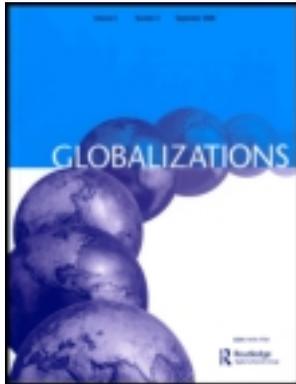


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Religious Globalisms in the Post-Secular Age

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ABSTRACT *This article explores the interconnections between mounting global crises and the emergence of the post-secular. Specifically, the article argues that the post-secular is both a description of and a response to shifting global realities in the twenty-first century. It describes the crisis of secular rationalism, brought about in many ways by an overemphasis on economic rationalism and neoliberalism (Steger et al., 2013). Yet, as noted by Jürgen Habermas (2006, 2008), Mariano Barbato (2010), and Justin Beaumont and Paul Cloke (2012), the post-secular offers a way of resisting, reforming, and potentially revolutionizing these dominant secular, rationalist, neoliberal frameworks that presently shape global politics and society. We suggest, however, that the influence of globalization has been under-theorized in these previous studies. In particular we argue that the intersection between the post-secular and emerging global political ideologies of market and justice globalisms is having a profound impact on religious movements, generating 'religious globalisms' that offer alternative responses to global crises around finance, poverty, and climate.*

Keywords: post-secular, religious globalisms, neoliberalism, globalization

During the same 30-year period that marked the ascendancy of neoliberal economics and information and communication technology, religion has experienced a dramatic resurgence in the global public sphere. The 'return of religion' and the concurrent 'crisis of secularism' (Calhoun et al., 2011; Petito and Hatzopoulos, 2003) have defied the expectations of many scholars and policymakers. Still steeped in the modernist 'secularization of politics' thesis, these commentators cast religion as a largely spent force, seemingly spiraling toward its inevitable demise as secular rationalism was gaining supremacy around the world (Berger, 1967; Fox, 2001, pp. 54–5; Marx and Engels, 1992 [1848], p. 24; Weber, 1918, pp. 139, 142–3). Both

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traditional and new forms of religion, however, have refused to heed such sweeping pronouncements of their impending death. Instead, they have thrived in the global political landscape of the twenty-first century while, paradoxically, secularism has encountered a serious problem of political legitimization (Berger, 1999; Casanova, 1994; Hurd, 2008; Mavelli, 2012a; Philpott, 2002; Wilson, 2012).

How can we explain that religion's growing political influence across the globe has been *helped* by globalization, democratization, international law, and technology—forces that were supposed to secure the ultimate victory of rationalism and secularism? While several theories have been put forward in response to this question, two incisive theses have appeared in a recent study on the subject. Its authors suggest, firstly, that the dramatic and worldwide increase in the political influence of religion occurring in the last few decades has been driven by religious people's desire for freedom for their communities to assemble and publicly profess their faiths and programs. In other words, the resurgent religions have benefited from, rather than been hindered by, globalization and other forces of the modern, secular world. The authors' second thesis suggests that various forms of 'political theology'—sets of ideas that religious communities hold about political authority and justice—have been *strengthened* as a result of the shifting relationship between the spheres of politics and religion fueled by the globalization of secularism (Toft et al., pp. 9–10).

While sharing these scholars' sensitivity to the impact of globalization on religion's political comeback, we suggest that understanding the significance of this phenomenon requires that we move beyond generalizations and explore, precisely, what sort of globalization dynamics facilitate what kind of religious resurgences. While helpful in general terms, Toft, Philpott, and Shah's identification of 'globalization' as driving our current transition into a post-secular era remains far too broad to help us understand which manifestations of globalization may contribute to the perceived resurgence of 'political theology' and the emerging troubles of secularism (Bretherton, 2010; Habermas, 2006; Mendieta and Vanantwerpen, 2011; Steger, 2008; Wilson, 2012).

In this article, we argue that 'globalization'—understood as neoliberal economic globalization—is contributing in many ways to an increasing questioning of secular rationalism as the main arbiter of acceptable knowledge in contemporary global politics. We further suggest that the post-secular is producing multiple religious globalisms—religiously infused political ideologies that inspire the faithful to pursue a particular vision for society—that operate as both supporters of and loci of resistance to dominant forms of neoliberal globalization. We identify three such religious globalisms—neoliberal religious globalisms, religious justice globalisms and neotraditional religious globalisms—though this list is by no means exhaustive.

