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Secularization elsewhere: it is more complicated than that

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Abstract

This paper argues that the modern secularization thesis is in the first place an explanation of the past of European societies and their colonial offshoots and that, contra its critics, it was not intended as a universal template. Such momentous historical changes cannot simply be repeated if only because, while the secularization of Europe was unprecedented, largely secular societies, that can attract emulation or rejection, now exist. What we might expect, and why, is detailed before the case of Brazil is considered. The paper concludes that, while it is too early to be certain that Brazilian changes fit the expectation that modernization weakens religion, we can probably conclude that they are minimally consistent with that expectation.

***Keywords*:** Secularization. Brazil. Modernization.

Introduction

It is no surprise that ideas are accidentally caricatured by scholars whose interest in them is slight. What is remarkable about the debate over the secularization thesis is that it is often caricatured by sociologists of religion. It is frequently asserted that the secularization thesis predicts the complete disappearance of religion from Western societies and the inevitable secularization of the rest of the world – for example, Joppke (2016, p. 43). The first is clearly a mistake. Bryan Wilson sensibly defines secularization as the decline in the *social significance* of religion (WILSON, 2016, p. 4). That should have some reciprocal relationship with popular religiosity: as religion loses social power, it also loses persuasiveness and as the proportion of the population that is religious declines, so will its social significance. Nonetheless, it is quite possible that, while the majority of the population

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of a largely secular society becomes religiously indifferent, a small minority will continue to hold religious or spiritual notions. However, so long as the operating principle of such societies is the individual's right to believe what he or she wishes and so long as there is any significant degree of social diversity, then religious or spiritual seeking will be characterised by a high degree of idiosyncrasy because there is no serious social pressure to shape the beliefs of individuals into a common faith. But it is the second part of the caricature – the *inevitable* secularization of the currently religious parts of the world – that concerns me in this essay. My theme is the application of the secularization thesis to what, with rather shaky chronology, used to be called the Third World and is now, with equally shaky geography, called the Global South. I will make some tentative suggestions about what can be expected of secularization "elsewhere" but my primary concern is the rather discipline-focussed one of making clear that extrapolating from the secularization thesis is considerably more complicated than the caricatures of its critics would suggest.

1 Clarification of Terms

Before anything else is said it is useful to clarify terms. By "secular" I mean the absence of the religious. The religious and the secular are not mirror images; like smoking and not smoking, they complement each other. By "secularization" I mean the long-run process of societies becoming less religious. The sociological explanation of secularization sees it as largely a result of unintended and unanticipated consequences of those social changes that we gloss as "modernization". "Secularism" is the philosophical and political preference for the secular society over that heavily shaped by religion. 'Secularists' are people who believe in secularism and who promote the secular. Although I do not have space here to justify this, sociologists generally differ from historians of ideas in that they do not think secularists terribly significant in the process of secularization. Important shifts in societies from more to less religious have usually been driven by complex long-run social forces; secularists join the process late, as cheer leaders for changes that are already under way. They are usually symptoms, not causes.

The secularization thesis posits a non-accidental relationship between modernization and secularization (BRUCE, 2011). By modernization I mean a complex of most or all of the following related changes: the rationalization

of thought and public life; increasing individualism, egalitarianism, and social diversity; industrialization and growth in technological consciousness; structural-functional differentiation; increased social differentiation; increased literacy and education; democratization; the demographic transition from high fertility and high death rates to low death rates and low fertility; and urbanization.

2 The secularization thesis

2.1 The Remit of the Secularization Thesis

The secularization thesis as suggested by Max Weber and elaborated by Bryan Wilson (2016), Peter Berger (1969), Thomas Luckmann (1967), David Martin (1978), me (2014) and many others is not, in the first place, a universal predictive template. It is an attempt to explain the present and past of Europe and its colonial offshoots. Arguments about the inevitably, or otherwise, of secularization often focus on the wrong thing. If we are right that modernization causes secularization then whenever one has modernization one should have secularization and, with due allowance for local contingencies, I would stand by that proposition. But modernization is far from inevitable: consider the fate of many African countries since their independence. Nor is it inevitable that all elements of the Western experience of modernization will be reproduced in the same package: as the Chinese and Russian experiences show, the technological elements and some of the economic changes we saw in the West may be reproduced within very different political and social contexts. But even when societies do now modernize, the experience of the West cannot simply be repeated for the simple reason that the largely secular West already exists. Europe's secularization was novel. Largely secular societies now exist and they may be emulated (as with Kemal Ataturk in Turkey) or they may be rejected (as with the 1979 Iranian Revolution). Further, because western powers are involved in the politics of Muslim lands, reactions to the secular may be "distorted" by contingent political considerations that overlay or overrule responses to the more enduring and systemic elements of the secular.

