers plant medicinal species (lemongrass, citronella) at the front of rows, which either attract or repel insects, depending upon the species. Local food from *El Ranchón* is provided to the workers, and produce is also sold to the surrounding neighborhoods through the market that they have operating directly on the site. This illustrates the theme of social engagement

within Cuban permaculture ethics and practice. According to Roger, who helps run *El Ranchón*, he and his wife left their careers in engineering and "traditional agriculture" in 1994 during the heart of the *Período Especial*. Although their physician could not directly determine the cause of debilitating headaches and two miscarriages, Roger attributed these conditions to their significant exposure to insecticides, fungicides, bactericides, and herbicides (personal communication, 18 March 2016).

Roger and his wife decided to move into agroecological methods of growing food within the urban garden movement, and in the year 2000 he and 74 other Cubans received an introduction to permaculture when FANJ visited the province. Roger claimed that the experience "changed everything that they learned at the university", and he became motivated to promote permaculture. In 2001 he helped form a group called *Grupo de Sustentabilidad Urbana* (Urban Sustainability Group), which initially began providing permaculture activities for acquaintances and then expanded to a grassroots permaculture fair that was organized "neighborhood by neighborhood". In 2002, FANJ invited the group to take the free permaculture course that they offered (personal communication, 18 March 2016).

The method of outreach and promotion that Roger described is part of the unique three-part method that FANJ developed in the 1990s. The first step is reaching out to individuals who might be interested in permaculture through what is called a *taller motivocional* (motivational workshop). This workshop, which is a basic introduction to permaculture, can be organized by autonomous individuals and groups; in other words, FANJ does not have to be the organization that facilitates every *taller*, although facilitators who work with FANJ often do. A community member could approach another community member who might be selling plants from their patio, for example. This hypothetical scenario is similar to the case of Isabel, one of the early pioneers of the permaculture movement in the Los Pinos neighborhood outside of Havana. Two workers from FANJ approached Isabel in 1993 during the Special Period because they were aware that she sold plants on her patio. They discussed with her the possibility of "capturing a group of people and giving them an introduction to permaculture, a beginning, a *tallercito*" (little workshop) (personal communication, 9 March 2016)

The second step in the Cuban process is the organization of the *taller de acercamiento*, or the "approaching workshop". This workshop is more in-depth than the initial *taller*, where participants learn about the main ethical ideas of permaculture, the history of the movement, and the various design principles. This workshop's function, which brings in the experiential learning methods from the Farmer to Farmer (*Movimiento Campesino a Campesino*, or MCAC), is designed to encourage participants to begin working within their own permaculture design systems, even though they haven't yet passed the permaculture design course.

The third step in the Cuban process is the permaculture design course offered through FANJ. Juan Manuel explained that even though FANJ is technically a non-governmental organization with a central address in Havana, it actually functions as a network of 24 national permaculture groups that help facilitate communication between individual coordinators who work in different provinces and geographical regions across the island. Each of these permaculture groups "has characteristics that are very autonomous", and this autonomy enables the individual groups to respond to highly specific and contextualized needs within local communities (personal communication, 9 March 2016).

According to Leticia, this three-step method is what makes permaculture in Cuba distinctive. The *taller de acercamiento* can come directly from within individual communities themselves, within the locations where people live. This way, one can see how individuals within the *taller de acercamiento* are "comprehending, are changing their mentality" through experiential learning techniques (personal communication, 3 May 2016). This "*cambio de mentalidad*" (change of mentality) involves re-imagining how human beings see themselves in relationship to not only other humans, but to the natural world in which they are embedded. It also involves a shift towards more experiential-based learning techniques, where individuals incorporate knowledge about how ecosystems function into their daily lives. As Gibson-Graham and Roelvink note, "in our new geological epoch of human-induced climate change, the Anthropocene, it has become increasingly clear to us that the more-than-human world is fundamentally implicated in the way we live our lives. We humans are neither masters nor caretakers

of the environment and other species; the more-than-human world is an active participant in diverse economies" (Gibson-Graham and Roelvink 2011, p. 32).

When Sánchez completed his responsibilities in 2007, he took the permaculture course offered by FANJ. Sánchez had a wide variety of elements in his system: fruits, fruit trees, vegetables, medicinal plants, chickens, a dry ecological bathroom, a pond for fish, and a water filtration system. Throughout his permaculture system, both at the front of his house and within the system, Sánchez had colorful signs promoting some of the ethics and values of permaculture. One of the signs said, "Fundamental ethical principles of permaculture: Care for the Earth, that is to say, the Planet, with its animate and inanimate elements. Care for People. Share the surplus. Violence interrupts cooperation and it's never an opportunity" (personal communication, 11 March 2016).

Signs that promote individual permaculture systems are another way that FANJ has been successful in the promotion of permaculture. Juan Manuel and Leticia's initial curiosity about the movement was sparked when they were passing by a sign one day that said, "We do permaculture here". They asked Isabel, one of the early pioneers of the permaculture movement in the area, about the sign. Isabel then encouraged them to participate in a *taller motivocional*. Leticia stated that after participating in the *taller motivocional*, they realized that the patients at the community health center where they worked could grow vegetables without chemicals. That possibility really "hooked her" (*enganchar*) the most because she was concerned about the rehabilitation of her patients (personal communication, 3 May 2016). This description of being "hooked" by permaculture was noteworthy in light of the interview with Isabel; Isabel argued that promoting permaculture was similar to what religious missionaries do: "It's like the religious people. The religious people go preaching their religion all around the world and from house to house. We say that there are ten people that close the door, but one that opens it. They don't tire of preaching. Why would we, who say that we love nature, get tired?" (personal communication, 3 March 2016).

FANJ is not a religious organization, but it is part of a larger group of civil society networks that have emerged in the aftermath of the fall of the Soviet Union and the Special Period. At the local level, networking between religious organizations, human rights groups, youth groups, and community groups has increased significantly since the 1990s, which suggests that "associationalism in Cuba is today stronger than in any period since the 1960s" (Crahan 2015, p. 93). FANJ can be analyzed as part of a larger post-Soviet revival in civil society and religious organizations for several reasons.

FANJ was founded during the heart of the economic crisis that resulted from the collapse of the Soviet Bloc, when Cubans were forced out of necessity to come up with creative ways growing food, recycling, using renewable resources, and caring for themselves and their families. The economic crisis, in combination with the larger socio-economic changes that occurred between state and civil society groups, provided fertile ground for the expansion of permaculture and other spiritually engaged movements. As a holistic movement that addresses spiritual as well as material concerns, permaculture arrived in Cuba in the early 1990s and was able to spread because of the larger changes that were occurring in civil society at the time.

5. The Spiritual Dimensions of Cuban Permaculture: Religion, Spiritual Needs, and Social Change in Post-Soviet Cuba

During fieldwork in March and April of 2016, I visited several *organipónicos* that were also utilizing permaculture methods and principles. On the 28 April 2016 I interviewed Edith, who has a background as a professor of biology and works at the "Linda Flor" *organipónico* in the province of Sancti Spíritus. During the Special Period, her school was moved to the countryside because there was no gasoline available for transportation. Edith had a small child at the time and couldn't move locations, so she began to pursue other work after the government decided to create an *organipónico* of flowers in her area.

According to Edith, this was done because the Cuban state recognized that people needed not only sustenance from food, but also sustenance for their "souls" due to the widespread issues of depression

at the time: "In 1994 I came here because they had begun creating those *organipónico* movements with the objective of satisfying the nutrition needs of the population during that moment of crisis, of food. And so they began to develop urban agriculture with those movements. The First Secretary decided to create an *organipónico* of flowers because they needed to motivate the population, to satisfy the food needs, sustenance, but also the soul, because the people were really depressed during those times" (personal communication, 28 April 2016). Edith began working at the flower *organipónico* in Sancti Spíritus with her father in 1994 during the heart of the Special Period.

After FANJ approached her about becoming involved with permaculture, Edith realized that she began to view herself as "more realized" working within the context of the garden than in the classroom because she could directly see the results of her work for herself, her family, and the surrounding community. Today, the "Linda Flor" permaculture system continues to sell flowers and also serves as a central reference for medicinal plants; they have a working relationship with the local *policlínico* (community health center) to offer alternative "green" medicine from the medicinal plants grown within the permaculture system. Edith stated that prior to becoming involved with FANJ and permaculture, she didn't have a "consciousness" regarding what it meant to care for the Earth. Through permaculture ethics, however, Edith has come to view the soil as "a living organism". This echoes Holmgren (2002, p. 5) discussion about the first ethical principal of permaculture (Care for the Earth) through the notion of living soil: "In the most grounded sense, Care for the Earth can be taken to mean caring for the living soil as the source of (terrestrial) life and for which we have the greatest responsibility".

Edith's statement about the Cuban state recognizing spiritual needs within the population is illustrative of some larger shifts that have happened since the fall of the Soviet Union. In 1991, the Cuban government eliminated the ban on religious individuals holding positions within the Communist Party. A year later, the Cuban Communist Party adopted a constitutional amendment declaring that Cuba was a secular rather than a scientific atheist state (Crahan 2009, p. 107). There were a number of political and social changes that played a role in this shift, including the encouragement of Fidel Castro in the 1980s to promote strategic alliances between Christians and Marxists (Crahan 2009, p. 104). These political changes opened up spaces for religions to practice more freely and, in some cases, gain official recognition by the state (Kocur 2016, pp. 231–32).

Even with these constitutional changes, however, the revolutionary government "has still tried, largely through executive orders, to limit the autonomy and development of associative organizations" (Crahan 2015, p. 91). In terms of belief within the population, the religious scene in Cuba is an interesting combination of several different elements: on the one hand, recent surveys have indicated that approximately 75 to 85 percent of Cubans believe in the divine (Crahan 2015, p. 90). Heidi, who works with an ecumenical center in Santiago in the promotion of sustainability programs, seemed to echo these statistics when she stated that within the Cuban population, many people believe in "something", whether it's God, multiple Gods, or Lucumí-based traditions such as Santería (personal communication, 28 March 2016). On the other hand, there is an historical precedent for low church attendance due to the weakness of the institutional Catholic Church in Cuba, particularly within rural areas (Crahan 2015, p. 90).

It is helpful to think of post-Soviet Cuban civil society in terms of "an expanding public sphere constituted by an increasing number of minispheres within the country and sustained higher levels of voluntary associational activity" (Crahan 2015, p. 91). This activity "includes not only civic associations and institutions but also informal networks linked horizontally with one another and, at times, vertically to political elites and the state" (Crahan 2015, p. 90). There is also a rather broad spectrum of political attitudes: some groups are in sharp opposition to the state; others are critical of the Castro regime but not necessarily opposed to socialism; and others consist of individuals who work for the state but have heterodox or reformist ideas (Crahan 2015, p. 91). Since the collapse of the Soviet Union and dramatic loss of material aid and resources, the Cuban state has retreated from its role as sole provider of social welfare programs.

In response to this, a variety of religious and other civil society organizations are stepping in to meet the specific humanitarian needs of local communities. However, this expansion of religious social engagement is not only due to material factors; there are spiritual and psychological needs that are contributing to these changes as well, especially among young Cubans who may not remember the harshest years following the collapse of the Soviet Union. As Crahan (2015) notes, "high levels of anomie and alienation in Cuba, as well as loss of faith in the Revolution by a good number of Cubans, especially young people, have fueled a fairly generalized search for spiritual and psychological consolation through religion" (Crahan 2015, p. 97).

