New Religious Movements as a Global Phenomenon Between Secularization, Religious Revival and Fundamentalism

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In my presentation I am going to proceed in three steps. First, I am going to explain why neither the premises of the traditional theory of secularization nor the category of fundamentalism are very helpful in helping us to understand the character of the new religious movements we are examining in this conference, namely Evangelicals, Pentecostals, and Charismatics, as modern forms of religion. Second, I am going to propose that a proper understanding of processes of de-confessionalization, religious individuation and pluralization are more helpful for the proper analysis of those modern religious phenomena. Finally, I will propose that from a sociological perspective the most viable response of the Catholic Church to such an external challenge must be the promotion of religious individuation and internal religious pluralism within the Church.

1. **Secularization and Fundamentalism**

Is secularization global? Yes and No. It depends what we mean by secularization. If by secularization we mean the historical process of institutionalization of the modern secular spheres of science and technology, administrative citizen states, and market economies which function autonomously from religious institutions and norms, then secularization is indeed a global process and we all leave in a global secular age. Let us call this process **Secularization** I. If by secularization we mean, however, the decline of religious beliefs and practices which in most Europe societies has accompanied the historical process of secularization, then this process of religious decline, let's call it **Secularization II**, is not a global phenomenon. On the contrary, throughout many parts of the world **Secularization I** is not accompanied by religious decline but rather by religious growth and by different types of religious revival or transformations. Let me elaborate on these two propositions.

Almost a decade ago in *Public Religion in the Modern World*, I argued that in order to speak meaningfully of "secularization" we needed to distinguish three different connotations of the term, which have become entangled in European debates:

a) Secularization, as **differentiation of the secular spheres** (state, economy, science), from religion, usually understood as the "emancipation," of the secular from ecclesiastical institutions and religious norms and the concomitant differentiation and specialization of religion within a newly emerged religious sphere. In this respect both the religious and the secular are reciprocally and mutually constituted structures which first emerge with modernity. In other words, religion as an abstract general category, rather than being something very primitive, or traditional is something constituted by modernity itself.

b) Secularization, as **decline of religious beliefs and practices** in modern societies, often postulated as a human universal developmental process. This is the most recent but by now the most widespread usage of the term in contemporary academic debates on secularization, although it remains still unregistered in the dictionaries of most European languages.

c) Secularization, as **privatization of religion**, often understood both as a general modern historical trend and as a normative condition, indeed as a precondition for modern liberal democratic politics. My book, *Public Religions in the Modern World*, put into question the empirical as well as the normative validity of the privatization thesis.[1]

Maintaining this analytical distinction should allow to examine and to test the validity of each of the three propositions independently of each other and thus to refocus the often fruitless secularization debate into comparative historical analysis that could account for different patterns of secularization, in all three meanings of the term, across societies and civilizations. We could

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[1] José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

distinguish secular differentiation, religious decline, and religious privatization respectively as Secularization I, Secularization II, and Secularization III. But this already points precisely to problems in our definitions and in our categories.

Since in Europe the three processes of secular differentiation, religious decline and privatization have been historically interconnected, there has been the tendency to view all three processes as intrinsically interrelated components of a general teleological process of secularization and modernization, rather than as particular contingent developments. In the United States, by contrast, one finds a paradigmatic process of secular differentiation, which is not accompanied, however, either by a process of religious decline or by the confinement of religion to the private sphere. Processes of modernization and democratization in American society have often been accompanied by religious revivals and the wall of separation between church and state, though much stricter than the one erected in most European societies, does not imply the rigid separation of religion and politics.

In a certain sense one could argue that both **Secularization I,** that is, the institutional differentiation of secular and religious spheres, and **Secularization II,** that is, the decline of religious beliefs and practices in the specific sense of the unchurching of the European populations, are unique Christian European historical developments which cannot find exact replication practically anywhere else in the world, except in post-colonial European settler societies such as Quebec, Uruguay or New Zealand.

The modern Western process of S**ecularization I** is a particular historical dynamic that only makes sense as a response and reaction to the particular medieval Latin Christian system of classification of reality between religious and secular and to the ecclesiastical claims of exclusive

sacramental mediation between immanence and transcendence. But this particular Western

Christian dynamic of secularization, which culminates into our secular age, has become

globalized through processes of Western colonial expansion, which have entered however into

dynamic tension with the many different ways in which other civilizations had drawn boundaries

between "sacred" and "profane," "transcendent" and "mundane," and "religious" and "secular."

For that very reason, however, outside of Western Europe this process is not experienced

as a process of internal institutional differentiation of the secular spheres from ecclesiastical

control, but rather as the challenge of a Western colonial expansion that calls forth various forms

of mobilization and transformation of traditional institutions and resources in order to face the

Western challenge. Outside of the West, therefore, rather than viewing **Secularization I** as a

process of secular differentiation it is more helpful to view it as a process of global expansion of

what following Taylor may be called the modern secular immanent frame.