2.2 Secularization Innate and Secularization Reactive

In thinking about secularization outside the West we can usefully divide causes into innate and reactive. If the secularization thesis is largely

correct, all or most of its elements will eventually be repeated wherever there is modernization. But they may appear "early" if those with political power decide to impose them or if the popular response to global communication is to emulate some western practice. Turkey has already been mentioned as an example of initially anachronistic elite imposition of formal institutional secularization. We could add the example of the communist imposition of a secular state across central and eastern Europe and parts of Asia. For examples of popular acceptance of western practices we can think of the attitudes to gender roles of many middle class people in Cairo, Kuala Lumpur, or Calcutta: not imposed by a liberalising elite but taken up by those who can see what gender equality (or something approximating it) looks like from movies, television and now satellite TV, and who like what they see.

Or secularising forces may be retarded by concerted opposition. It is not difficult to think of examples of innate secularizing forces being deliberately repelled, though many of the obvious examples are actually instances of something slightly different. Afghanistan, for example, was not well down the road of secularization (despite the timid attempts of the short-lived communist administration) before the Taliban intervened. What the Taliban prevented was not secularization but the logically-and-causally-prior modernization.

Ironically, the prior existence of largely secular societies may retard change elsewhere by providing an 'escape valve": across the Middle East liberals despairing of social change have migrated to Europe and the USA and thus reduced the pressure for change.

Examples of a modernizing society retarding the secularizing consequences of that modernization are less easy to find (for the good reason that there is a powerful socio-logical causal connection) but there are examples of what Roy Wallis and I called "cultural defence" (WALLIS; BRUCE, 1992). In Ireland and Poland the Catholic Church enjoyed considerable popularity because it was seen as an autonomous guarantor of national identity against an oppressor of a different religion. The British in Ireland and the Russian-backed communists in Poland could take over the mass media, the court system, the educational institutions, the military and the polity but, because they did not share the Catholicism of the Irish or the Polish, they could not take over the Church and it remained the only institution that could be relied on to represent the common people and their interests.

The separation of innate and reactive secularization is, of course, analytical artifice: many elements of the secularization thesis are both innate and reactive. For example, the gradual acceptance of the idea that all people are fundamentally similar and should enjoy rights irrespective of religious identification was a subtle consequence of a variety of changes – the demands of the economy for greater labour mobility and the proliferation of new occupations – that weakened the power of feudal 'estate', class, ethnic and other stratified group identities, and allowed us to think of the 'real' person distinct from his or her role in any particular system of stratification; that change was innate to the modernization/secularization process. But having been philosophically elaborated and given a firm base in the thinking of many powerful societies, it could be promoted as virtuous, independent of its original context, by western societies and by international organizations such as the United Nations. For example, being overwhelmingly Lutheran, the Scandinavian countries had little or no internal religious diversity to accommodate but by the mid-nineteenth century the democratic reforms that were introduced came with the expectation of first religious toleration and then religious liberty. No matter how little they may mean it, states now wishing to join the United Nations have to subscribe to a charter which declares inalienable and universal human rights. Nonetheless the innate/reactive distinction is useful in thinking about secularization outside the West.

If we appreciate that modernization is not simple a matter of the passage of time (so that all societies now extant are 'modern') but is a matter of particular types of social development, we also appreciate another important principle: that now-extant societies may be at different points in a similar journey of change. An important example is the individualization of religion in which the religious division of labour that sees a small body of professionals placating God on behalf of a largely passive laity is replaced by an active pious laity. In the legal language of responsibility, people now attained salvation "severally" rather than "jointly". Europe's Protestant Reformation, which occurred in the sixteenth century, has contemporary parallels. The conversion of large numbers of Latin Americans from Catholicism to Pentecostal Protestantism is a literal replay, four centuries later, of Europe's Reformation. But we also see something similar in Islam. We can understand better the clash between traditional Islam and Islamic fundamentalism if, in addition

to concentrating on fundamentalism's rejection of secular modernity, we note the Reformation parallels. Martin Luther would have recognised what the puritans of the Taliban, Iran's Revolutionary Guards, and Saudi's Wahhabi religious police are trying to do in breaking reliance on saints as intermediaries between humanity and God, in imposing strict standards on all Muslims, and in asserting the authority of a sacred text over the accretions of centuries of tradition (GELLNER, 1992).