When talking about religious revival in Cuba since the fall of the Soviet Bloc we have to keep several things in mind: (1) there has been an upsurge in church attendance and involvement in recent years (Crahan 2015, p. 96), particularly within the Cuban evangelical movement connected to house churches; (2) there is a long history in Cuba of non-institutionalized religious belief and practice, frequently tied to spiritism and African-derived traditions; and (3) since the Cuban state has retreated from its role as sole provider of social welfare programs, there are a growing number of religious and civil society organizations that are becoming more visible through social engagement programs. I argue that nongovernmental organizations like FANJ have been deeply engaged in Cuban civil society through sustainability initiatives like permaculture.

Multiple factors are contributing to a generalized search for spiritual fulfillment in Cuban society, including feelings of alienation among young people (Crahan 2015, p. 97). This alienation is tied to several economic, political, and cultural issues. One major factor involves long-standing problems with the management of Cuba's economy (Harnecker 2015, p. 50), including the continued use of two currencies, the relationship of the state to an increasing number of independent wage earners, recent layoffs in government jobs, and a highly educated populace that is gravitating towards the tourism industry.

A second issue that helps explain alienation in Cuban society is tied to the vision of the Revolution itself; the 1959 Revolution promoted, through highly affective and emotional language, the transformation of the character of the Cuban people through a vision of the "New Human". This vision sought a "change of consciousness", where individuals would work for moral rather than material incentives (Blum 2011, p. 22). The Cuban government has spent a significant amount of political (and economic) capital in the promotion of this vision since 1959, but the collapse of the Soviet Union posed fundamental challenges to it. When Cuba was importing nearly all of its material goods from the former Soviet Bloc, the state could more easily maintain its status as provider of jobs and social welfare programs for citizens, particularly within professional areas such as education and health care. Since the 1990s, however, the state has been cutting back on social welfare initiatives.

At a more fundamental level, the moral vision for creating the "New Human" within a changing civil society has become even more complex, as international organizations, businesses, and religious groups have expanded their networks in Cuba. If you walk today along "La Rampa", a major thoroughfare leading to the neighborhood of Vedado in Havana, you will see Cuban youth sitting along sidewalks on their cell phones, talking to friends and family through new chat programs. With the rise of new technologies and opportunities abroad, what is the future of this Cuban vision for voluntary work for moral rather than material incentives? Youth in particular are losing faith in this vision and turning to other areas for spiritual and moral fulfillment (Crahan 2015, p. 97). Permaculture activists tied to FANJ are well aware of these recent cultural and economic changes, which explains why they have been reaching out to Cuban youth to encourage them to become involved in permaculture. For activists, permaculture not only offers opportunities to be more self-sufficient in food production; it is a "philosophy of life" tied to a spirituality that embraces caring for the Earth, one's self and one's family, and one's community.

Permaculture has addressed these needs and has functioned like a religious movement by providing (1) care and support through networks of social solidarity and (2) a *cambio de mentalidad* (change of mentality), where individuals embrace a love of the Earth and recognize their dependence

upon it for life; offer critiques of consumption; and emphasize the sharing of resources through social solidarity and cooperation rather than competition. The permaculture movement that is directly tied to FANJ's outreach and promotional efforts is a movement engaged in the spiritual transformation of deeply held values connecting human beings to one another and to the environment.

Major figures associated with FANJ sought to promote an ethic of responsibility towards the natural world by looking to earlier aspects of Cuban culture, such as the writings of a national hero, to argue that this ethic has always been a part of Cuban culture. In the aftermath of the Special Period crisis and the challenges to the Revolution's moral vision for a "New Human", civil society and religious organizations are stepping in to present their visions for what Cuban society should look like. For example, Antonio Núñez Jiménez, the "extraordinary Cuban revolutionary, geographer, anthropologist, agricultural reformer, and writer" (Birnbaum and Fox 2014, p. 54) wrote about José Martí's love of nature. José Martí is a national hero who was instrumental in defining the vision of *Cuba Libre*, or independence from Spain and the United States (Pérez 2015, p. 113). In addition to Martí's political writings, however, Martí is also known for his poetry and prose about human beings and their relationship to the natural world. In an 1882 publication in Caracas, for example, Martí wrote of the forest: "the forest brings reason and faith back to man, and it is the perpetual youth. The forest gladdens, like a good deed. Nature inspires, cures, consoles, and prepares the virtue of man" (Jiménez 1998, p. 385). In 1980, Jiménez embarked on a *Campismo Popular* (popular camping) program to "awaken a love of nature, of flora and fauna and the fight to preserve them" (Jiménez 1998, p. 514; Stricker 2007, p. 115). Permaculture was part of this vision of awakening a love of nature in individuals through its ethical and moral principles.

Although the Cuban state has promoted the use of sustainable methods of agricultural production in Cuba's environmental framework law (Stricker 2007, p. 43), some activists emphasized during interviews that there was still a long road ahead in terms of convincing individuals at the grassroots level to embrace an ethic of environmental awareness and love of nature. This seemed to be a notable challenge within the capital city of Havana, where Cuban youth are increasingly influenced by factors such as the role of mass media, new technologies, and the challenges of work opportunities that do not match their qualifications (Domínguez 2015, p. 384).

Leticia explained that FANJ is trying to promote a *cambio de mentalidad* among the Cuban youths who are associating farming and growing food with poverty. With recent changes in the availability of public Wi-Fi hotspots, cell phones, and computers, Leticia noted a concern about youth being "too taken by technology" (personal communication, 3 May 2016). Encouraging the development of a love of nature and the Earth is a central part of permaculture ethics and spirituality, so FANJ is working through its networks of national leaders and promotors to work specifically with Cuban youth and couples in these efforts to promote an environmental consciousness. The Centro Cristiano de Servicio y Capacitación "B.G. Lavastida" (hereafter "the Centro"), for example, is an ecumenical organization in Santiago dedicated to the promotion of healthy communities and ecosystems through its social engagement and outreach efforts. In its Training Program, the Centro has an area dedicated to issues that Cuban youth face today. Within all of its particular programs, including the promotion of permaculture, the Centro is actively working to engage with young people in an effort to address their material and spiritual needs.

Tony, a young man in the city of Sancti Spíritus who became exposed to permaculture through his wife, admitted that at first he associated the idea of permaculture with "work in the countryside". However, after learning more about it, Tony came to see permaculture as more than just planting food: "permaculture is holistic; you can apply it in all areas of your life. I started to learn and have a consciousness about the harm that one sometimes does to the planet, that in the end it's the home that unites us because we live here. If something happens to the planet, one way or another it's going to happen to us" (personal communication, 16 March 2016). In stating that harm to the planet harms human beings as well, Tony illustrated a theme heard frequently during qualitative interviews: human

beings are in an interdependent relationship with the natural world, and if you take care of the Earth you are also taking care of yourself because you are dependent upon the Earth for life and sustenance.

Juan Manuel echoed this theme when discussing the first permaculture ethical principle of caring for the Earth; he argued that "there has to be a social change" when it comes to caring for the soil, because using chemicals will harm the soil, create more nitrogen in the soil, and ultimately create dead zones in the Gulf of Mexico. "The only way of producing a change is through the consciousness of people, from the consumer to the producer. It has to change" (personal communication, 9 March 2016). This *cambio de mentalidad*, or "change of mentality" is linked to a critique of consumption that is an integral part of the ethical messages within Cuban permaculture.

For Cuban activists, permaculture provides a critique of overconsumption that can be found within both environmental movements and religious traditions. It does this in two ways. First, it dismisses the notion that human beings are somehow separate from nature and that nature has value simply because of what it can provide for humans. Juan Manuel made this clear during his interview on 9 March 2016: "Some religious things say that humans have the right of stewardship [over the Earth]. I think that it's not even stewardship; we are a part of and connected to all the other animals that also have their rights". Oscar, who maintains a large permaculture system in Santiago of over 26 hectares (64 acres), made a similar statement: "the human being is one more part of the system . . . the banana leaf fulfills its function within the system, right? We all fulfill a role within the system. I'm one more element within this system, me and my family are one more [element]" (personal communication, 30 March 2016). Oscar and Juan Manuel were emphasizing a key theme within Cuban permaculture: interdependence, or the web of relationships between elements within an ecosystem.

Second, Cuban permaculture provides a critique of overconsumption based upon its spirituality that emphasizes the common good. This spirituality highlights the need for social and ecological justice, where human beings and the natural environment have intrinsic value apart from the material goods that they can produce. From an ecological perspective, this integrated form of development utilizes the principles within permaculture design, such as catching and reusing energy, minimizing the use of external inputs within a system, composting, and recycling. From a spiritual and moral perspective, Cuban permaculture critiques visions of development that focus predominantly on the pursuit of individual wealth and the accumulation of material things, and there is an explicit emphasis on sharing whatever one has if someone is in need. Leidis, who works with the Centro in Santiago, pointed out that the third ethical principal of permaculture is the sharing of excess resources. In Cuba, however, excess resources are few and far between. So Cuban permaculturalists take a broader view of what constitutes a resource. Leidis mentioned that there would be many days where her husband Gabriel would say, "OK. Let's utilize two of the hours that we have in the day to go and work" in order to help out someone else (personal communication, 26 March 2016).

Leticia explained it this way: taking the permaculture design course not only taught them to create a physical permaculture system tied to their house; "we also designed and redesigned our lives, our family relationships, our human relationships, our relationships with the community". When discussing the second major principle of permaculture (Care for People), for example, Leticia argued that this principle "goes together with taking care of the spirit", of caring for not only the planting of healthy food, but caring for how people fundamentally relate to the natural world and to one another. When discussing the permaculture principle of taking care of others, she said that "it goes very well with taking care of the spirit, of taking care of not just 'I plant healthy, I eat healthy, and I keep myself healthy,' but also I relate in a healthy way with my partner, I relate in a healthy way with my children; I try to live happy, I try to prioritize the things that bring me happiness, that bring me well-being, that give me spiritual happiness. And so, I keep myself psychologically and spiritually healthy, and I keep my family healthy" (personal communication, 3 May 2016). This holistic view of spirituality within Cuban permaculture underscores the idea that the movement has a broader meaning beyond the planting of organic food, although it includes this dimension as part of its principles.

Leticia also emphasized that one of the main principles within permaculture is collaboration rather than competition, along with valuing "the marginal". This can mean valuing people on the "margins" of society that need aid, such as those with psychiatric and mental health conditions (personal communication, 3 May 2016). Leticia also emphasized the importance of promoting ecological literacy among Cuban youth, and she noted that primary school teachers have requested visits to permaculture systems "so that the children can see water collection, see the compost, see the vermiculture, so that they can learn to view the soil as a living organism that one has to take care of" (personal communication, 3 May 2016). This process of learning to view the soil as a "living organism" illustrates the process of a change of consciousness within Cuban permaculture, where individuals learn to view and to live with the natural world in a different way.

Marieta, a Baptist in Santiago who also worked with the Centro, discussed how she has utilized her permaculture system as an opportunity to meet the spiritual and material needs of community members (personal communication, 29 March 2106). Marieta named her system "*El Amor Construye*" (Love Builds) because she and her husband have used the space as an opportunity to listen to and help women who are victims of violence. For Cuban permaculturalists, the ethics and values of the movement are tied to an emphasis on nonviolence towards other humans and the natural environment. Marieta has promoted social welfare programs and community outreach in other areas as well; she has helped youth "integrate into Cuban society" through workshops on José Martí in her permaculture system, and has hosted courses on nutrition and food conservation in an effort to encourage community members to eat healthy foods and preserve them during moments when they might not have access to food.