In a certain sense, not only the so-called "secular" societies of the West but the entire

globe is becoming increasingly more secular and "disenchanted" in the sense that the cosmic

order is increasingly defined by modern science and technology, the social order is increasingly

defined by the interlocking of "democratic" citizen states, market economies, and mediatic

public spheres, and the moral order is increasingly defined by the calculations of rights-bearing

individual agents, claiming human dignity, liberty, equality, and the pursuit of happiness. All

three orders are secular insofar as they are structured *etsi Deus non* daretur, that is, as if God

would not exist. Yet, comparisons of secular Europe and religious America or the evidence of

religious revivals around the world make clear that within the same secular immanent frame one

can encounter very diverse religious dynamics. In other words, **Secularization I** is not

necessarily accompanied by **Secularization II**, that is by the drastic decline in religious beliefs

and practices characteristic of most Western European societies, but is often accompanied by processes of religious growth, as illustrated by the global expansion of Evangelical, Pentecostal and Charismatic communities.

For that very same reason the category of religious fundamentalism is not very helpful for an understanding of these modern religious dynamics. Indeed, theories of religious fundamentalism only make sense as counterparts of the traditional theories of secularization. Put bluntly, it is simply a convenient way of labeling new religious dynamics that do not follow the prescribed model of religious decline or religious privatization, without questioning the theory of secularization. Looking at the most comprehensive study of religious fundamentalism throughout the world, namely the five volume *Fundamentalism Project,*[2] it is obvious that from a descriptive and even interpretative point of view, they offer many valuable individual studies. What is highly problematic is the attempt to interpret the most diverse religious movements and phenomena within one single analytical theoretical framework, as if they were all so many instances of a fundamentalist reaction to the world-historical process of secularization, exemplifying a supposedly global conflict between "religion" and "secular modernity."

The most diverse religious phenomena are now linked together: the public reemergence of Protestant Fundamentalism in the United States, the Islamic Revolution in Iran and the proliferation of all kinds of Islamic and "Islamist" movements, the rise to power of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in India, ethno-religious conflicts between Sikhs and Hindus in the Punjab and between Muslims and Hindus in Kashmir, conflicts between separatist Tamil Hindus and Sinhalese Buddhists in Sri Lanka, the emergence of new forms of Jewish religious Zionism and new forms of Muslim Palestinian nationalism such as Hamas. All these diverse religious

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[2] Martin Marty and Scott Appleby, ed., *Fundamentalism Project.* 5 Volumes (U of Chicago Press, 1991-1995).

phenomena are now interpreted as so many instances of a single worldwide phenomenon, the global growth of religious fundamentalism as a multiform reaction against secular modernity. In their book *Strong Religion*, Almond, Appleby and Sivan characterize all these movements as "militant and highly focused antagonists of secularization… (which) call a halt to the centuries-long retreat of the religious establishments before the secular power."[3] But such an interpretation, indeed such an analytical perspective only makes sense if one assumes first the existence of a world-historical process of secularization. Take away the premise of a universal process of secularization and the analytical category of global religious fundamentalism collapses as meaningless.

Moreover, even if one was to accept the validity of the category of fundamentalism for normative-evaluative purposes, it becomes much more difficult analytically to extend such a category of religious fundamentalism to the global expansion of Christian evangelical, Pentecostal and charismatic religious communities throughout Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa and large parts of Asia, since they do not represent any defense of some kind of traditional religious establishment in those regions, but signify on the contrary radically new developments of religious pluralization which challenge the traditional status quo.

2. De-Confessionalization, Individuation and Religious Pluralization: NewReligious Trends in the Post-Colonial non-European World

Sociological theories of urbanization grounded in theories of Western European secularization and modernization have tended to view only the moment of liberation from religious tradition and from religious bonds which the move to large cities may entail while

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[3] Almond et al. *Strong Religion* (Chicago, 2003) 1-2.

ignoring the opportunities for religious innovations and individual and collective religious

transformations and new community formations which contemporary global cities may offer.

This was clearly a shortsighted view based on an ideologically secularist and simplistic reading

of processes of European urbanization in the 19th and 20th centuries which ignored the broader

comparative historical experience and was fixated on a supposedly world-historical process of

transition from "tradition" to "modernity" and from "Gemeinschaft" to "Gesellschaft."[4]

It is undeniable that much of the experience of modern Western European urbanization

has been associated with radical secularization, expressed most succinctly in the famous

statement of the leading post World War II French Catholic sociologist, Gabriel Le Bras, that the

moment a French peasant sets foot in Paris' *Gare de Montparnasse*, he stops going to church.[5]

Crucial was the fact that once one left behind the rural territorial parish, one not only ceased

being a practicing Catholic in France, but one simply became irreligious. There was practically

no alternative of being religious in any other way. Notwithstanding the existence of small

Protestant and Jewish religious minorities the basic alternatives were to be either religiously

Catholic or irreligiously secular.