The concept of the post-secular is still fluid, with multiple debates about its meaning and application (Mavelli and Petito, 2012). Yet notions of 'resistance' and 'alternatives' feature prominently in efforts to define and describe this emerging phenomenon. The post-secular challenges the dominance of secularism, particularly militant forms of secularism that police the borders of the public sphere and limit expressions of religious argumentation and belief from entering therein. Contrary to the assumptions of such militant secularism, which argues that religion is irrational and causes only violence and chaos when permitted in the public sphere, the post-secular argues that religion can also be an important source of meaning and identity, one that can open up alternative ways of being in and responding to the world, that can positively contribute to the pursuit of justice and emancipation for humanity (Barbato, 2010; Beaumont and Cloke, 2012; Habermas, 2006; Mavelli and Petito, 2012).

Resisting such dogmatic rejections of religion as irrational and prone to wreak chaos and violence on the public sphere (Dombrowski, 2001, p. 4; Rorty, 2003), we are nonetheless conscious that religion manifests at the global level in a variety of ways, positive and negative, constructive and destructive. We share with other observers the ‘post-secular’ conviction that the religious beliefs of billions of people constitute an important source of meaning and identity that routinely traverse the conventional secular–sacred divide (Cavanaugh, 2009; Eberle, 2002, p. 304; Strenski, 2010). Let us be clear we are not suggesting a return to arrangements where religion dominated the public sphere or the state-sponsored privileging of specific religious practices in the public sphere. Nonetheless, we point to the possibility that religion can open up alternative ways of being in and responding to the world that can positively contribute to emancipatory forms of resistance to oppressive and discriminatory practices (Barbato, 2010; Beaumont and Cloke, 2012), while remaining critical of religion’s own tendencies to domination and exclusion.

The majority of academic literature dedicated to identifying post-secular forms of resistance has focused on the local, the individual and abstract-theoretical frameworks. Beaumont and Cloke (2012), for example, have examined the ways in which local faith-based organizations in urban contexts challenge the processes and values associated with neoliberal policies of deregulation, privatization, and liberalization that contribute to poverty and marginalization. Mariano Barbato (2010) has highlighted the language of the pilgrim as an important source of resistance for individuals in addressing the materialistic urges of late capitalism, while Luca Mavelli (2012b) has emphasized the individual body as an important site of post-secular resistance in revolutionary social contexts such as the Arab Spring. Habermas’s work on the subject (2006, 2008) epitomizes the abstract-theoretical conceptualization of the post-secular as a form of resistance to dominant forms of secular rationalism that can work to exclude other useful contributions to public debate, in particular religion. Within international relations, post-secular analysis has been limited by the discipline’s traditional focus on the nation-state, so far failing to adequately take into account the multi-tiered structures of authority and governance in contemporary global politics (Camilleri, 2012, pp. 1030–1, 1033).

Given the centrality of processes of globalization in the emergence of the post-secular as a form of resistance (Barbato, 2010; Beaumont and Cloke, 2012), it seems imperative to also consider how post-secular resistance and engagement is manifesting at the global level. This is the task we undertake in this article, thereby also addressing Camilleri’s (2012) recent call for post-secular theorizing that goes beyond the nation-state. We examine how the post-secular both informs and takes shape as global projects of political practice and resistance—especially at the ideological level in the form of what we call ‘religious globalisms’ (Steger, 2009).

We begin by outlining the key features of the neoliberal and secular rationalist crises relevant for our analysis. We then explore the interconnections between globalization, resistance, and the emergence of the post-secular. In the main section of this article, we examine how the post-secular at the global level is constituted and enacted in terms of three distinct types of religious globalisms. We characterize two of these variants as forms of post-secular global resistance that contest the dominance of neoliberal market globalism (and its religious variant) by explicitly resorting to religious argumentation. Finding conceptual variations both within and between each of these belief systems, we nonetheless argue that ‘religious globalisms’ fall into a category that differs from the two previously identified sub-families of ‘globalisms,’ namely ‘market globalism’ and ‘justice globalism’.

Neoliberalism, Secularism, and Global Crisis

In the last few years, ‘crisis’ has become a ubiquitous signifier, often appearing in tandem with the familiar buzzword ‘globalization’. Across political, social, economic, and cultural dimensions, globalizing forces, such as economic and political integration, population flows and technological advances both generate and respond to new ‘global problems’ including financial volatility, climate change, increasing food scarcity, pandemics such as AIDS and SARS, widening disparities in wealth and wellbeing, increasing migratory pressures, manifold cultural and religious conflicts, and transnational terrorism (Gills, 2010; Houtart, 2010).