By emphasizing the development of at least some level of self-sufficiency, the permaculture movement in Cuba does not gloss over individual autonomy and creativity; in fact, one of the striking things I noted during fieldwork was the personal naming of individual permaculture systems to reflect individual creativity and, frequently, connections to friends and family. However, permaculture systems in Cuba are never created and maintained in total isolation. Individuals work on each other's systems in order to share knowledge and resources; they come together during *encuentros* (meetings) of activists from across the island through the work of FANJ; they share seeds with one another during these *encuentros*; and they rely upon one another in a tight-knit network of mutual aid and social solidarity. Marieta and other permaculture activists I interviewed emphasized that "we permaculturalists, we feel like a big family, like siblings. We love each other" (personal communication, 29 March 2016). Cuban permaculture also enlarges the definition of community and emphasizes the need for a fundamental perceptual shift in how individuals see themselves in relationship to the natural world and other people. It also focuses on a new way of living and designing one's life.

6. Cuban Permaculture, Spirituality, and Social Solidarity

An explicit emphasis on cooperation, social solidarity, and an expanded definition of community that includes the natural world has played an important role in the expansion of the permaculture movement in Cuba. As Birnbaum and Fox (2014, p. 55) note, the promotion of permaculture through FANJ has been deeply embedded within local communities and social movements. Some of these movements include religious groups and ecumenical centers. Through the training of local promotors, FANJ has networked directly with the Centro in Santiago. The Centro, founded by Pastor Elmer Lavastida Alfonso and his wife, the Reverend Gisela Pérez Muñiz, also has social welfare programs dedicated to permaculture, agroecology, food preservation, ecotheology, youth services, and caring for individuals with HIV/AIDS. Pastor Alfonso is the son of Bartolomé G. Lavastida-Díaz, founder of the Los Pinos Nuevos Bible School. The Los Pinos Nuevos Bible School started out as a nondenominational seminary, but today it is one of the largest denominations in Cuba and is considered the only national Protestant denomination (Esqueda 2007, pp. 18–19).

For promotors of permaculture who work with the Centro, the movement serves a vital social function: it encourages the formation of strong bonds of family and social solidarity through a network

of activists who share knowledge, resources, and their time and energy with one another. Heidi, who works with the Centro, stated during an interview on 28 March 2018 that a "spirituality" of solidarity and respect between individuals has been created within permaculture groups "because we have spaces where everyone comes together. It doesn't matter if you have food production in your system and I don't. It doesn't matter; all of us are under the common good (personal communication, 28 March 2016). This notion of a "common good" is indicative not only of the ethics and spirituality within permaculture, but of values that have been particularly important within specific Cuban contexts and geographical regions. The eastern provinces of Cuba, for example, are prone to additional natural disasters and issues beyond the general issues of the island as a whole. Permaculture activists tied to the Centro emphasized that the region of Santiago was facing water shortages and droughts that made the collection and filtration of water an essential feature of permaculture systems in the area.

According to a March 2016 website from Oxfam, the eastern regions of Santiago de Cuba, Guantanamo, and Baracoa have also been hit with a high frequency of seismic activity since January of 2016 (Oxfam 2016). Nilda, a permaculture activist who works with the Centro as a collaborator with the Food Preservation Program, showed me areas of her system that had been damaged during the last earthquake in January of 2016. Nilda also noted that Hurricane Sandy "had destroyed everything" in 2012, including her house (personal communication, 29 March 2016). Thanks to the knowledge that she had gained through permaculture, however, Nilda was better prepared because "the permaculturalists, we have seeds saved" (personal communication, 29 March 2016). Saving and sharing seeds with one another has not only encouraged the development of social solidarity within the Cuban permaculture movement; it has made it easier for permaculturalists to start growing food again after natural disasters.

The main ethical principles of permaculture (Caring for the Earth, Caring for People, and Sharing Resources) have served vital social and spiritual functions within the Cuban context for people from a variety of backgrounds. In terms of the social function of Cuban permaculture, the movement has (1) helped individuals collect, share, and save seeds in order to increase biodiversity within permaculture systems and encourage food security; and (2) created networks of permaculture activists who know one another and can help each other during difficult moments. These networks serve important functions within a context of material scarcity since the fall of the Soviet Union. The spiritual functions of Cuban permaculture are closely linked to the social functions of the movement, because Cuba's post-soviet cultural, political, and social changes have helped create the conditions for a search for spiritual fulfillment within society. The Cuban permaculture movement has created a spirituality that promotes a change of individual consciousness on the one hand, while also highlighting a social analysis that critiques overconsumption and the redistribution of resources on the other. This spirituality emphasizes themes of the common good and social solidarity and unites activists of different backgrounds and relationships to organized religion.

7. Conclusions

Social networks that address both the material and the spiritual needs of individuals have increased in recent years in Cuba, particularly since the fall of the Soviet Bloc. As Crahan (2015) notes, there are several reasons for this. One of them involves the fact that the state's ability to ensure basic needs has decreased, and religious and civil society organizations are stepping in to meet these needs. Second (and this point might be related to the first), there has been an increase in the "capacity, skills, and motivation to organize outside the realm of the state" (Crahan 2015, p. 92). As a holistic movement that addresses spiritual as well as material concerns, permaculture arrived in Cuba in the early 1990s and was able to spread because of these changes. When Cuban permaculture activists spoke of the need for a *cambio de mentalidad* (change of mentality), they were also pointing to this shift towards the development of an ecological consciousness. This change of mentality is rooted within critiques of overconsumption of the Earth's resources, as well as a critique of Cartesian dualism that separates human beings from nature.

Interviews with permaculture activists in this case study indicate that individuals are attracted to the permaculture movement because it is fulfilling an important social and spiritual function within the post-Soviet context. The close friendships of Cuban permaculturalists have contributed to the growth of the movement because individuals know that they are never alone; they are part of something bigger than themselves, and this contributes to a holistic vision of sustainability. Johnston (2013, p. 24) notes that it is helpful to separate out the idea of sustainability into several dimensions: the ecological dimension, where the realm of human activities is ecologically sustainable; the equity/equality dimensions, where resources are distributed fairly; and the efficiency dimension, where resources are allocated according to the first and second dimensions. All three of these dimensions are present within the Cuban permaculture movement, and qualitative interviews with activists indicate that individuals have been attracted to permaculture because these dimensions are addressed in a holistic way through social networks of solidarity.

Taylor (2010) identified, through numerous examples that included nature writers, radical environmentalists, scientists, and permaculture, examples of dark green religion. He acknowledges that although the momentum from trends of ecological destruction seems stronger than the movements that have arisen to resist them, dark green religion is capable of moving and influencing individuals because of its compelling stories and narratives (Taylor 2010, p. 219). The wide range of examples that Taylor provides are useful because they can help scholars broaden definitions of religion to include religious-resembling movements, rituals, beliefs, and practices. However, the relationships between religious-like movements that encourage the reverent care of nature and civil society deserve a deeper analysis.

Qualitative interviews with activists reveal that the Cuban permaculture movement contains multiple approaches to defining religion, spirituality, and connections to the sacred. Some of these approaches are tied to institutionalized religions such as varieties of Christianity, while others are connected to nature-based spiritualities and non-institutionalized religions. They include (1) perspectives that highlight the intrinsic value of non-human nature; (2) Creation Care narratives within institutionalized religions such as Christianity; (3) spiritualities connected to social welfare and a focus on the common good; and (4) holistic definitions of spirituality that focus on the concept of interdependence between all living things. Within some qualitative interviews, activists combined two or more of these different approaches as they described their relationships to permaculture, how they interpreted permaculture's ethical principles, and why they became involved with the movement.

Cuban permaculture is a religious-resembling movement that encourages the kind of change of consciousness that Taylor discusses within nature spiritualities and dark green religion. In addition to encouraging a *cambio de mentalidad*, however, it also provides a social critique of modern consumption and industrialized agricultural methods. For Taylor, dark green religion is rapidly growing and is as widespread as most traditional religions. However, "it has neither a priesthood nor institutions officially devoted to its promotion", even though it does have "institutional manifestations" (Taylor 2010, p. 217). In the Cuban case, however, permaculture does have an institution that is officially devoted to its promotion. FANJ, an NGO that has collaborated with multiple state institutions, international organizations, and religious groups, has played a fundamental role in the spread and promotion of the movement. This has created a spirituality that allows flexibility in perspectives about nature as sacred, critiques of consumption, a focus on social solidarity, and a view of the "New Cuban" that involves deep and affective bonds between human beings and the natural world. The Cuban case can encourage scholars to examine further the role that social and state institutions are playing within nature-based spiritualties throughout the world.

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Article

Should Governments Tax the Rich and Subsidize the Poor? A Comparative Study of Muslim and Christian Respondents

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Abstract: This study used the most recent World Values Survey (WVS) dataset to determine whether Christian and Muslim views on the acceptability of taxing the rich and subsidizing the poor was an essential feature of democracy. The sample size included more than 23,000 individuals from more than 50 countries. More than a dozen socioeconomic and attitudinal variables were also examined to determine whether significant differences existed. The study found that differences in viewpoint were often significant.

Keywords: religion; religiosity; ethics; redistribution; property rights; economic inequality; government; subsidy; tax; public finance

1. Introduction

One of the most basic questions of political philosophy is the proper role of government. Should it merely protect the right to life, liberty, and property (the night watchman state), or should it perform other functions, such as the redistribution of wealth? The World Values Survey (WVS) included a question in its most recent wave of surveys asking whether taxing the rich and subsidizing the poor was considered to be an essential feature of democracy. The present study uses that dataset to determine whether views on this question differ based on religion. Muslim and Christian views were examined, along with several other demographic variables, to determine whether the differences of opinion on this issue were significant.

The study begins with a discussion of the theoretical background to the issue of wealth redistribution. The economics, political science and, philosophical literature were examined, and it was found that there are two basic views on this issue. One view, the minarchist view, holds that the only legitimate functions of government are the protection of life, liberty, and property. All other governmental functions are viewed as illegitimate because any other functions must necessarily involve the violation of someone's property rights. The other view is that the proper functions of government are not limited to the protection of life, liberty, and property, but may also include functions that result in the redistribution of wealth.

Rights theory holds that any redistribution of wealth that involves the violation of property rights is an inappropriate policy (McGee 1998a, 1998b, 2004; Nozick 1974; Rothbard 2003). Utilitarian theory holds that redistribution of wealth is an inappropriate policy if the result is a net loss to society, or a negative-sum game (Blum and Kalven 1952; McGee 2004). The results of the present survey indicate that most respondents either ignored these views or rejected them.

Part 3 discusses the methodology, which involved the gathering, interpretation, and analysis of the data gathered by many researchers in more than 50 countries as part of the most recent WVS wave. Part 4 provides the results of the present study. Part 5 presents a discussion and conclusions.

2. Theoretical Background

The theoretical literature on the morality, economics, and politics of taxation is more sophisticated than the analysis we offer in the present paper. However, the intent of this paper is to determine the attitude of individuals on the justification of using the coercive power of government to redistribute wealth. It is not a paper on economics, politics, philosophy, public finance (taxation), or morality. Thus, a more sophisticated discussion on taxation is not called for in the present paper. We merely review some of the relevant literature to set the foundation for the later discussion and to inform the reader of the main views on the issue.

The view that the rich should be taxed to subsidize the poor incorporates several related strains of thought. (Marx [1875] 2010) suggested that individuals should be taxed according to their ability to pay, and recipients of the tax funds should receive based on their needs. Incorporated in this belief is the view that the rich should pay more taxes than the poor, not only in absolute amount, but also as a percentage of income (Jones 2002; McGee 1998b, 2004; Musgrave 1959, 1986, 2002; Rawls 1971) because of the belief that they have more ability to pay (Crowe 1944; McGee 1998a, 2004; Musgrave 1959, 1986). A related belief is that everyone should pay their fair share (Crowe 1944; McGee 1999, 2012; Morris 2012), since not doing so—paying less than one's fair share—would result in some individuals or groups subsidizing the benefits of other individuals or groups.