Undoubtedly, the process of secularization throughout continental Europe is associated

with the liberation from the confessional bonds of the territorial rural or urban parish and in this

respect the process of secularization in Europe takes primarily the form of de-

confessionalization.[6] In the European context, secularization means above all liberation from

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[4] José Casanova, "Religions, Secularizations, Modernizations," *Archives Européennes de sociologie/European Journal of Sociology*, LII, 3, 2011, pp 488-508.

[5] "Et enfin, je dirai en troisième lieu que l'attraction des villes a une influence ruineuse sur la religion des rureaux (…) Je suis pour ma part convaincu que, sur cent rureaux qui s'établissent à Paris, il y en a à peu près quatre-vingt-dix qui, au sortir de la gare Montparnasse cessent d'être des pratiquants." Gabriel Le Bras, *Etudes de sociologie religieuse.* Vol II (Paris: PUF, 1956) p 480.

[6] The religious and secular situation across Europe is actually rather complex and diverse and no straightforward theory linking rates of secularization with rates of modernization or urbanization can do justice to this complex

confessional affiliations and identities, of the kind which were first determined by the previous

process of religious and confessional territorialization across Europe that resulted from the post-

Reformation religious civil wars and the imposition of the Westphalian principle *cuius regio eius*

religio. This principle, moreover, was already institutionalized with the expulsion of Jews and

Muslims from Spain by the Catholic Kings in order to constitute a religiously homogeneous

national territorial state. Repeated ethno-religious cleansing and territorialized confessional

religious boundaries have been two interrelated structural consequences of the dynamics of state

formation in early modern Europe. Europe solved the problem of religious diversity through

emigration, by expelling or by letting their religious minorities flee their home countries to find

refuge first in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and then overseas. Northern Europe became

homogeneously Protestant. Southern Europe became homogeneously Catholic. In between there

emerged a bi-confessional buffer zone formed by Holland, Germany and Switzerland, where it

became obvious that it was impossible or too costly to get rid of the large Catholic or Protestant

minorities. Some form of modus vivendi developed, but usually based on similar principles of

territorial confessionalization, cantonalization, or pillarization.

The principle of freedom of religion became institutionalized in Europe only much later,

beginning in the 19th century and in many cases only after World War II with the incorporation

of the individual principle of religious freedom into the UN Declaration of Human Rights. One

could argue that implicit in the freedom, i.e. compulsion of religious minorities to emigrate was

the emergence of the modern conception of religion as something which cannot be imposed or

coerced and which individuals carry with them, in their private consciences. It is this modern

sectarian and secular principle which was to gain full institutionalization first in the American

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diversity. José Casanova, "The Religious Situation in Europe," in Hans Joas and Klaus Wiegandt, eds., *Secularization and the World Religions* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2009) pp 206-228.

colonies, where some of the radical Protestant sects, such as Quakers and Baptists, became influential minorities, and eventually after independence in the entire United States with the extension of the dual clause of the First Amendment, protecting the no establishment of religion at the state level and the free exercise of religion in society.

In contrast to European cities, eighteenth century American colonial towns, already before independence, were characterized by a vibrant religious super-diversity. This was true of New York and Philadelphia, as well as of Providence, R.I. and Charleston, S.C. Moreover, even in the colonies which had established churches such as Congregational Massachusetts or Anglican Virginia only the elites belonged to the established church and therefore the majority of the population never had confessional affiliations nor was territorialized into the parish system. The churching of the American population took place after independence through continuous immigration and through the revivalist conversions and evangelical campaigns associated with the Second Great Awakening.[7] It is estimated that before independence less than 20 percent of the American population belonged to churches or sects, that is, had any religious affiliation. By the 1830's, however, over 60 percent of the American population already belonged to some religious denomination. Baptists, Methodists and Catholics, had been only tiny minorities at the time of independence, each constituting approximately only 1 percent of the population. By the 1840s, however, the three had become by far the largest American denominations, many times the size of the old established colonial churches (Congregational, Anglican, and Presbyterian) and constituting already more than 50 percent of the population. But along with them there were already dozens if not hundreds of old European sects and new American denominations.[8]

[7] Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, *The Churching of America, 1776-1990: Winners and Losers in our Religious Economy* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992).
[8] Robert Wuthnow, *The Restructuring of American Religion* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988).