Despite a lack of consensus about the best solutions to contemporary global problems, there is emerging agreement about their causes. Political leaders and activists across a wide center-to-left spectrum have specifically identified neoliberal economic policies that promote rampant growth at the expense of the environment, human dignity, and social cohesion as a key factor contributing to global crises. Economists point to the inherent instability in neoliberalism (Crotty, 2009; Patomäki, 2009), even those who were once faithful disciples of market globalism (Soros, 2008; Wolf, 2009). Advocates for action on climate change stress that the earth’s finite resources cannot support a global economic system and ideology that is geared around infinite consumption and growth.¹ Recent global food crises have been clearly linked to rising speculative trade in food staples, such as rice, wheat, and maize (Chand, 2008; Schutter, 2010). Thus, pundits are increasingly questioning neoliberalism’s utility as a policy framework.

The perceived failure of neoliberalism has contributed to a reconsideration of secular rationalism’s dominance as the main arbiter of acceptable public reasoning. After all, as critics from the global justice movement (GJM) have emphasized, neoliberalism operates according to strict rationalist logic, with little consideration of moral or ethical issues (George, 2001; Grassroots Global Justice, 2009; Steger, 2009; World Council of Churches, 2009). The neoliberal emphasis on market forces—the economic core of the larger ideological constellation we call ‘market globalism’—ignores a wealth of alternative sources of meaning and values that constitute important components of the human experience.

As recent critiques have pointed out, much the same applies to secular rationalism (Bleiker, 2009; Habermas, 2006; Wilson, 2012). For too long, public and academic discourses, particularly within Western contexts, have been governed by strict secular rationalist logic. This prevailing dynamic has excluded not only religious arguments and ideas from consideration in public debate (Eberle, 2002; Rorty, 2003), but also emotions and aesthetics by deeming these too ‘subjective’ (Bleiker, 2009). The legitimate framework for public debate consisted of secular-rational arguments judged acceptable to a majority of citizens (Dombrowski, 2001; Rawls, 1999).

However, as Christopher Eberle (2002, pp. 313–14) has observed, the assumptions surrounding the acceptability of secular grounds over religious grounds made especially by liberal scholars are misleading (see e.g. Rawls, 1999; Rorty, 2003). Eberle argues that the term “‘secular’ connotes “‘natural’ and “‘universal’”, whereas “‘religious’ connotes “‘supernatural’ and “‘particular’” (2002, p. 313). However, he goes on to note that ‘secular’ justifications for particular beliefs, values, and principles are not universal and natural, but are in many cases culturally specific. While most liberal scholars argue that secular grounds are the only acceptable justifications because they are rational and universal, Eberle (Ibid., p. 314) points out that they are seen to be rational and universal precisely because they are made within a particular cultural setting that establishes secular thought as rational, universal, and acceptable. As he puts it, ‘Secular grounds,

then, are cultural grounds, grounds we find plausible, in large part, because we have been socialized into one culture and not another' (Ibid.).

Globalization—the proliferation of connectivity across world-time and world space—constitutes a central dimension of this crisis of secular rationalism, for it undermines such specific cultural criteria. Increased migration flows often generate heterogeneous and hybrid populations with different (and sometimes contradictory) value and knowledge systems. Growing global interconnections mean that people who lead vastly different lives according to vastly different worldviews must work together to generate acceptable approaches to dealing with common problems and pursuing the common good. Notions of the common good are also increasingly conceived and articulated at the global level in cosmopolitan terms, not just at the level of the national (Erskine, 2002). As Eberle (2002, p. 316) suggests, in such diverse contexts, there arise serious problems with valuing the secular over the religious that may lead to biases, tension, and conflict in political decision-making. Additional critiques of the dominance of secular rationalism have emerged in recent years from scholars interested in the aesthetic (Bleiker, 2009), alternative sources of knowledge (Hulme, 2009, 2010), not to mention scholars of religion in public life (Arkoun, 2003; Bretherton, 2010; Habermas, 2006, 2008; Wilson, 2012). These authors note how 'the primacy of logos over mythos' has led to a marginalization of 'religion's existential, symbolic and prophetic dimensions' within the academic study of religion (Arkoun, 2003 cited in Kassab, 2009, p. 175). Moreover, they object to the privileging of 'reason as the faculty of true knowledge, differentiated from knowledge based on the representations of the imagination' (Arkoun, 2003, p. 31).