This belief applies not only for individuals within the same country, but also throughout the world community. Pope Francis (2015) has stated that it is a moral duty to redistribute wealth from the richer countries to the poorer countries. His view incorporates the belief that the unequal distribution of income needs to be reduced (Steil et al. 2014). Those who advocate social justice also advocate reducing income inequality, both at the national level and internationally (Galasso and Wood 2015; OECD 2008, 2012).

All of these interrelated views have been criticized. The most basic criticism, which applies to all these strains of thought, is that force would need to be used to achieve this goal. Another criticism, one that incorporates both economic theory and history, is that the goal of reducing income inequality by transferring wealth from the rich to the poor cannot be achieved in reality unless everyone is made equally poor. Voluntary, market-based policies to reduce income inequality have been suggested (Deaton 2017; Early 2018; Meyer and Sullivan 2018; Swagel and Boruchowitz 2017; Tanner 2016), but most policy makers have not done much to implement these suggestions.

Another criticism addresses the moral justification for using force to redistribute income. Pope Francis was guilty of this philosophical flaw when he advocated the forcible redistribution of wealth. Some people state that Jesus was a socialist because he advocated the redistribution of wealth. However, the flaw in this line of reasoning is that Jesus never advocated the *forcible* redistribution of wealth. He never advocated confiscating the wealth of some individuals and redistributing it to others. Perhaps there is a moral duty to give to the poor or to assist individuals who need help, but it does not follow that force must be used to accomplish the wealth transfer. Making the *force* argument involves a non sequitur—poor individuals need to receive more resources; therefore, force must be used to accomplish the transfer. The goal may be achieved in other ways, such as voluntary wealth transfers or providing more opportunities for the poor to become less poor by adopting policies that foster wealth creation.

Both Christians and Muslims believe that there is some moral duty to assist those who are less fortunate. Some (but not all) Christians believe in tithing, or giving a portion of their income to the less fortunate, either directly or indirectly. Some Muslims believe in zakat, the voluntary distribution of a portion of their wealth to help the less fortunate. However, both tithing and zakat are voluntary acts. They do not involve force. The present study does not examine views on the voluntary redistribution

of wealth[1]. It limits its examination to the view that the forcible redistribution of wealth is morally justifiable in a democracy.

Then there is the utilitarian economic argument against the forcible redistribution of wealth. If the government penalizes an activity, you will get less of it; if the government subsidizes an activity, you will get more of it. In other words, taxing the rich will lead rich people at the margin to create less wealth, and subsidizing poor people will give some of them less incentive to become less poor by working (Blum and Kalven 1952).

There is a widespread belief among Christian clergy that there is nothing morally wrong with the graduated income tax. In one survey, 88% of ministers believed there was nothing morally wrong with it, while only 6% thought there was something morally wrong with it (Jones 2002, p. 101). Among the nearly 500 clergy who were asked the following question, 64% disagreed; only 23% agreed (Jones 2002, p. 101). It is said that taxing the rich to help the poor through government welfare is against Christian (ethical) principles, because it removes the voluntary aspect of true charity.

It is said that taxing the rich to help the poor through government welfare is against Christian (ethical) principles, because it removes the voluntary aspect of true charity. Where there is no choice (because of coercion), there can be no morality. Morality or immorality can exist only in situations where there is choice. Thus, it cannot be said that using tax revenue to redistribute wealth to the poor is a moral act (McGee 2004).

It is a basic principle of moral philosophy that morality can exist only where there is choice. Where there is no choice, it is not possible to act morally or immorally (McGee 2004). Thus, the majority view of the clergy in that survey was in conflict with the basic principles of moral philosophy. The counter argument to this view might be that, in a democracy, the people have consented to be taxed and have delegated the specifics of the process to their elected representatives. The problem with this argument, as Lysander Spooner pointed out more than 100 years ago, is that not everyone consents to every act of their elected representatives, even if they voted for that particular representative, and even less so in the many cases where a particular individual did not vote for the representative who is making the policy (Spooner 1870).

Robert Nozick (1974) believed that there is no one more entitled to the income than the individual who earned it. Walter Williams addressed the entitlement argument—the view that some individuals or groups of people have a moral claim on the assets of other individuals or groups—as follows.

> *"But let me offer you my definition of social justice: I keep what I earn and you keep what you earn. Do you disagree? Well then tell me how much of what I earn belongs to you—and why?"* (Williams 1987, p. 62).

Bastiat (1968, p. 21) addressed the redistribution concept a different way in the 1840s. His basic argument was that no government may justifiably engage in any activity that individuals may not engage in. The establishment of government does not result in waiving a magic wand to justify an act that would be a crime if done by individuals. For example, an individual using force to take one person's assets to give them to another person (or to keep them for himself) would be a crime. A group of individuals who form a government and use force to take one person's assets and give them to another person or group of persons cannot say that it is not a crime just because it is a group that does the confiscation rather than an individual.

One tenet of political philosophy that has received widespread acceptance is that the legitimate functions of government include the protection of life, liberty and, property (Bastiat 1968; Locke 1988). Disagreements are spawned when one asks whether governments have any additional legitimate functions, or whether their legitimate functions are limited to these three. Those who believe that

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[1] Taking historical perspective, both tithing and zakat were not voluntary. So this point might also well have a bearing on contemporary views on coercive redistribution.

legitimate governments are limited to these three functions are often referred to as minarchists, or advocates of the night watchman state (Bastiat 1968; Nozick 1974). Those who believe that governments have additional functions are sometimes referred to as advocates of the welfare state.

One additional function that some political philosophers believe is legitimate is the redistribution of income. However, governments that engage in redistribution must necessarily violate the property rights of some members of society in order to have something to distribute to others, a function that has been criticized (Hoppe 2001; Rothbard 2003).

The present paper examines the popularity of the view that allowing government to redistribute assets from those who have more to those who have less constitutes a legitimate function of government. Muslim and Christian views were examined and compared.

A few prior studies have examined this issue from a secular perspective where religious views were not examined in depth. Thus, the present paper expands on the limited current literature on this issue.

McGee (2016a) measured the strength of the belief that it is an essential element of democracy to tax the rich and subsidize the poor. His sample population was from the United States using the WVS data from Wave 6 (World Values Survey 2010), which is the most recent wave. The survey used a 10-point Likert Scale where 1 = not an essential characteristic of democracy and 10 = an essential characteristic of democracy. The overall mean score was 5.04, which indicated a fairly strong belief that wealth redistribution was an acceptable function of government.

He also examined some demographic variables. Women were found to be significantly more in favor of wealth redistribution than men. Mean scores declined with age, meaning that opposition to wealth redistribution increased with age. Married individuals were most opposed to wealth redistribution; separated individuals were least opposed. In terms of social class, the two lower social classes were least opposed to asset confiscation (redistribution), while the three upper classes were most opposed.

The relationship between education level and opposition to redistribution was curvilinear. Those with no formal education were most opposed to redistribution, whereas primary school dropouts were least opposed. Those having at least some college education were more opposed to redistribution than were those with less education.

Mean scores by geographic region were examined to determine whether this demographic variable was significant. It was. The ethnicity variable was also examined. The non-Hispanic white group was most opposed to redistribution, whereas the black non-Hispanic group was least opposed.

McGee (2016a, 2016b) also conducted studies of 59 and 60 countries using the same WVS dataset. He ranked countries based on the extent of their opposition to redistribution. The Brazilian sample was most strongly opposed to redistribution, but, with a mean score of 4.51, there was a great deal of support for this policy. Pakistan was least opposed to redistribution, with a mean score of 8.69.

McGee and Yoon (2018) published a study of South Korean opinion using the same WVS data. South Korea ranked 54 out of 60 countries, meaning it was far less opposed to redistribution than were most countries included in the dataset, with a mean score of 7.44. Male and female opinions did not differ significantly on the issue.

The differences in mean score for the three age groups was only weakly significant, with the youngest group somewhat more in favor of redistribution (at the 10% level) than the middle group (30–to 49 years old).

McGee et al. (2018) conducted a similar survey of German opinion. The German sample ranked 45 out of 60 countries in the WVS dataset, with a mean score of 6.95, indicating strong support for redistribution. Male and female opinions on the issue were not significantly different. Support for redistribution grew with age, meaning older people were more supportive of redistribution than were younger people. Single individuals showed the least support for redistribution; separated individuals showed the strongest support.

For the social class demographic, there were no significant differences in view. No clear pattern was evident for the education variable. Orthodox Christians showed the weakest support for

redistribution; Roman Catholics showed the strongest support for it. The Asian group showed the least support; the African group showed the strongest support for it. Some geographic regions had significantly different degrees of support for redistribution than others. Mean scores declined between 2006 and 2013, indicating that support for redistribution has declined over time.

3. Methodology and Data

3.1. The Sample

For the purpose of this paper, data were derived from the most recent wave of the WVS, conducted in the period of 2010 to 2014. The survey was administered to facilitate cross-national and religious comparison of basic values in a wide range of concerns and carried out through face-to-face interviews. The wording of the questions, answers, and sequencing were identical in all local languages. The last version of the survey is referred to as Wave 6, which collected data from 57 countries with more than 85,000 respondents. This study was focused on only two different religions: Christianity and Islam. This choice resulted in a substantial reduction of the sample size to 23,103 observations. Both dependent and independent variables for the analysis were constructed based on the relevant WVS questions.

3.2. The Dependent Variable

The dependent variable of attitudes on whether it is proper in a democracy to tax the rich and distribute the wealth to the poor. The question asked: "*Many things are desirable, but not all of them are essential characteristics of democracy. Please tell me for each of the following things how essential you think it is as a characteristic of democracy*". Use this scale where 1 means "not at all an essential characteristic of democracy" and 10 means it definitely is "an essential characteristic of democracy": Governments tax the rich and subsidize the poor. For binary logistic regression analysis, the 10-point scale responses converted into dichotomous variables with 0 being "not at all an essential characteristic of democracy" and "an essential characteristic of democracy" as 1 otherwise.

3.3. The Independent Variables

In this paper there are several variables included as control variables in the analysis. These variables, accordingly, were classified into four groups: Socioeconomic variables, social bond variables, attitudinal variables, and religiosity variables.

Socioeconomic variables: Six variables were included in the analysis. Age was measured as a respondent's reported age in the year of the survey. Gender was a binary variable where male = 0 and female = 1. Education level was assessed with the available data in the survey as an ordinal variable, where no formal education = 1 and University-level education with a degree = 9. Social class was assessed with a single item (reverse coded): "People sometimes describe themselves as belonging to one of the range of responses used to lower class = 1 to upper class = 5." Degree of literacy was a binary variable where illiterate = 0 and literate = 1. Scale of income was assessed with subjective judgment about the respondent's own relative standing where lowest group = 1 and highest group for the socioeconomic status = 10.

Social bond variables: Three social bond variables were included in the analysis. Marriage was a dummy variable where married, living together as married, and widowed = 1; all other non-marital statuses = 0. Employment status was measured as a dichotomized variable where paid employment, retired/pensioned, housewife, and student = 1; unemployed = 0. Sector of employment was measured as a dichotomized variable where government or public institution = 1 and private business or industry, private non-profit organization, and other (autonomous/informal) sector = 0.