The name itself, *denomination,* as well as the system of religious denominationalism is an American invention which has no equivalent in any European language. It is usually translated either as confession, or as sect, but it actually has a radically new connotation, which is not captured by the old European terms. Denomination is simply the name which I assume as the member of a voluntary religious association and the one by which I am recognized by others. Institutionally crucial is the fact that it is a system of mutual recognition of groups in society without state recognition or regulation. Crucial is the fact that while in Europe processes of modernization and urbanization were historically associated with un-churching, de-confessionalization and drastic secularization, in the United States processes of urbanization and modernization have been continuously associated with processes of churching, denominational affiliation, and religious revivals. Through continuous immigration the system of denominational pluralism which was at first an internal Protestant model has expanded to incorporate first all the religions of Europe and today all the religions of the world.

Moreover, it has been repeatedly observed by immigration scholars that immigrants today as much as in the 19th century tend to become more religious in America after immigration than they were in their home countries. That means that religion in America is not a traditional residue called to disappear with progressive modernization, but is a modern response to the challenges confronting immigrant groups that have to find a space in a religiously diverse society. Immigrant religions are not simply traditional ethnic remnants but are actually creative transformations of religious resources in novel contexts.

Surveys of American religion reveal two persistent characteristics of the American religious system. The first is the high level of religious belief (over 90% of the population declare belief in God), of religious affiliation (around 80% of the American population declare

some religious denominational affiliation), and of individual and collective religious practice (over 70% pray regularly and over 50% participate in congregational religious services at least once a month). The second remarkable characteristic is the highly competitive and dynamic fluidity of American religious pluralism. According to the 2008 Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life Survey, more than one-quarter of American adults (28%) have switched their religious affiliation since childhood. If change in Protestant denomination is included, the number of adults who have switched their religious affiliation rises to 44 percent.[9] This is a phenomenon totally incomprehensible in the European confessional context, where the only relevant change is unchurching and confessional secularization, not the change in religious affiliation.

Two principles are central to American religious denominationalism: a) The principle of individual voluntary congregationl association of lay people, so that even religions which have no such congregational associational tradition, such as Catholicism, Hinduism or Buddhism, tend to adopt the form in the United States and b) the principle of formal equality of all denominations which tends to undermine the traditional European distinction between church and sect, as well as that between orthodoxy and heterodoxy, that is, true and false religion.[10]

I have lingered on this comparison between European and American processes not in order to contrast an idealized model of urban religious pluralism with the European model of urban secularization, but in order to make two basic points. The first point is that social theories of modernization were blinded by the European experience to ignore completely the significance

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[9]José Casanova, "The Religious Situation in the United States 175 Years after Tocqueville," in Miguel Vatter, ed., *Crediting God: The Fate of Religion and Politics in the Age of Global Capitalism* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2011) pp 253-272.

[10]R. Stephen Warner, *A Church of Our Own: Disestablishment and Diversity in American Religion* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005).

of religious groups, religious movements and religious dynamics in modern processes of urbanization outside of Europe. This urban secularist blind spot is evident in the fact that even the Chicago school of urban studies, despite its ethnographic focus on immigrant and ethno-racial group dynamics, missed completely the religious dimension of these urban processes in Chicago or elsewhere in America.

The second main point is that if one finds such fundamental transatlantic differences between Europe and the United States in otherwise similar and comparable processes of modernization, urbanization and secularization within the Christian West, the more one should expect differential dynamics which will tend to follow neither a European nor an American model, elsewhere.

A comparison of Quebec and Brazil, two post-confessional post-Catholic societies illustrate the same dual divergent pattern. Up to the 1960's, Quebec had been a homogeneous confessional Catholic society, arguably the region with the highest levels of religious belief and practice not only in Canada but in all of North America. In one single generation, as a consequence of "the quiet revolution," Quebec underwent a drastic process of secularization. State, nation, and the population of Quebec were de-confessionalized. The new secular state not only had taken over from the Church education, health care and most social services but it supplanted the Church as "the embodiment of the French nation in Canada."[11] Religious practice and affiliation plummeted and today Quebec is arguably the most secularized region of North America. A population which had been previously homogeneously Catholic had become in short order homogeneously secular and post-Catholic. As in Western Europe, the only dynamic of religious pluralism has been brought in by the new immigrants.

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[11]David Seljak, "Why the Quiet Revolution was "Quiet": The Catholic Church's Reaction to the Secularization of Nationalism in Quebec after 1960,"*CCHH, Historical Studies*, 62, 1996, pp.109-124.

Since the 1960's Brazil has experienced its own quiet secular revolution. Brazil has also ceased being a confessional Catholic society. But de-confessionalization of state, nation and population has not led to drastic homogeneous secularization but rather to an explosion of religious pluralism of all kinds. Brazil remains the largest Catholic society and a dynamic center of global Catholicism. But simultaneously it has become a dynamic center of global Pentecostalism and a dynamic global center for the transformation of Afro-American religions.

Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil's global cities, exhibit increasingly pluralist religious dynamics. One finds side by side divergent Catholic trends from liberation theology to thriving charismatic communities, divergent Protestant trends from the historical denominations to Mormons, Jehovah Witness, Pentecostal churches and Neo-Pentecostal mega-churches, Afro-Brazilian movements such as *Umbanda and Candomblé,* new Amer-Indian religious movements, and immigrant diasporas communities of all kinds, Jewish, Muslim and Bahá'ís, Christian Middle Eastern, Eastern Orthodox, and Greek-Catholic, Japanese Buddhist and Chinese Taoist, as well as new Brazilian syncretic cults such as La Comunidade Espírita O Vale do Amanhecer near Brasilia or O Templo Ecuménico Espírita de la Legion de la Boa Vondade en Brasilia.[12]

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[12]The literature is immense. Cf. Cândido P.F. de Camargo, *Católicos, protestantes, espíritas* (Petrópolis; Vozes, 1973); John Burdick, *Legacies of Liberation: The Progressive Catholic Church in Brazil* (Hampshire, UK: Ashgate, 2004); Brenda Carranza, *Catolicismo Midiático* (Aparecida, SP: Editora Idéias & Letras, 2011); Cecília Loreto Mariz, "Católicos de Libertação, Católicos Renovados e Neopentecostais," in *Cadernos CERIS*, n. 2, 2001, pp. 11-47; Cecilia L. Mariz and Maria das D.C. Machado, "Mudanças recentes no campo religioso brasileiro," *Antropolítica*, 5, 1998, pp. 21-43, and Cecilia L. Mariz and Roberta B.C. Campos, "Pentecostalism and 'National Culture'. A Dialogue Between Brazilian Social Sciences and the Antropology of Christianity," in *Religion and Society. Advances in Research*, vol 2, 2011, pp.106-121; Alberto Antoniazzi, *Por que o panorama religioso no Brasil mudou tanto?* (São Paulo, Paulus, 2004); Antônio Flávio Pierucci, "'Bye bye, Brasil': O declínio das religiões tradicionais no Censo 2000" in *Revista Estudos Avançados de Universidade de São Paulo*, vol. 18, n. 52, set/dez 2004, pp. 17-28, and " Ciências sociais e religião – a religião como ruptura," in Faustino Texeira and Renata Menezes, ed., *As religiões no Brasil: Continuidades e Rupturas* (Petrópolis: Vozes, 2006); Ricardo Mariano, *Neopentecostais: Sociologia do novo pentecostalismo no Brasil* (São Paulo: Edições Loyola, 2000); Ari P. Oro, André Corten, and Jean-Pierre Dozon, eds., *Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus: Os novos conquistadores da fé* (São Paulo: Paulinas, 2003); Ronaldo Almeida, *A Igreja Universal e seus demônios* (São Paulo: Terceiro Nome, 2009); Reginaldo Prandi, *Os candomblés de São Paulo* (São Paulo: Editora Hucitec, 1991); Roberto Motta, " Ethnicité, nationalité et syncrétisme dans les religions populaires brésiliennes," *Social Compass*, 41 (1) 1994, pp. 67-78, and "L'expansion et la reinvention des religions afro-brasilennes: Réenchantement et decomposition," *Archives des Sciences Sociales des Religions*, 117, 2002, pp.

Moreover, permeating all the religious phenomena in Brazil one finds the ubiquitous, syncretic and protean espiritismo.

While Brazil may be an extreme case, one can observe similar processes of religious pluralization throughout Latin America.[13] Moreover, a global comparative look at post-colonial global cities throughout Asia, Africa, and Latin America would seem to indicate that the 'new world" paradigm of religious innovation and pluralization appears more adequate and fruitful than the old European paradigm of secularization and religious decline.[14] Indeed, the BRICs (Brazil, Russia, India, China) and other emergent socio-economic powers such as South Africa are all characterized by diverse patterns of religious pluralism.[15]

The genealogical and teleological European theories of secularization were grounded on the basic premise that "religion" was a "primitive," "ancient," or "traditional" universal human phenomenon which was bound to weaken, if not altogether disappear, and be superseded by the secular. The more modern a society became the less religious and the more secular it would also become. The theory could not account for the possibility that societies were becoming

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113-125; and Erich Gomes Marques, *Os Poderes do Estado no Vale do Amanhecer: percursos religiosos, práticas espirituais e cura*. Dissertação – (Mestrado em Antropologia) – Universidade de Brasília, 2009.