2.3 Changes Universal and Changes Contingent

Let us, for the purposes of analysis, leave aside reactive secularization and concentrate on the playing out of natural or innate consequences of modernization. The important point to appreciate is that, even without reaction to existing secular models either accelerating or retarding secularization, exactly how changes play out will depend on a very wide variety of local contingencies. I will demonstrate the point with some examples.

a) Rationalization

Max Weber sees the rationalization of thought and of social organization as key features of modernization. My qualification is that, even in relatively homogenous societies, some social groups will affected by such forces earlier and more severely than others. It has often been remarked that men are generally less religious than women (TRZEBIATOWSKA; BRUCE, 2012). There are many reasons for this but a powerful one is that men were more likely than women, and earlier than women, to work in large-scale enterprises removed from the domestic context, and to work in social positions which require the universalistic treatment of customers, clients, and colleagues and which privilege instrumental over expressive orientations. As Talcott Parsons pointed out, in the public sphere we are required to confine discrimination to the matter in hand, to pursue efficiency, and to subject our work methods to rational scrutiny and experimentation. Precisely because it allows particularism, tradition, and expressivity, the domestic sphere offers a haven from the impersonality of the public sphere (PARSONS; BALES, 1955).

b) Science and Technology

The relationship between science and religion is often misunderstood. Advances in scientific knowledge have indeed proved some long-held elements

of the Christian worldview to be wrong: the earth is not the centre of planetary movement; heaven and hell are not respectively just above and below our feet; the earth is vastly older than any date suggested by the Bible; and something like Charles Darwin's theory of evolution via natural selection offers a more plausible account of the origins of the species than does the Biblical version in Genesis 1-12. However, scientific knowledge in the abstract can be neutralised with a variety of social techniques such as ignoring threatening ideas or devaluing them by stigmatising their carriers. What is more insidious are the effects of science-based technology. In providing solutions to practical problems that are patently more effective than the religious predecessors,, technology reduces drastically the occasions on which we naturally resort to religion and reduces the status of religious professionals relative to that of scientists, engineers, doctors and secular professionals. In 1747 John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, wrote a popular medical textbook. Now very few of us would consult our priest about a medical problem before we consulted our doctor.

As an aside I might add that this example shows how misplaced is the complaint of Christians that their faith "has been marginalised", the active verb form suggesting the change was the work of some active body of secularists. In the case of problem-solving, religion "became marginal" – a very different matter – because sheep dip offered better protection against fly strike than did prayer, clean water and effective sewerage did more for health than did piety, and triple by-pass surgery extended far more lives than did passive acceptance of divine providence.

A subtle but important consequence of the development of science-based technology is what Martin neatly summarised as increased "mastery over fate" (MARTIN, 1969, p. 116). Increasing ability to control our environments much reduces the sense of helpless resignation that is the lot of the pre-modern person. This does not prevent us being religious but it makes less likely the attitude of subordination implied in the notion of worship. What we see in the sphere of religion is a gradual growth in assertiveness and a move from authoritative hierarchical religion to a consumerist orientation in which each individual decides what he or she will believe and how much he or she will commit to it.

Again, the process may be general but the initial impact will be varied. Although effective technology eventually penetrates and changes the entire society, its initial impact is greater on the industrial and urban core than on the rural peripheries.

c) Individual Liberty

Using World Values Survey data, Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart demonstrate that there is a common pattern in all the societies surveyed, and that includes a number of non-Christian societies. Prosperity and political stability are positively correlated with declining (or increasingly idiosyncratic expressions of) religious commitment (NORRIS; INGLEHART, 2004). They explain this with a complicated theory which presses Maslow's hierarchy-of-needs idea into the sort of service for which it was never intended. There seems a much simpler explanation that also explains the 'cultural defence' pattern that sees religion in Europe remain popular where it serves to integrate a people with a common religion which is threatened by an enemy of a different religion or, in the case of communist oppression, no religion. When people feel threatened, they are likely to put loyalty to the group (and hence to its identifying features) above the individual preference to deviate. When the threat recedes, people find the liberty to indulge their personal preferences, which may mean reducing the effort they put into ensuring their children are socialized into the dominant religion and increasing indifference to the attempts of community moral guardians to prevent religious dereliction.