Attitudinal variables: Five attitudinal variables were included in the analysis. Happiness was assessed with a single item (reverse coded): "Taking all things considered, would you say you are not at all happy = 1, not very happy = 2, quite happy = 3, and very happy = 4". Political scale was measured by the item: "In political matters, people talk of "the left" and "the right." How would

you place your views on this scale, generally speaking?" The range of responses used a 10-point Likert Scale where Left = 1 and Right = 10. Government responsibility was assessed with by item: "How would you place your views on this scale? The range of responses used a 10-point Likert Scale where Government should take more responsibility to ensure that everyone is provided for = 1 and people should take more responsibility to provide for themselves = 10." Importance of democracy was measured with a single item: "How important is it for you to live in a country that is governed democratically? The range of responses used a 10-point Likert Scale where not at all important = 1 and absolutely important = 10." Confidence in government was assessed with a single item (reverse coded): "How much confidence do you have in government? Not at all = 1, Not very much = 2, Quite a lot = 3, and a great deal = 4."

Religiosity variables: Four religiosity variables were included in the analysis. Religious person was measured as a dichotomized item: Independently of whether you attend religious services or not, would you say you are? A religious person = 1 and not a religious person and an atheist = 0. Belief in God was assessed with a binary item: Yes = 1 and No = 0. God Importance was measured with by item: "How important is God in your life? The range of responses used a 10-point Likert Scale where not at all important = 1 to very important = 10." Praying was assessed with the item (reverse coded): "Apart from weddings and funerals, about how often do you pray? Never, practically never = 1, less often = 2, once a year = 3, only on special holy days = 4, only when attending religious services = 5, several times each week = 6, once a day = 7, and several times a day = 8."

4. Results

Table 1 shows the results of the descriptive analyses of all the variables in this study. The Christian sample consists of Anglican, Armenian Apostolic Church, Assembly of God, Baptist, Evangelical, Jehovah Witnesses, Orthodox, Pentecostal, Presbyterian, Protestant, Roman Catholic, The Church of Sweden, Dutch Reformed, and Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. The Muslim sample consists of Shia, Sunni, and Muslim[2].

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics.

Variables	Christian (N = 16,776)			Muslim (N = 6336)		
	Range	Mean	SD	Range	Mean	SD
Dependent Variable						
Should Governments tax the rich and subsidize the poor?	0–1	0.89	0.312	0–1	0.88	0.314
Not at all an essential characteristic of democracy	1807 (10.77%)			772 (12.18%)		
An essential characteristic of democracy	14,969 (89.23%)			5564 (87.82%)		
Independent variables						
Age		43.03	2.954		39.08	13.426
Gender (Female = 1)		0.52	0.499		0.40	0.490
Education Level		5.89	2.250		5.97	2.332
Social Class		2.70	0.992		2.91	1.014
Literacy (Literate = 1)		0.97	0.179		0.94	0.239
Scale of Income		4.75	2.033		5.44	1.993
Marital Status (Married = 1)		0.71	0.455		0.75	0.435
Employment (Employed = 1)		0.91	0.280		0.95	0.212
Sector of Employment (Government = 1)		0.30	0.457		0.36	0.481
Happiness		3.16	0.742		3.25	0.718
Political Scale		5.65	2.312		6.26	2.356
Government Responsibility		4.41	2.873		4.73	3.029
Importance of Democracy		8.36	2.031		8.26	2.026
Confidence in Government		2.38	0.905		2.64	0.995
Religious person (Religiosity Person = 1)		0.80	0.402		0.75	0.432
Believe in God (Yes = 1)		0.94	0.245		0.99	0.108
God importance		8.08	2.509		8.96	1.885
Praying		5.71	2.245		5.99	2.487

[2] In the World Values Survey (WVS), some of the Muslim respondents express themselves as Sunni, Shia, or only Muslim.

In Table 2, we investigate how the answers of the dependent variable "should governments tax the rich and subsidize the poor?" is affected by all mentioned covariates in two aspects, that is, both Christian and Muslim. The first column highlights the results of explanatory variables in predicting Christian responses while the second column is for Muslim. The first column shows the thirteen variables which are Age, Gender, Education Level, Social Class, Literacy, Scale of Income, Employment, Happiness, Government Responsibility, Importance of Democracy, Religious person, God importance and Praying were significantly associated with the dependent variable.

Table 2. Binary Logistic Regression Results for Christian and Muslim Responses.

Variables	_Christian_			___Muslim___		
	b (SE)	Exp (b)	VIF	b (SE)	Exp (b)	VIF
Constant	2.995(0.273)	19.982 ***		1.327(0.480)	3.768 **	
Age	0.007(0.002)	1.007 ***	1.297	0.002(0.003)	1.002	1.308
Gender (Female = 1)	0.112(0.051)	1.119 *	1.033	−0.197(0.080)	0.821 *	1.029
Education Level	0.011(0.013)	1.011	1.359	0.028(0.020)	1.029	1.553
Social Class	−0.025(0.029)	0.975	1.341	−0.080(0.043)	0.923	1.332
Literacy (Literate = 1)	0.298(0.130)	1.347 *	1.107	0.085(0.179)	1.089	1.295
Scale of Income	0.030(0.014)	1.031 *	1.304	0.056(0.021)	1.058 **	1.222
Marital Status (Married = 1)	−0.020(0.059)	0.980	1.165	−0.058(0.101)	0.944	1.260
Employment (Employed = 1)	−0.005(0.088)	0.995	1.042	0.371(0.164)	1.449 *	1.021
Sector of Employment (Government = 1)	0.183(0.062)	1.201 **	1.157	−0.401(0.084)	0.669 ***	1.150
Happiness	−0.123(0.036)	0.884 **	1.097	−0.069(0.056)	0.933	1.060
Political Scale	−0.033(0.011)	0.968 **	1.051	−0.022(0.017)	0.978	1.056
Government Responsibility	0.002(0.009)	1.002	1.053	0.004(0.013)	1.004	1.048
Importance of Democracy	−0.027(0.013)	0.974 *	1.040	0.022(0.019)	1.022	1.064
Confidence in Government	0.097(0.028)	1.101 **	1.031	−0.020(0.040)	0.980	1.071
Religious person (Religiosity Person = 1)	−0.071(0.016)	0.932 ***	1.405	0.007(0.019)	1.007	1.210
Believe in God (Yes = 1)	−0.061(0.079)	0.941	1.411	−0.276(0.100)	0.758 **	1.063
God importance	0.348(0.139)	1.416 *	1.793	0.322(0.332)	1.379	1.138
Praying	−0.125(0.015)	0.882 ***	1.551	0.029(0.020)	1.029	1.284
Psuedo R^2 (Nagelkerke)		0.037			0.020	
R^2 (Cox & Snell)		0.018			0.010	

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$.

Results for Christian responses: According to the socioeconomic variables, the elderly, females, respondents who were literate people and at a higher scale of income tended to accept the idea that governments taxing the rich and subsidizing the poor was an essential characteristic of democracy. In the social bond variables, there was only one statistical significance in respondents who were employed for governments accept that governments tax the rich and subsidize the poor as a characteristic of democracy. In the attitudinal variables, the respondents with lower scores in happiness, left side of political scale, lower score for importance of democracy, and a higher score for confidence in government think positively about the legitimacy of the policy of democracy to tax the rich and subsidize the poor. Finally, when it comes to the religiosity variables, the respondents who had higher scores in the God importance variable, a lower score in praying and not religiosity, and/or atheist person were significantly more receptive to the idea that taxing the rich and subsidizing the poor was an essential characteristic of democracy.

Results for Muslim responses: According to the socioeconomic variables, males and respondents who rated themselves in a higher scale of income tended to report accepting that governments tax the rich and subsidize the poor as a characteristic of democracy. In the social bond variables, the employed people and respondents who were employed for governments tended to believe that governments should tax the rich and subsidize the poor. In the attitudinal variables, none of the attitudinal variables were statistically significant. Lastly, in the religiosity variables, the respondents who believe in God people were significantly more opposed to the idea that taxing the rich and subsidizing the poor was an essential characteristic of democracy.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

If any conclusion can be drawn, it is that demographic differences are sometimes significant when it comes to attitude toward taxing the rich and subsidizing the poor. This topic is highly interdisciplinary. There are religious, historical, political, philosophical, and sociological reasons for the differences of opinion on this issue. The present study could not examine the various reasons behind these differences due to the nature of the sample. The WVS data gatherers were not able to ask for the reasoning behind the more than 200 questions that were asked in the survey due to time and other resource constraints, which makes it impossible to dig far beneath the surface to determine why certain individuals hold the views they hold on the question of wealth redistribution. However, future studies could examine all these reasons and sub-issues using a smaller survey and a smaller sample size.

Several future studies are possible on the religion issue alone. In the present study, individuals of the same religion were assessed together regardless of country. It is reasonable to expect that Roman Catholics from Latin America might hold views that are significantly different from the views of Roman Catholics in Europe, North America, Africa, Asia, or Oceania. It is also quite possible that Protestants and Roman Catholics in the same country might hold significantly different views, as might various Protestant sub-groups. It is entirely possible that Baptists in the United States, for example, might hold views that are significantly different from those of Presbyterians or Lutherans in the same country.

Likewise, Muslims who live in Indonesia might hold views that are significantly different from those held by Muslims in Egypt, Turkey, or Iraq. Sunni Muslims might hold different views than Shia Muslims.

Differences in other demographic variables might also be explored. Do Muslim women and Muslim men have the same opinion on this issue? Roman Catholic men and women? Prior studies (McGee 2012) using the WVS data for other issues such as bribery or tax evasion have found that male and female opinions sometimes differ significantly within the same country and/or religion. The same might be true for the issue of the appropriateness of forcible income redistribution.

Sometimes variables such as gender, age, education level, social class, marital status, and so forth make a difference and sometimes they do not make any significant difference. Several additional studies could be made to determine why differences are significant in some cases but not in others.

There is also room for more theoretical studies on the issues raised in the present paper. If forcible redistribution of wealth is an essential feature of democracy, why is it an essential feature of democracy? If rights theory or utilitarian theory should be ignored, rejected, or discounted, what theory should replace them? If the forcible redistribution of wealth is appropriate or inappropriate for a democracy, would it also be appropriate or inappropriate for governments that are not democratic?

There are numerous other studies that could be spun off from the present study. This study could be used as a model or template for those future studies.

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Reflections on the Evolution of the State of the Art

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Abstract: Reflections on the evolution of the state of the art in the study of religion, society, and politics in Latin America over the last five decades begin with a critical assessment of the conventional wisdom of fifty years ago, as conveyed in texts and in graduate education. Stress was placed on modernization and secularization (with religion depicted as static and destined to decline) on consensus as a foundation for social life, and on drawing clear lines between religion and politics. These concepts were of little use when confronted in the late 1960s with a reality of continuous change, conflict, and efforts from left and right to assert a public role for religion. Working concepts of religion and politics had to be broadened well beyond church and state. Conceptual space had to be found for religious pluralism as the emergence of Pentecostal and evangelical churches was putting an end to centuries of Catholic monopoly: Latin America was becoming religiously plural. The state of the art is now much improved. Current and future research could usefully focus attention on issues like sexuality, gender, and identity, spirituality and encounters with charismatic power, and the new realities of religion and violence. Mid-range theories that give prominence to change and to the relation among social levels, and mixed methodologies that highlight meaning and significance will be central to any future state of the art that can make sense of a reality marked by continuing waves of creative change.

Keywords: Latin America; religion; politics; methodology; theory

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These are personal reflections on my experience with the state of the art of the study of religion, society, and politics in Latin America over more than 50 years of research and publication. I am a scholar of North American origins and training, but also deeply affected by European and Latin American scholarship. I happily acknowledge my debt to Latin American colleagues and students, many of whom are cited in the Bibliography. I discuss how I had to unlearn what I had been taught in graduate school in order to see and understand what I encountered once on the ground. I then ask if we are better now than we were five decades ago, better prepared to grasp and explain a reality marked by successive waves of change. A third section suggests elements for an agenda for future work. I close with brief reflections on theory and method.