[13]Daniel H. Levine, *Politics, Religion & Society in Latin America* (Boulder, CO: Lynne, Rienner, 2012); David Lehmann, *Struggle for the Spirit: Religious Transformations and Popular Culture in Brazil and Latin America* (Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 1996); Frances Hagopian, ed., *Religious Pluralism, Democracy and the Catholic Church in Latin America* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009); and Paul Freston, ed., *Evangelical Christianity and Democracy in Latin America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

[14]Otávio G. Velho, "Missionization in the Postcolonial World: A View from Brazil and Elsewhere," in Thomas J. Csordas, ed., *Transnational Transcendence: Essays on Religion and Globalization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009) pp. 31-54; Paul Freston, *Evangelical and Politics in Africa, Asia, and Latin America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Simon Coleman, *The Globalisation of Charismatic Christianity: Spreading the Gospel of Prosperity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Joel Robbins, "The Globalization of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 33, 2004, pp. 117-143; Fenella Cannell, ed., *The Anthropology of Christianity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006); David Martin, "Pentecostalism: Transnational Voluntarism in the Global Religious Economy," in *The Future of Christianity* (Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2011) pp. 63-83.

[15]On mainland China as well as other Chinese global cities and diasporas, Vincent Gossaert and David A. Palmer, *The Religious Question in Modern China* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2001). On the very different dynamic of religious pluralism and majority-minority relations in India see, Laurent Gayer and Christophe Jaffrelot, eds., *Muslims in Indian Cities. Trajectories of Marginalisation* (London: C Hurst & Co, 2012)..

increasingly both more religious and more secular, that indeed global modernization was accompanied everywhere by the diverse institutionalization of religious and secular domains and that religion in this respect rather than being a 'traditional" phenomenon shared by all pre-modern societies, was a very modern construction that accompanied everywhere the globalization of the Christian Western religious-secular divide.

Today it is becoming increasingly evident that the disenchantment of the world that accompanies the globalization of the secular immanent frame does not entail necessarily the disenchantment of consciousness, the decline of religion or the end of magic. On the contrary, it is compatible with all forms of re-enchantment and religious revival.

3. The Challenge of Religious Pluralism and the response of the Catholic Church to the Loss of Hegemony in Latin America

Since the 1960s, Latin American societies have also been undergoing a pronounced process of de-confessionalization. But de-confessionalization from ascribed Catholic confessional identities is not leading primarily as in Europe to unchurching (*Entkirchlichung)*, individualized "invisible religion" (T. Luckmann) or irreligious secularity, but rather to the expansion of religious pluralism, multiplying the religious rather than the secular options. While in Europe processes of modernization, urbanization, and democratization have been historically associated with un-churching, de-confessionalization and drastic secularization, in Latin America today as earlier in the United States processes of democratization, urbanization and modernization have been associated with fluid changes in denominational affiliation and born-again religious revivals.

The evidence on decline of Catholic affiliation and the growth of *Evangélicos*, particularly Pentecostal and neo-Pentecostal churches and congregations, is uniformly clear,

consistent and persistent throughout the region, although it may have reached a plateau at the higher end of Protestant growth in Chile and Guatemala. The data from the attached Tables on Church Growth and Installed Capacity in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Guatemala, Mexico and Peru indicate that the proportion of Non-Catholic Christians (WCD) in 2009 oscillated between the lower end of 10 percent of the population in Mexico and the higher end of 32 percent of the population in Chile and Guatemala. [16] The rest of the Latin American countries falls somewhere in between.

Data from the Brazilian Census (IBGE) indicate that the proportion of the population declaring itself Catholic has dropped progressively from 95.2 percent in 1940 to 68.5 percent in 2009, while the proportion of *evangélicos* has increased from 2.5 percent in 1940 to slightly over 20 percent in 2009. But when compared with the trends in the last two decades of the 20th century, in the first decade of this century one can notice a slight deacceleration in both the declining Catholic trend and the rising Protestant trend. In this respect one may speak cautiously of a relative stabilization in the dynamics of the two main competing religious groups in Brazil. This relative stabilization is accompanied by a slight rise in the proportion of those claiming to have "no religion," from 5 to 7 percent of the Brazilian population as well as a slight but persistent rise in the proportion of those following "other religions" from 1 percent in 1991 to close to 5 percent in 2009. Included in these alternative religions would be *espíritas,* followers of Afro-Brazilian religions as well as of other world religions and new religious movements.[17]

Other data from the accompanying tables also warrant a cautiously optimistic reading of the ability of the Catholic Church to respond successfully to the challenge of religious pluralism in Latin America. The proportion of Catholics in all six countries has been clearly deteriorating