In addition to the cultural defence contingency, there are also differences in local economic and social organization which give a community more or less power over the individual. To give a micro example: the western Scottish island of Lewis remained religious long after the northern Scottish Shetland and Orkney islands secularised and one key difference was the distribution of the population. In Lewis the crofts were gathered in villages and there was considerable reliance on common grazing which was managed by the crofters themselves. This meant that people could monitor each other's adherence to social norms and could effectively censure deviants (by shunning or refusing to assist with loans of farm machines, for example). In Shetland and Orkney crofts were typically much larger, there was less reliance on common grazing, and crofts were spread thinly but evenly across the countryside. Hence there

was a less firm structural base to community cohesion and deviation from community standards was much easier (BRUCE, 2016).

d) Diversity

The secularizing consequences of religious pluralism will be felt first by those societies which possess a considerable degree of diversity. The drafters of the US constitution had to deal with the fact that, while most of the original colonies had "established" churches, they were not the same one and most colonies also possessed significant dissident minorities. Hence the first amendment's erection of what Thomas Jefferson, in a letter to the Baptists of Danbury, called a clear wall of separation between church and state (GAUSTAD, 2003). The Scandinavian societies were homogenously Lutheran and thus faced far less practical demand for religious toleration. Norway permitted the common people (but not state officials) to leave the state church for one of a list of acceptable alternatives in 1845; full liberty did not occur till 1956. Sweden made similar changes in 1860 and 1951 respectively (BRUCE, 2003, p. 171). But the secularizing of state institutions is not the same as the secularizing effect of positive social interaction with people of a different religion. One of the reasons the island of Lewis remained religious longer than the Shetland and Orkney islands is that Lewis was unusually homogenous in its religion. Almost everyone belonged to the Calvinistic evangelical Free Church of Scotland. In contrast the northern isles had a considerable degree of religious diversity.

A further complicating contingency is that, for a variety of local reasons, the key pre-condition for diversity to have a secularizing effect may be rejected. Berger is right that religious diversity weakens religious commitment by reducing the certainty with which one can hold one's beliefs and the claims to virtue which can be made for any particular religious identity. It is difficult to assert with conviction that one's faith has a monopoly of virtue when one has pleasurable and effective relationships with people of different faiths. And that become even more the case with intermarriage: a Catholic mother will find it hard to convince her children that they *must* attend Catholic Mass when Daddy is a Protestant. As Berger outlines, the general effect of pluralism is for all faiths to be relativized. But this assumes that it is no longer acceptable to apply one of the four more traditional responses to diversity: the pagans

should be exterminated, expelled, forced to convert, or isolated in a "millet" (as with Christians and Jews in the Muslim Ottoman Empire) or ghetto (as in the case of Jews in Central and Eastern Europe). There are many causes of the cultural change that makes such strategies unacceptable. Some are general: as already noted, there seems to be a clear association between a certain level of economic development and the idea that, despite their apparent differences in wealth and status, all people are "really" the same and should be treated in roughly equal manner. Some are related to the political histories of nations. The British toleration of religious diversity was encouraged by the failure of repression to retard the spread of dissent and by the dawning realization that the stability of the state did not depend on religious homogeneity. That realization might have dawned sooner had the state not been threatened externally by its Catholic neighbours of France, Portugal and Spain, and internally by Catholic support for the restoration of the Stewart monarchy. But even in the twentieth century local conflict can cause a reversion to the pre-modern responses to diversity. When in 1922 three-quarters of the land mass of Ireland won its independence from Britain as the Irish Free State, Irish Catholics in parts of the South revenged themselves for what they felt to be centuries of oppression by murdering or expelling Protestants. I might add that one way we know this was an adherent anachronistic reaction is that a conspiracy of embarrassed silence prevented the extent of violence against Protestants in the south of Ireland being admitted and widely discussed for half-a-century.

In summary, we need to recognise that the world is complex. Even if it is the case (as I firmly believe) that the secularization thesis expresses a more-than-adequate explanation of the relationship between modernization and secularization, we would be foolish to expect (a) that all societies will modernise or (b) that all the elements of the secularization thesis will work in precisely the same way anywhere else as they did in Europe's past. Indeed, we would be foolish to suppose that all the elements of the secularization thesis worked out in precisely the same way in all western societies.