1. Unlearning in Order to Learn

I first set foot in Latin America over 50 years ago. I came directly from graduate education (London School of Economics and Yale University), where I had been schooled in the conventional wisdom of the time. Central concepts included modernization and secularization which were presumed to evolve together in a progressive and irreversible process of "development." From this perspective, religion was a fossil, static and destined in the long run to disappear in the face of advancing science and education, and in the short run to lose members and public position. It was the perfect representative of "tradition" as opposed to "modernity."

Once I hit the ground, I encountered a very different reality. These were times of great change in religion and in the churches. The Catholic Church was just beginning to grapple with the impacts of the Second Vatican Council (1962–65), the regional bishops' meetings at Medellin Colombia (1968), the first stirrings of the theology of liberation, and the emergence of activist social movements of both

the Catholic left and right in various countries.[1] It was also possible to see the beginnings of the surge of evangelical and Pentecostal churches, soon to become a major wave that would transform religious life and practice throughout the region, and change forever the presence of religion in the public sphere (Cox 1995; Oro and Saman 2000; Chesnut 2003, 1997; Parker 2005; Steigenga 2001; Steigenga and Cleary 2007; Stoll 1990).

I still have a photograph (Figure 1) I took in Guatemala in 1968, in the indigenous village of Solalá, perched above the shores of Lake Atitlán. The photo shows a preacher, speaking in the midst of the weekly market. The market was in full swing, with people buying, selling, and visiting one another. In the midst of all this activity, the preacher was standing, in front of a large hand-painted canvas that depicted heaven and hell, the path of the just and of the damned, all illustrated with vivid images and biblical citations. I kept the photo for many years as a lovely and interesting image, but without grasping its full significance. This preacher was a real precursor, a sign of what was to come. Now we meet his successors in any public square, train or bus station or simply on the corner or sidewalk, preaching with a megaphone, handing out pamphlets, inviting passersby to meetings, building churches and communities. The example of the Guatemalan preacher, the precursor, underscores a central point in any effort to evaluate the state of the art in the study of religion society and politics. The point is that reality comes first: theory follows, often with a notable time lag. Reality changes continually; theory has to catch up. What this means for students of reality is that we must always be open to being surprised, ready to accept things that don't fit into our preconceived schemes. We need to work with the new realities that press themselves on us, and then try to make sense of them, building a new and consistent theory.

Figure 1. Solalá, Guatrmala, 1968, photo by author.

It is now more than obvious that, instead of fading away, in much of the world religion is now vigorous, dynamic, and creative. Far from being static, religions everywhere change continually in

[1] On the impact of Vatican II and Medellin see (Levine 2012).

form and expression. Far from limiting themselves to the personal and private, they actively claim a role in public life. Moreover, in Latin America it is no longer possible to speak of "the church". Now there are many churches and religiously linked movements of all kinds competing for members, resources, and a visible and legitimate place in public life. It has been commonplace to talk about this in terms of a "resurgence of religion" but it would be more accurate to see it as a reordering or reorganization of long-standing relationships. Religion has always been present: what has changed are the voices, the actors, the leaders and followers, the social location of movements and of conflicts, the forms and speed of communication, the issues and forms of expression that move people and which they see as proper and legitimate.

I am a political scientist by training, and in my discipline it was common in those early years to stress the need for clear lines between "religion" and "politics" (identified for all practical purposes with "church" and "state"). The concept of "politicization of religion" was in common use, as if there existed a thermometer the could measure the level of such politicization: high was taken to be bad, low good. To be sure, seeing the process from another angle, it would have been possible and useful to search not for lines of separation or levels of politicization (if it were even possible to find a measure) but rather for syntheses, asking who was active, with what goals, what resources, which allies, where and under what specific conditions, and so forth. These are good questions, but in my case they came later, under the impact of experience that differed radically from what my education and training had led me to expect.

A few years after my initial encounter with Latin American reality, I organized and carried out a comparative study of religion, society, and politics based on field work in Colombia and Venezuela. I interviewed 60 Catholic bishops and carried out extensive field studies in different regions and levels in the two countries. The idea was to compare contrasting cases of the Catholic Church facing the modern world and reacting to change. The working assumption was that the sources of change were external to religious life and to the churches as institutions. Once again, reality had surprises in store for me: I encountered a Catholic Church in ferment, with intense internal debates. Change and conflict were not impelled only by reaction to external pressures, but also and notably as a result of internal transformations, debates about ideas and conflicts between groups within the church, above all concerning the proper social and political role of religion, of formal institutions and more generally of people of faith.

Just a few years earlier in Colombia, Camilo Torres, the guerrilla priest, had been killed in combat with the army and buried in an unmarked grave. Torres had famously written of revolution as a "christian imperative" and saw bearing arms as an act of charity in the pursuit of justice (Levine 2011) This was also the time of the Movement of Christians for Socialism in Chile, the Movement of Third World Priests in Argentina, along similar groups in many countries, not to mention those on the right. Also around this time the first major works of liberation theology began to appear. Among other things, liberation theology flat out rejects the idea of separation of religion from politics. Neutrality was seen as an illusion: a convenient excuse for continuing to affirm the established order. Far from searching for ways out of politics, at issue were new efforts entering the political sphere, no longer in terms of elite influences or partisan politics, but rather in pursuit of basic changes in the structure of power that kept injustice in place (Gutierrez 1971).

All this affected me like an alarm clock. It opened my eyes and made me see things from a wholly different perspective. It was time to wake up and to rethink. My formal preparation had left me innocent of the change under way and lacking theoretical and methodological tools to make sense of the reality I was encountering every day. I had to rethink the assumption that change in religion stemmed primarily from reaction to external pressures, I had to rethink the assumption that the separation of religion from politics was logical, desirable, and in any case an inevitable consequence of "modernization". In sum, I had to rethink what I had been taught. I had to unlearn in order to be able to learn anything valid and reliable about religion, society, and politics. Other theories and other methods had to be found.

As a first step, I had to free myself from dominant theories of modernization and secularization. I confess that I have never been much convinced by theories of modernization. They struck me as too neat, too linear, and I did not believe in its supposed inevitability. There was a lot of talk in the 1960s about "take off" to modernization, when we all know that take off is no guarantee of a smooth flight. Since that time, throughout my professional life I have preferred to work with more basic concepts—ideas, organizations, power, and conflict—and to see where they lead me. The concept of secularization was also of little help, at least in its most common and crude form, limited to the separation of institutions and the supposedly inevitable process of reducing religion to the private and personal, and to ultimate disappearance in the face of science and education. What I found instead was something more complicated and more interesting: a process of growing individual and group autonomy that came hand in hand with waves of creative innovation in religion.

The existing bibliography was of little or no help. At that time, the great majority of available work on these issues was by historians, for the most part working in a traditional vein. With rare exceptions, these works took a narrative approach, focused on church and state and the formal declarations or positions of leaders. The basic data were documents and legal accords, and the result was a narrowly institutional and formal approach. The criteria for selection of data (rarely stated explicitly) was whether or not something had to do with formal and legal church–state issues.[2] The state of the art of the sociology of religion was also not of much help. At that time, much work remained excessively formal, and at least in the United States it was dominated by functionalist assumptions which made consensus a basic element for modernization. A good example was the work of Ivan Vallier (1970) Vallier had the virtue of going beyond documents and institutions and collecting systematic empirical data on the attitudes of contemporary Catholic leaders. His work was innovative and influenced a generation of students of the issues. The problem was that his basic thesis hinged on the need for consensus and withdrawal from politics in common pursuit of "development" at the very moment when pressures were rising on all sides to mobilize for political action, sometimes to pursue radical change, in others to support the existing order. Concepts of consensus turn out not to be of much help in times of conflict.[3]

As noted earlier, it was also necessary to rethink basic concepts of "religion" and "politics". Just as politics cannot be limited solely to governments or formal channels like elections or regulations, in the same measure, religion cannot be limited to the formal structures of the churches. It was and it remains a fatal error to identify religion and politics narrowly with "church and state". The formal institutions of church and states are of course important—they control resources and continue to command loyalties, although exactly how and in what measure remains an empirical question. But much more is at stake, and it was essential to find ways to open up the field of study, to look beyond the confines of both churches and states to ordinary behavior. We cannot be content with documents alone: most people don't read church documents. We need to examine how messages are transmitted and received, and how individuals and groups organize themselves to understand and act in and on the world.

In my experience, it is a mistake to assume that religion can be easily translated into a single, monolithic position in society and politics. There are always multiple positions, and who ends up speaking in the name of "religion" is a matter of contestation, and thus of power. It cannot be settled by definition. Indeed, if we locate the question of the political orientation of "religion" in a historical and comparative context, it becomes clear that religion is something like an empty vessel, a space that has been filled over the years with a wide range of positions, from the revolutionary tendencies of the English Puritans (who cut off the head of a king after a civil war) or of Camilo Torres or Chile's Christians for Socialism to the conservative extreme of movements like Tradition, Family and Property and everywhere in between. The role of the African American churches in the Civil Rights movement

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2 For a recent example of this kind of work, see (Schwaller 2011).

3 Vallier did his field studies in Chile and was much influenced by the ideas of Christian Democracy, in power in that country from 1964 to 1970.

(Branch 1986, 1998, 2006; Morris 1984; Harris 1999) is mirrored by the resurgent religious right in the U.S., now locked in a political embrace with Donald Trump: difficult to make sense of but a fact nonetheless.

In sum, my initial research in Colombia and Venezuela reality quickly showed me that it was necessary to study and understand the process from another angle. I wanted to get beyond leaders and documents, beyond what theologians or historians wrote. I wanted to know how ideas got to people, who carried them, in what form, and with what consequences for personal and collective behavior. My goal was to understand the process from within and to examine, in so far as possible, how actors themselves, elites and ordinary people, understood the process and organized themselves to act, with what goals, which values, what legitimating principles, and what organizational models.

In theoretical terms, I took the creation of meaning as a central focus, trying to grasp what actions and commitments meant to those involved. This means not to see them only in the light of my own preconceived questions (and then decide that they were ill-informed if they did not respond in the same terms) but rather to try to enter into the reality of others, using their words, their categories of analysis (Weber 1978b). It is not easy to do this, and many would say that it is impossible. But I believe that it is not necessary to become the other to nonetheless make progress in understanding the other making sense of the rules and values by which they live. Along with my interviews with bishops and formal organizations, I dug deep into current debates, I read theology for the first time, I interviewed pastoral agents of all kinds, I observed numerous community meetings, and I studied the history of organizations (Levine 1981).

In a subsequent work, a decade later, I turned the process upside down, working "from below" to understand the ordinary life of religious communities and then examine their connection to institutions. I did extensive field work with Christian base communities (in Spanish, *comunidades eclesiales de base*, or CEBS) in distinct regions and localities, once again in Colombia and Venezuela. I spent the better part of three years traveling in the cities and countryside of the two countries, in *barrios* and small villages, swallowing dust on rural buses. I went where I was told that no one ever went, I did interviews that I was told could not be done. I did life histories, I sat in on community meetings. I ended up with more than 3000 pages of interview transcript and field notes, which formed the basis of my *Popular Voice in Latin American Catholicism* (Levine 1992). This was research for someone young and robust as I was at the time, at least in relative terms. I would not be able to do it now.

For intellectual nourishment, I returned to an early interest in the sociology of knowledge, asking why, how, where, and under what conditions ideas arise and have an impact on behavior, an impact that lasts and consolidates. This kind of work requires entering fully into the context, not depending on data collected by others. This cannot be done by relying on an existing data bank: you have to be present, observe, and talk with people.[4] So I began to educate myself, to learn the language of religion, and to understand how perceptions, judgments, and models of organization were formed. I tried to situate work, as Mills (1959) suggests, in the space between biography and history, with emphasis in the connections across levels.[5] In the end, I did manage to unlearn much of what I had been taught, and to acquire new perspectives that I was able to put to use throughout my scholarly career.