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[16] See Table 3.3, 3.4, and 3.5.
[17] Marcelo Côrtes Neri, ed., *Novo Mapa das Religiôes* (Rio de Janeiro: FGV/CPS, 2011)

compared with the much faster rates of growth of Non-Catholic Christians. However in absolute terms the rates of Catholic growth have been also considerable, being able to keep up relatively well and falling only slightly behind the rapid change in population growth. Most significant, however, has been the consistent growth in practically all the categories of institutional "installed capacity" in all six countries, particularly in the dramatic expansion of pastoral centers and diocesan priest ordinations. For the first time in its history Latin America is being able to produce an endogenous clergy without having to rely on foreign missionaries and priests. The only significant and somewhat alarming exception is the rate of growth in the proportion of women religious (sisters) in the same period from 1970 to 2009, which evinces either a pronounced decline in Argentina, Chile and Brazil or a much smaller rate of growth in Guatemala, Mexico and Peru. I will return to this point in the final section of my paper.[18]

The most remarkable success story has been the dramatic growth of charismatic and neopentecostal Catholics, a development which at first was viewed with a certain suspicion by most of the hierarchy but now has been officially embraced by the Catholic Church throughout Latin America.[19] This growth, however, has contributed to a greater internal pluralism within Latin American Catholicism, so that analysts frequently distinguish between three major diverse tendencies: "Christian Base Communities" with origins in liberation theology, "*católicos renovados*" and "neopentecostals." [20] To these major groups, one should add the growing numbers of individual Catholics who in various surveys claim to be "*católico a mi manera*"

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[18] See the tables.

[19] On Brazil the most comprehensive study is Brenda Carranza, *Catolicismo Midiático* (Aparecida, SP: Editora Idéias & Letras, 2011). See also, Edward L. Cleary, *The Rise of Charismatic Catholicism in Latin America* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2011).

[20] Cecília Loreto Mariz, "Católicos de Libertação, Católicos Renovados e Neopentecostais," in *Cadernos CERIS*, n. 2, 2001, pp. 11-47.

(Catholic in my own way, cf. Parker) or *cuenta propista* (on one's own, cf. Mallimaci).[21] As

another expression of this internal pluralism, Catalina Romero also speaks of "the development

of public space and civil society *within the church.*"[22] It is worth pointing out that all these

analyses come from engaged Catholic social scientists, who have been observing and analyzing

Catholic trends in their respective countries for several decades.

Daniel Levine, one of the most perceptive analysts of the Latin American religious and

political transformations of the last decades, offers a good summary of the consequences of the

process of Catholic de-confessionalization and what he calls "the convergence of multiple

pluralisms":

The decay of Catholic monopoly and the growing pluralism of religious
expression and organization are accompanied by processes that have moved religious
groups, issues and leaders off center stage of public debate, contestation, coalition
formation, and political discussion. This is an inevitable consequence if important
currents of pluralism that have come with the democratization   of civil society and
politics of the last two decades. There are many more options and vehicles for expression
now than in the past; Church leaders can no longer monopolize the public expression of
religious comment, nor can they count on being king makers or critical veto players. The
effort is bound to run into multiple figures working the territory. There is simply a lot of
competition out there.[23]

Confronted with this almost dizzying external and internal religious pluralism, one of the

temptations of the Catholic hierarchy is to try to reassert once again at least internal institutional

control and hegemony over the Catholic faithful. Romero points out that in Peru "in the last

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[21]Cristián Parker, "Education and Increasing Religious Pluralism in Latin America: The Case of Chile," Pp. 131-181 in Hagopian, ed., *Religious Pluralism,* and "América Latina. ?Ya no es Católica? (Cambios Culturales, Transformación del Campo Religioso y Debilitamiento de la Iglesia), *América Latina Hoy* 41(December) 2005, 35-56 ; and Fortunato Mallimaci and Marta Villa, *Las Comunidades Eclesiales de Base y el Mundo de los Pobres en la Argentina: Conflicto y Tensiones por el Control del Poder en el Catolicismo* (Buenos Aires: CIEL/PIETTE/CONICET, 2007)
[22] Catalina Romero, "Religion and Public Spaces: Catholicism and Civil Society in Peru," Pp. 365-401 in Hagopian, ed., *Religious Pluralism.*
[23]Daniel H. Levine, "The Future as Seen from Aparecida," in Robert Pelton, ed., *Aparecida Quo Vadis?* (Scranton, PA: University of Scranton Press, 2008) p. 178.

decade, this space has begun to close once again due to the intervention of a number of bishops who are trying to take back control of public space in the church itself and in the way the church expresses itself and is represented in civil society, political society, and the state."[24] Other analysts have shown how throughout the region, fearing division and loss of control, bishops are cutting funds to dissident groups and striving for greater control over schools, universities and publications.[25]

Let me end by addressing what I, as a sociologist and engaged lay Catholic, consider to be the most critical issue and challenge facing the Church today not only in the liberal democratic societies of the developed North, but also throughout Latin America. All the available sociological evidence tends to indicate that women are particularly attracted to the new evangelical, Pentecostal, and charismatic communities. There are many reasons for this attraction, but one is surely the inadequate response of the Catholic Church so far to the "gender question."