The task of sociology is to draw general patterns out of the mass of historical detail. The rational choice sociologists led by Rodney Stark think the secularization thesis is plain wrong. I have responded to their argument in

detail elsewhere (BRUCE, 1999) and concentrate here on those sociologists who are more-or-less in the secularization camp. For them the issue is *just how far* we can generalise. As I have tried to show in precis form above, even a dyed-in-the-wool secularizationist recognises that there are many contingencies, large and small, that influence precisely how secularizing forces express themselves in any particular setting: though we might wish it was less complex, that is just what the world is like. David Martin's *A General Theory of Secularization* has the level of generalization about right (MARTIN, 1978). He differs from others in leaving open the possibility that the trends we have seen in the West since the mid-nineteenth century are merely the down side of a repeating cycle and hence that there may be religious revival in the West but his argument that the principal secularizing forces are mediated by differences in religious culture, in political history, and in economic and social development is little different from my own position.

3 Religion in Brazil

Not being an expert on either Latin America in general, or Brazil in particular, my thoughts about the secularization of Brazil are tentative at best. But it is worth making some tentative observations.

Brazil is conventionally modern in now having a high degree of formal institutional secularization. There is a clear separation of church and state. When it became independent of Portugal in 1822, it made the hegemonic Catholic Church the official state religion but when it became a republic in 1889 the tie was broken, though, as with the formal secularization of those central and eastern European societies dominated by communism from 1945, the impetus for juridical secularity came more from political theory than from the need to accommodate diverse religions.

It was not until the end of the twentieth century that Catholic hegemony was challenged. As already noted, there are obvious parallels between Brazil's recent changes and the European Reformation of the sixteenth century. In 1970, 92 per cent of Brazilians were Roman Catholic. Thirty years later, the figure was 74 per cent and in 2009, it was 68 per cent (MOTTA, 2014). There has been a considerable shift to Pentecostal forms of Protestantism, which Motta estimates at 13 per cent in 2009: more than half of the total

Protestant population. As the secularization thesis would expect, that change most effected the more urban and industrial south and south-east.

Catholic and Marxist critics dismiss Pentecostalism as a US export, designed to divert energies that would otherwise fuel a left-wing revolution. We can separate the two parts of that claim: what made the context fertile for an emotional cathartic individualist religion (rapid social change) and the source of the response (American imperialism). Elie Halevy made a similar case in arguing that the rise of Methodism in the UK explains why it did not experience social upheaval parallel to the French revolution but he did not identify an external source for Methodism (Halevy, 1937). Instead he assumed its origins were internal: a natural selection from the perpetually-available range of options within Christianity. The environmental observation has its Latin American parallel: the rapid decline of the rural economy and growth of the cities. And we know that North American Pentecostal television evangelists and preachers put considerable resource into Latin America but that most Latin American Pentecostal churches funders and promoters were local suggests that the contentious source question can be left to one side as we recognise that Pentecostalism has appealed because it offered a socially-functional response to social upheaval that is more effective than the Catholic Church's flirtation with Marxism (in the form of Liberation Theology) or the subsequent conservative reaction. Both those Catholic responses suffered from the major defect that they tried to keep alive the image of an organic community against the individualistic tide of urbanization and capitalism and, even in the form of Liberation Theology, the model of authority remained hierarchical: the Church knew best. In place of the organic communal Catholicism associated with the unchanging hierarchical rural hacienda, Pentecostalism offers supportive voluntary associations based on an essentially individualistic, demotic and puritanical faith that stresses the important of continence, abstinence and sobriety; values that are seen as better suited to an urban society, a democratic polity, and a capitalist economy.

Whether religion has benefitted from the sort of cultural defence role we see in Ireland or Poland is less clear. As all of its neighbours were also hegemonically Catholic, the Church could not, as religion did in the component republics of the former Yugoslavia, enjoy a boost from external conflict but the Church may have benefitted somewhat from its opposition to

the military junta that ruled Brazil from 1964 to 1980. Liberation theology may have been more popular with young idealists in the West than with its intended beneficiaries in Latin America but the Church in Brazil did oppose the junta and was punished for it. Post-1980 party politics has seen the active involvement of both the Catholic Church and Pentecostal churches trying to protect their competing institutional interests and their shared conservative socio-moral agenda. However, the presidential victories of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (2003-2010) and Dilma Rousseff (2010 till her removal from office in 2016), both the least religious candidates in their contests, suggests such involvement was of limited value.