I go into all this autobiographical detail to underscore once again the lesson of the Guatemalan preacher, the precursor I cited at the beginning of this paper. The lesson is that reality changes faster than theory, and that it is therefore essential to be open to surprises, to unexpected events and patterns that may not fit our preconceived scheme, to take them seriously and try to understand them, make sense of them within a theory which is ours to construct. All this brings me to a few obvious questions: have we made progress? Are we better off now than half a century ago?

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[4] This is what American political scientist Key (1984) described as "soaking and poking".

[5] (Mills 2000, p. 43) defines social science as "the study of biography, of history, of the problems of their intense interaction within social structure."

2. Are We Better off Now?

The answer is yes, we are indeed much better off now, for a few very specific reasons. First, in the current state of the art as I understand it, an exclusive focus on formal structures and documents has been mostly left behind. These of course remain important, but a lot more now comes as part of the offering. We also have a wealth of studies now that recognize the need to examine "religion" in many forms and at multiple levels of experience. With a few notable exceptions, neither churches nor religious communities are taken as monolithic entities.[6] Multiple tendencies and locations are recognized and multiple sites for conflict are identified within churches and communities. There is also now much systematic work that takes into account the impact of massive demographic and cultural transformations on religious change. When I first arrived in the region, the growth of literacy was becoming notable, along with a beginning edge of massive physical mobility, internal and international migration. Exploding access to mass communications and lately to the internet has amplified the impact of these social forces, opening masses of ordinary people to multiple sources of information (Parker 1996, 2005; Marzal 1988) and to the possibility of choice among multiple options.[7]

All this has an impact on the quality of affiliation in the church and on expectations of obedience. Membership and loyalty cannot be taken for granted, as some church leaders imagine was the case in some golden age of the past which they long to recreate. In all probability, the past was never so neatly ordered and structured as some imagine. Anyway, what seems to some to be a loss of order can be an opening of opportunities for others (Levine 2009; Romero 2009). In my own field work, I kept running into hollow shells of groups. Church officials would point them out on an organizational chart, but more often than not, there was little more than a name on a chart. No one could ever be found.[8]

These elements of the current state of the art mean that religious pluralism is now generally understood to be a central fact, something that provides both context and energies for cultural innovation and competition. Much contemporary work addresses the relation between the emergence of religious pluralism and the consolidation of democratic politics and more open civil societies in the region, following the resolution of civil wars and the end of military rule through the region in the 1980s (Hagopian 2009a; Levine 2009, 2012). The existence of a more open civil society, with lower barriers to organization, stimulates the creation of new groups, drawing in ambitious new generations of leaders and attracting members seeking an anchor, a community, in the new situations in which they find themselves.

The relation between the pluralization of religious options and the quality of open democratic politics is both simple and unexpectedly complicated. It is simple because the simple fact of having multiple actors and religious sites (churches, movements, communications media like radio or tv, publications, schools, or internet) creates more points of contact with politics than existed 50 years ago. One cannot now speak of "the Church" as if only one church had any public role: there are many. There is also something like a civil society within the churches (groups, movements, schools and universities, publications, radio stations) that has to be taken into account; social groups, publications, schools, and universities, all seeking voice and a legitimate place in public life (Romero 2009). The question gets more complicated as we enrich and broaden the meaning given to both "religion" and "politics". Reality has now moved us well beyond the issues of "church and state" that dominated earlier research, well beyond traditional elites and what they write and say. There are more actors, new generations of leaders, potential members with greater access to information, greater possibilities of choice, and of

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[6] Cf. much work in the rational choice vein, for example (Gill 1998). On the other hand, Chesnut (2003) and Chesnut (1997) work well with rational choice language to illuminate change centered on expanded sup-ply of religious alternatives an thus of expanded possibilities of choice by religious consumers who pro-vide members of new churches.

[7] When I first worked in rural Colombia, I noted something like a funnel effect (ley del embudo in Spanish), whereby most information and choices were filtered through networks and agents of the church. There was no real competition. That situation has long been overcome.

[8] It is therefore risky to refer to lists of church-related groups as "resources" for the hierarchy as they elab-orate plans. For an example of this, see (Hagopian 2009a, 2009b).

alliances. These changes also open us to studying the dying relation among levels of action: individual and group; local, regional, national, and transnational. Any serious study needs to examine who these new leaders and followers are, where they come from, and how connections are made and sustained. In this context, movement and change arises from all parties to the process. Religious leaders and groups seek recognition and legitimation, they pursue resources and search for contact, access, and reliable allies. At the same time, political actors search for votes, building patron–client relations that can ensure steady support.

The political impact of these related transformations has often differed from what many anticipated. A central fact to note here is that evangelical and Pentecostal Protestantism has changed orientation. We are now well beyond traditional models of the new Protestantism (Lalive 2009; Willems 1967) that centered attention on a flight from the world in the effort to see one's should and create a community of the elect. A different vision now prevails, one that urges children of light to bring that light to the world. Living in a political world, new groups organize to understand, and evaluate on that world (Algranti 2011; López 2008).

The effect is often not what organizers expected. Numerous attempts to form evangelical parties, electoral alliances, or legislative blocs have on the whole met with little success—except perhaps in the case of Brazil. Leaders and followers with little political experience have entered naively into alliances where they have been more used than effective.[9] Seeking recognition and legitimation, they have bonded with leaders as diverse as Venezuela's Hugo Chávez, Peru's Alberto Fujimori, with Brazil's new President, Jair Bolsonaro, and of course with Donald J. Trump himself, as with George W. Bush before him. So the experience is at best mixed, and calls to mind Max Weber's famous admonition in his 1919 essay on "Politics as Vocation". Weber warned against the danger of entering into politics in search of the salvation of one's soul, or of the soul of society. "The man who is concerned for the welfare of his soul and the salvation of the souls of others", he wrote, "does not seek these aims along the path of politics. Politics has quite different goals, which an only be achieved by force . . . When the goal is pursued in accordance with the use of an ethos of intent in a war of faith, it can be damaged and discredited for generations to come" (Weber 1978a, p. 223). Tocqueville (1967) wrote something similar almost eighty years earlier in his observations on the kind of society he encountered in the United States in the 1840s. He was much taken with the religious vitality of the country, which differed so much from the *ancient regime* he had known in France. He ascribed the source of this vitality precisely to the distance between government and churches. When they are closely bound together, as in France, opposition to the first breeds opposition or indifference to the second. Religions thrive better on their own in the open market of an open society.

All this suggests that a prime challenge for new religious groups who seek role in the public sphere in Latin America today is to educate themselves in politics, to search for reliable allies (a scarce resource at the best of times) and direct their efforts at building communities, forming leaders, and elaborating projects that may be smaller in scope but perhaps with greater chance of success (Algranti 2011; López 1998, 2008). The recent experience of Latin America offers many examples of coalitions in which groups of religious inspiration or with some links to churches have doggedly and with some success pursued a range of goals: human rights, divorce or abortion, educational subsidies, local campaigns for housing or transport, work with gang members, migrants, or prisoners (Levine 2015b).

3. Building a Future State of the Art

What would a good agenda for future research look like? What should be included? Elsewhere (Levine 2015a) I discuss a number of elements that together might provide the backbone for a useful and productive future state of the art in the study of religion, society, and politics in Latin America.

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[9] In general, religiously linked political parties have had little success. Once seen as a wave of the future, Christian Democracy has faded in most of Latin America.

Each points to a set of issues that emerge from civil society. The churches and explicitly religious issue are involved and implicated, but less as initiators than as actors in a plural setting. This suggests beginning future work not from a specific concern with churches or "religion" but with the issues and contexts, and then seeing how churches and religion play a role. At a minimum, these include the following: 1. sexuality, gender, and identity; 2. spirituality and encounters with charismatic power; 3. changing relations between religion and violence; 4. new perspectives on secularization; 5. citizenship; 6. ethnicity; 7. ecology; 8 new generations of leaders and followers; 9. communications and media. Limitations of time and space make it impossible for me to review all these elements here. I limit myself to three which illustrate well much of the realities of religion, society, and politics that are being transformed. These are: sexuality, gender and identity, spirituality and encounters with charismatic power, and violence.

The general area of sexuality, gender, and identity has changed rapidly in ways that make it a prime subject for research into religion, society, and politics. Change has been impelled by actors in civil society who have advanced their concerns and core issues in ways that implicate religion and the churches. The process has been highly contested with strong impact on personal lives and social conditions, with new models of what is legitimate and possible being advanced. When I began my own studies, this field was mostly concerned (at least in the public sphere) with issues of contraception and abortion, marriage and divorce, and family legislation. The long-standing concept of *patria potestad*, which affirms the authority of men in household and property, was still mostly unchallenged (Htun 2003, 2009). When I first arrived in Colombia, I was so naive that I asked a friend if there was civil divorce in the country. The response was "Civil divorce? We don't even have civil marriage here" To get a civil marriage, the parties had to make a public declaration of apostasy, of loss of faith and abandonment of membership in the church. This was a strong social disincentive and many went out of the country to marry.[10]

Older problems of sexuality and gender like contraception and abortion persist, but now they must share the public sphere with other, highly contested issues such as gender rights, gay rights, same-sex marriage (known in Spanish as egalitarian marriage, or *matrimonio igualitario*) and of course now with the avalanche of cases of clerical sex abuse and cover-up by high church officials (e.g., Goodstein 2018). In his many visits to the region, Pope Francis has led the way in bringing public attention and support to those involved in issues like migration, ecology, and inequality (Levine 2016b). But on matters of sexuality and gender, and in particular on the need for transparency and accountability in cases of clerical sexual abuse, he has made numerous missteps. Within Latin America, the case of Chile has been particularly visible, with arrests, police raids on church archives, and the resignation of all the bishops of the Catholic Church. Pope Francis has played a contradictory role. In a disastrous visit at the beginning of 2018, he chided accusers of priests and bishops for "calumny", only later to recant, apologize, and demand resignations and investigations. One element that is notable in this case as in others, from the U.S. to Ireland, Germany to Australia, is that the Catholic Church has lost its air of untouchability.[11] Politicians and police who long turned a blind eye find it hard to do so now. Police raid church archives, priests and bishops are indicted and arrestees: behaviors unthinkable fifty years ago (Goodstein 2018; Robertson 2018). To be sure, the nineteenth century was filled with church–state conflicts, often involving violence and clerical expulsions, but those disputes were centered around classic issues of control over property and education. The dynamics of the current disputes centered

[10] This is similar to the situation in Israel today, where the official rabbinical establishment oversees any marriages. Many secular Israelis make the short trip to Cyprus for a civil marriage.

[11] In a recent editorial (National Catholic Reporter 2018), the National Catholic Reporter stated that " . . . there has been a kind of 'paradigm shift' in how Catholics view the scandals. It once was perceived as the crimes of a small and disturbed group of clerics, but it became clear that the problem was widespread, not only in this country but throughout the globe with a similar narrative from country to country. As a result, Catholics began seeing it as a systematic problem of tolerated and accepted crime. And if that were the case, then a great many presumptions about who we are as Catholic and what the church and the clergy mean are called into question."

on sexuality, and clerical abuse are different. The process, the actors, and of course the context differ sharply from the past. This is a new world.