Sociologically, in reaction to the Catholic Church's official defense of a "traditionalist" position on gender issues and a singularly obsessive focus on "sexual" moral issues, one can observe throughout the Catholic world a dual process of female secularization and erosion of the Church's authority on sexual morality. Perhaps for the first time in the accumulative waves of modern secularization women have left the Church in large numbers, most dramatically throughout Europe, but increasingly also throughout North America and incipiently in Latin America in a way that should sound alarm bells. Female secularization is probably the most significant factor in the drastic secularization of Western European societies since the 1960's and in the radical rupture of European Christian "religion as a chain of memory." Simply put, the

[24]Romero, "Religion and Public Spaces," p. 386?
[25]Carol Ann Drogus and Hannah Stewart-Gambino, *Activist Faith: Popular Women Activists and Their Movements in Democratic Brazil and Chile* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005).

male intelligentsia left the Church in the eighteenth century, the male bourgeoisie in the early nineteenth century, and the male proletariat in the late nineteenth and twentieth century. But as long as women remained in the church, children were baptized and raised as Christians and there was a future for the church and the possibility of a religious revival and a reversal of secularization. Once women begin to abandon massively the church, as has happened and continues to happen since the 1960's, the future of the Church begins to look sociologically much bleaker.

Sociologically, it would be a great mistake to think that this is a problem for Northern developed societies that does not affect so directly Southern developing societies, or at least not yet. But the centrality that issues of gender occupy in the *Documento de Aparecida*, at the May 2007 General Conference of Latin American and Caribbean Bishops would seem to belie this notion. The question is whether the Catholic Church's response has been the appropriate one so far. The evidence of increasing female secularization in Latin America is only incipient but it is in my view serious. Every sociologist of religion knows that females tend to be more religious than males practically in all societies and in all religious traditions. In Brazil, the proportion of males with "no religion", 8.52 percent, is significantly larger, almost double than the proportion of females without religion, which stands at 5 percent. Yet, one of the most intriguing pieces of evidence emerging from the last Brazilian census is that females are leaving the Catholic Church faster than males. Indeed, female membership or affiliation is consistently larger than male membership in every religious denomination in Brazil, Christian and non-Christian, Evangelical and Pentecostal, Afro-Brazilian and every other non-Christian religion, with the sole exception of the Catholic Church. The proportion of male Catholics, at 68.92% of the Brazilian population, is larger than the proportion of female Catholics, which reaches 67.96% of the

Brazilian population. The difference may not appear large, slightly over 1 percent of the Brazilian population which translates roughly into 2 million more men than women in the Church. But it is a telling indication of female exodus from the Church, from a time several decades ago when there were still more women than men within the Church. Men who leave the Church tend with greater frequency to become "secular", without religion, while women who leave the Church tend with greater frequency to join other Christian and non-Christian religions. Indeed, counting only Brazilians with some religious affiliation and excluding the 6.72 percent of the Brazilian population without religion, the gender gap becomes more pronounced, 71.6 percent of women who are Catholic versus 75.4 percent of men.

If one adds the other equally revealing evidence from the even more dramatic gender gap in vocations one should hear alarm bells. While the number of diocesan priests in Brazil from 1970 to 1979 increased from 2,630 to 3,956, at a 50 percent growth rate, the number of women religious dropped equally dramatically from 12,823 to 8,206, at a 36 percent rate of decline. This trend may augur well for the short-term reassertion of clerical control over the faithful and of episcopal control over women religious, but I do not think that sociologically speaking this is a trend that augurs well for the long term future of the Catholic Church.

A problematic trend within the Church today is the growing clericalization of diocesan priests, who are becoming increasingly detached from the laity and from the world, while the male and female religious orders are becoming ever more incarnated in the world. This entails a paradoxical reversal. The diocesan secular clergy is becoming ever more "religious" and detached from the world, while the male and female religious are becoming more engaged in the secular world. The religious orders remain today one of the rare places within the Church for relative autonomy from episcopal supervision and control.

Ultimately what is at stake is the model of Church that is being promoted. As a sociologist observing the latest ecclesiastical trends, I cannot but think that the model tends to be increasingly that of a purified clerical church in an impure secular world, a dramatic reversal at a time when we are ready to celebrate the 50th anniversary of *Gaudium et Spes*, the Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World. Perhaps unduly influenced by a sociological literature that has explained convincingly why Protestant conservative churches are growing while liberal ones are losing ground to secularization, the Catholic Church appears also at times to be retreating to its conservative core. But this may be an apt and winning strategy for Protestant sects within a pluralist competitive religious market, but it is a problematic strategy for a "universal" Catholic Church. From a sociological perspective one could argue that only a Church that embraces and fosters its rich internal pluralism can have a chance to offer a successful response to the many and plural challenges that emerge from an increasingly pluralist world and remain "catholic" and "universal".