Superficially Brazil remains a highly religious society. According to 1998 World Values Survey data Brazil ranked third after Poland and Nigeria in positive responses to "Are you religious?" and second only to Nigeria in claimed belief in God (Inglehart, Basanez and Moreno, 1998). However, as many commentators have noted, much Brazilian Catholicism seems conventional and nominal: "[…] most [...] do not attend Catholic cults, not do they take part in official religious activities, are routinely exposed to ecclesiastical authority, or follow their moral, doctrinal or religious guidelines" (MARIANO; ORO 2011, p. 246). And there are signs of this dereliction in the WVS data: only 51 per cent of Brazilians claimed to believe in heaven and only 31 believed in hell. The "personal God" figure was also low: only 56 per cent. One Catholic teaching that is obviously neglected is the Church's repudiation of artificial methods of contraception. In the 1960s, Brazil's fertility rate was around 6 children per woman. By 2012 this had fallen to 1.82 (JENKINS, 2013). Conservative Christian views on homosexuality also seem to be relatively unpopular: Brazil approved same-sex unions in 2004.

A common mistake in much thinking about the fate of religion is to suppose that it rests on adults choosing to maintain or to abandon religious affiliations. Generally more important is the success, or otherwise, of the family transmission of religious values. Even in a situation of flux in religious affiliations (such as the rapid growth of Pentecostalism) childhood socialization remains significant because such flux normally involves adults who have been socialised in some religion changing their affiliation rather than the recruitment of the religiously indifferent. In the modern world, where global

communication makes the option of religious indifference well-known, we probably cannot expect widespread nominalism to be an inter-generationally stable condition. The pretence involved in nominalism (which, in effect says, "I don't actually believe this stuff but I say and occasionally act as if I did") is difficult to transmit across generations. Where a society has a single faith, strongly supported by all important social institutions and deeply embedded in all social relationships and social interaction, inertia will allow the faith to survive with a relatively small core of seriously committed adherents: on a parallel with the functional equivalence of an external and an internal skeleton, the religiosity of a thoroughly religious society obviates the need for a religiosity of a mass of pious individuals. But in a society with largely secular social institutions, a good degree of religious diversity, a significant and growing number of religiously indifferent people, and an awareness that, in other prosperous and attractive parts of the world, not being religious is the popular option, religious nominalism is precarious.

There are signs of this in Brazil. In 2013, 9 per cent of Brazilians said they followed no religion; but the figure that was much higher among those under 20 than among the elderly (JENKINS, 2013). And as few people who were not socialized into a religious faith when young become religious in late adulthood, this should presage an overall decline in levels of religiosity. The novelty of Pentecostalism (a Pentecostalist now aged 30 may well have parents who were founder members of his or her church) may give its adherents local reasons to remain loyal even after doubts and reservations set in and thus retard the decline of religiosity among Pentecostalists but at the same time, their work in making religion a matter of personal choice rather than inherited necessity has created the condition for a rapid decline in the next few generations.

4 Conclusion

To return to my opening remarks, the secularization of the West cannot simply be a template that shapes the development of other societies because the very existence of largely secular societies changes the environment for all other societies that cannot effectively insulate and isolate themselves. Globalization has made religious indifference a well-known option to an extent unknown

in Britain in the 1800s. As Brazilians have no good geo-political reason to reject secularization, we can expect that the boost to religiosity given by the Pentecostal 'Reformation' to be relatively short-lived. If Brazil continues to enjoy economic growth and continues to be informed by egalitarian and democratic values (neither of which should be taken-for-granted) we can expect that the more attractive aspects of secular society – essentially variants on the theme of personal freedom – to become ever more powerful. It is far too early to be confident that the religious culture of Brazil is changing in ways that confirm the general applicability of the secularization thesis but we can minimally say that there does not seem to be anything currently occurring in Brazil that need lead us to conclude that the thesis is mistaken.

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Secularização em outro lugar: é mais complicado do que isso

Resumo[2]

Este artigo defende que a tese moderna da secularização é, acima de tudo, uma explicação do passado das sociedades europeias e de seus territórios coloniais e que, contrariamente a seus críticos, não foi concebida como um modelo universal. Tais mudanças históricas relevantes não podem ser simplesmente repetidas porque, embora a secularização da Europa não tenha tido precedentes, atualmente existem sociedades amplamente seculares que podem atrair emulação ou rejeição. O que se pode esperar e por quê, é detalhado antes de se considerar o caso brasileiro. O artigo conclui que, não obstante seja cedo para garantir que as mutações brasileiras se encaixam na expetativa de que a modernização enfraquece a religião, provavelmente podemos concluir que são minimamente consistentes com essa expetativa.

***Palavras-chave*:** Secularização, Brasil. Modernização.

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2 Resumo traduzido por Jorge Botelho Moniz.