This is clearly a process that has been building for a long time, impelled by groups from civil society, above all groups of victims along with associations of lawyers, doctors, and social workers and human rights groups. They have fought to make these issues central to the public agenda. The question for analysis is to understand why now, and why in this way. Why has it been possible now to break through the cover of silence and indifference and demand accountability? The question is why has it been possible here and now to win access to the public sphere. To find an answer requires tracing the history of these groups and understanding how networks were built and sustained. Any study will have to work in many sites and with a great variety of data including analysis of social movements, of legal proceedings of legislation, combined with attention to the public discourse of churches and political leaders, and the transnational connections of movements.

Under the heading of spirituality and encounters with charismatic power, there are two points to bear in mind. First, the great surge of creative innovation and growth in religion in Latin America is highly influenced by Pentecostal beliefs and practices (Chesnut 2003, 1997; Steigenga 2001; López 2008; Algranti 2011). This is not limited to Protestant churches new or old. The Catholic Charismatic Renewal is itself one of the fastest growing movements in the entire region (Steigenga and Cleary 2007; Cleary 2011). The specific variants of Pentecostal experience run from intense personal and collective prayer, belief in divine healing, and public exorcisms (often televised), visions and speaking in tongues (*glossalalia*) to brief in a health and wealth gospel according to which true believers will be showered with material goods.[12] In all its variants, Pentecostalism provides believers with an intense personal and collective experience of contact with the divine.

The new centrality of Pentecostal practice is a prime example of multiple and simultaneous creation. There was no single point of origin. Instead, initiatives popped up all across the region eventually making contact and consolidating. Contacts and news somehow flowed across borders and filtered down through social levels. I still recall one instance when I was working with a neighborhood group, a Christian base community in the city of Cali Colombia. They knew that I was an American and soon asked me for ways to contact the Word of God Movement. Word of God is an acknowledged source for the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in U.S. Catholicism. How they knew about the movement was a mystery to me. This was all well before massive access to the internet or even to reliable mail or telephones. But somehow information makes it through.

Studying phenomena of intense spirituality and encounters with charismatic power can be a challenge for many social scientists who are made uncomfortable by phenomena they cannot easily touch or measure with standard approaches. Most have been trained to remain neutral, to keep a distance, to avoid "going native". There can also be personal or psychological problems in accepting the reality of this kind of encounter. But to understand the social power of what is happening in churches across the region, it may be necessary to take the risk of crossing that line that separates the observer from the actor, the believer from the student (Harding 1987). The first step is to take these experiences seriously: not as some aberrant phenomenon, but rather as a key element of personal and collective experience, not to explain it away but to try to get inside and understand it as much as possible. It will not be easy. I know lots of sociologists who can talk all day about religion in the abstract but who turn their eyes away in front of a *Santería* altar, and who have nothing to say in the presence of a public exorcism where thousands of people are chanting "out with the Devil"!!! I still recall the shock I gave to some colleagues when I told them that if my interviewees said that they had had a vision, well then, they had a vision. We need to work with it. Or as they say in Colombia, "*no creo en brujas, pero que vuelan, vuelan* ("I don't believe in witches, but if they fly, well then, they fly").

[12] See (Gifford 2004), for fascinating detail on the prosperity gospel and new churches in Ghana.

To work with phenomena of this kind it is essential to be present, to be on the scene, to observe, to listen, to interview, to work with videos (often easily available) and occasional pamphlets which members are usually delighted to share. The power of these experiences is not limited to words, so it is also important to listen to music, to examine iconography to observe the emotional tone of meetings, and to look at the objects people touch and use. Because many of the most successful Pentecostal and neo-Pentecostal churches are new, it is of particular interest to understand how they were set up and how they grew, who the leaders are, what members are taught and how new leaders are trained, how the churches are structured, and what leadership styles are like. There is already good work on these issue (Algranti 2011; Fonseca 2008; Freston 2001; Kramer 2005; Oro and Saman 2000) and more is needed.

Elsewhere I have written extensively on the changing relations between religion and violence in Latin America (Levine 2011, 2012, 2016a). So I will be brief here. Any discussion of violence benefits by being concrete and specific. My concern here is above all with coercive violence: the violence that forces itself on people, that wounds, tortures, and kills, that leaves widows and orphans, along with complex and lasting psychological, social, and economic suffering. With the end of military rule and the resolution of civil wars across the region, the character and social location of violence has shifted. Massive state repression and open civil war have happily passed from the scene, but of course violence remains and in some cases takes an even greater toll (Wilde 2015). Any current portrait of violence in Latin America must take account of new forms of violence including the impact of drugs and gangs, the violence that accompanies internal and transnational migration (Frank-Vitale 2015), the ordinary violence of mostly unaccountable police and so-called security forces, (Brinks 2010) violence in the truly horrific prison systems (Johnson 2015), and of course the continuing presence of domestic and child abuse.

The transformation of violence and its more multiple and decentralized manifestations has been matched by the transformation of religion into a multiple and decentralized field. In the most recent era of military rule, religious leaders often led the resistance to state oppression most notably in cases like Chile, Brazil, or El Salvador, mobilizing option and providing support and resources to victims.[13] The Catholic church dominated the scene. But now any action by the Catholic Church is matched and often exceeded by multiple actions undertaken by multiple churches and religiously inspired groups of all kinds Three good examples are work with gangs and gang members (Brenneman 2012, 2015), work in jails and prisons, and assistance to those faced with coercion, robbery, rape, and abuse as they attempt to migrate.

The phenomenon of gangs fueled by drug wars is present everywhere but most studied in Central America and Brazil. (Brenneman 2012, 2015; Insight Crime 2015) references cited in (Levine 2010, 2012, 2016a). Alongside the conventional Catholic repertoire of official chaplains or truce negotiations brokered by bishops, a range of options have emerged from the new churches including direct work with gangs and gang members. Many gangs are notorious for punishing any effort to leave with killing, but exceptions are commonly made for those who claim to have found Jesus. Real believers are given a pass out although the gang checks up to make sure that conversion is lasting. For their part, churches welcome new members, provide tattoo removal clinics[14] and access to work in a supportive community. In some prisons, evangelicals pastors have entered and managed to create "evangelical blocs", areas in which inmates withdraw from gang rule to live a gospel life, governing themselves with the help of the churches. In the case of migrants, for example from Central America to the "Norte", the role of churches of all kinds (Catholic and evangelical) has been notable long before Donald Trump made migration his core issue. Pope Francis gave an impassioned homily in a mass at the U.S.—Mexico

[13] Catholic leaders were rarely united on these issues and in some cases the bulk of the hierarchy was solid-ly in support of military rule, Argentina is a prime example.

[14] The extensive tattooing of gang members (often including the entire face) can be a frightening sight, and thus presents a bar to social reintegration. Removal is painful and difficult but it can help.

border, remembering migrants who died in the effort to reach the border (Levine 2016b). On their way north, many hitch notoriously dangerous rides on the train (known as *la bestia*, the beast) where they are regularly victims of robbery, rape, and often murder. The little help that is offered (food, water, shelter for the night, medical assistance) comes from scattered initiatives by churches or local religious groups (Levine 2016a; Frank-Vitale 2015).

In all the areas mentioned here (sexuality, gender and identity, spirituality and encounters with charismatic power, and violence) action arises from numerous scattered local and regional groups, sometimes specifically religious, sometimes not. The implication for research is that future students of the matter would do well to begin not by studying churches but rather by identifying sites of conflict and contestation, and then look to ways in which religion may be involved.

4. Reflections on Theory and Method

A central thread in any effort to draw a history of the state of the art is the need to locate any specific study in a historical and structural context in ways that can shed light on how individual and collective experience are bound together. This is what Mills meant by focusing on the intersection of biography and history. Structuring work in this way allows us to concentrate on lived experience, to understand how meaning is formed and acted upon, not in isolation but in some structured relation to other social levels. After all, religious experience itself is necessarily both personal and collective, both private and public. Analysis has to recognize and value that complexity. There is a concrete social process in which people, material resources, ideas, and models of organization travel back and forth, linking the local and personal with larger networks and formal structures. In my own work, I have traced these connections in multiple ways: tracking the social history of a pamphlet or an audio cassette, asking who produced them and how they got to their destination. It makes a difference who brings ideas to groups and communities and so I have also studied the careers of pastoral agents, and the history of group membership. All these processes are more complicated and multiple than they were half a century ago, but in the same measure they are also richer and more interesting.

The question that preoccupies me here is what can we do to ensure that any future state of the art will yield better studies, more valid and reliable data, more insights into patterns and dynamics of change. The task is at once theoretical and methodological. In theoretical terms, efforts at building grand theories to order and explain everything are likely to be less useful than work with mid-range theory that can generate concepts able to specify elements of a complex and multileveled reality, that can identify likely sites for innovation and conflict, point to channels of access, and leave substantial room for questions of meaning. If we do not understand what motivates people, what seems to them to be legitimate and possible and why they find it in what we call "religion", it will be difficult to grasp the source and rhythm of change, and to understand where it may lead in the future.

To explain something, it is necessary to locate the general in the specific and particular, to construct a relation between otherwise isolated cases, and to show how and why they fit together in relations that can then be extended to other levels. Having a clear theoretical focus is what allows us to take any study beyond simply accumulating instances of some phenomenon, naming them, and sorting them into categories. Collecting data and building typologies should always be subordinate to explanation. Without a theory, typologies lead to no conclusions of particular interest. This reflection brings me to a final autobiographical note.

In the mid-1960s, I received a Master's degree in Political Sociology from the London School of Economics. During my time in London, I was privileged to attend lectures on the philosophy of science by Karl Popper. Popper began one session this way: "Gentlemen, observe". There was stunned silence in the auditorium: none of us knew what to say or do. Popper then drove home the point. "You see", he said, "to observe you need a theory." Popper elaborated further: without a theory, it is impossible to know what to observe, how to isolate any specific element from the swirl of a complex and always-changing reality. Without a theory, it is impossible to know what may constitute a unit of analysis or how individual units may fit together into some organized whole.

The theories that can open us to a better state of the art will be those that can provide us with tools to identify the origins and dynamics of socioreligious phenomena, give us an explanation of its power to convince, and to organize behavior. They should also be able to identify the new social forces and creative energies that carry it forward, and to recognize when they are successful and also when they fail, because many do fail. So we need theory, theory that makes a central place for continuous change, theory that will shed light on the relations between religion and politics, and for Latin America specifically, between religious pluralism and political alternatives, not to trace lines of separation, but rather in search of synthesis and mutual influence.

In terms of method, I limit myself to noting a few essential points. In the design of any study, it is important to build in a comparative dimension, with work in varied sites and social levels. Even if the data are based exclusively on field work within Latin America, or within any particular country, the available bibliography can enrich any study with comparative references. In my experience, it is useful to work with mixed methods, combining quantitative with qualitative data (large and small surveys, depth interviews, observation, collections of documents and pamphlets, iconography and music, web sites and videos). A mixed approach yields a denser and richer portrait of reality than can be derived from any single data source. The problem for many scholars today is that work of this kind is difficult, time-consuming, and on occasion dangerous. Considerations of career make people want to publish more quickly, and with what they imagine to be "hard data." It is simpler to access a data bank.

But I believe strongly that going into the field, observing, touching, talking, and listening make possible a much richer and more complete understanding of reality and what it means to the actors themselves. It opens us to grasping more fully how actors see and value the world and how they organize themselves to act within it. It helps us understand what it means to say that ideas shape reality. In Latin America today, religious actors of all persuasions work every day to create and sustain communities, to give meaning to personal and collective life, and to have an impact on the public sphere. Contrary to what classic theories of modernization and secularization led us to expect, they do not fade gently into private life, but rather find new and often surprising ways to enter to understand the world, and act within it. This is where the work is for future generations.

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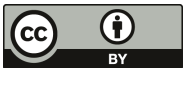

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