The Post-Secular as Description and Response to Global Crises

In this context, we suggest that the post-secular may best be understood as both a description of and a response to these global epistemological and ontological problems. It defines an emerging social condition where neither religious belief nor secular rationalism rules as the dominant *mentalité* of our time. Consider, for example, Charles Taylor's claims regarding the conditions of a secular age. He argues that engaging with religion or having a belief system become one option amongst many. Further, he suggests '[T]he presumption of unbelief has become dominant in more and more . . . milieux; and has achieved hegemony in certain crucial ones, in the academic and intellectual life, for instance; whence it can more easily extend itself to others' (Taylor, 2007, p. 13). For Taylor, then, the chief characteristic of the secular age is where non-belief becomes the default option.

We suggest that in a post-secular age, non-belief is no longer the default position and is itself considered one option amongst many others. Religion is rehabilitated into the public sphere, becoming a legitimate option for challenging dominant political ideological paradigms. This can be seen particularly in the role of faith-based organizations, who are increasingly filling the gaps left by the neoliberalization of the state and campaigning for broader change on issues such as immigration policy and climate change (Beaumont and Cloke, 2012; WCC, 2005; Wilson, 2011). Let us be clear we are not suggesting that belief becomes the default option once again. Rather, in a post-secular age, the default option is either one of pluralism, where both belief and non-belief coexist, sometimes peacefully, sometimes violently, or where, in fact, there is no default option on this matter at all. To put it differently, the post-secular does not represent the end of modernity, nor of the Enlightenment project, but rather 'a continuation of the enlightenment by another means, the production of a New Enlightenment, one that is enlightened about the limits of the old one' (Caputo, 2001, pp. 60–1, cited in Camilleri, 2012, p. 1026).

As a response to the contemporary global situation, we suggest the paradigm of post-secularism represents an attempt to make sense of the continuing and in some cases revived presence of religion in secular societies. The rise of the religious right in the United States as well as the increasing importance of migrant religions in European countries such as the Netherlands (Mepschen et al., 2010; Uitermark and Gielen, 2010) are but two examples of the importance of public religions in the twenty-first century. In this context of ongoing public religious influence, Mavelli and Petito argue that the post-secular has emerged as ‘a form of radical theorising and critique prompted by the idea that values such as democracy, freedom, equality, inclusion, and justice may not necessarily be best pursued within an exclusively immanent secular framework’ (2012, p. 931).

This form of post-secular critique has profound implications for political debate and reasoning in the public sphere. Habermas (2006) has pointed out that, to a large extent, the rules around contemporary political debate and the types of reasoning permitted within the public sphere are premised on certain key assumptions of secularization theory—namely that religion is predominantly a historical relic, a phenomenon that will die out with the spread of modernization and rationalization (Berger, 1967; Deneulin and Rakodi, 2011). With the end of the Cold War and the events of 9/11, it has become abundantly clear that religion is not dying out, but is taking on new significance and alternative forms (Casanova, 1994; Hurd, 2008; Juergensmeyer, 2008; Leustean and Madeley, 2009; Philpott, 2009).

Habermas (2006, pp. 8–9) insists that we must rethink the parameters of acceptable public reasoning and in particular reassess the requirements that have been placed on religious citizens. He considers it inequitable to expect religious citizens to translate the reasoning for their arguments into secular language, when we do not place the same translation requirement on secular citizens (Ibid., pp. 10–11). Further, he argues that secular society loses an important source of meaning and identity when it refuses to allow religious reasoning and language into the public sphere (Ibid., p. 10). Habermas is not the first commentator to question the exclusion of religious language and reasoning from the public sphere (see e.g. Stout, 2004), nor even the first to employ the term ‘post-secular’ (see e.g. Connolly, 2000; Thomas, 2005). Arguably, however, his recent writings have acted as a catalyst for the present debates about the meanings and uses of the term (Mavelli and Petito, 2012, p. 936). By arguing that the inclusion of religious language in public debate is not only necessary but also desirable, Habermas calls into question particular assumptions about what is acceptable and what is not in political debate. Our post-secular age, he seems to suggest, can no longer afford to cling to rationalism as an indispensable foundation or even make confident judgments as to what should be considered ‘rational’ or ‘irrational’.

While endeavoring to push us beyond secularist boundaries of public reasoning, several recent critiques have pointed out that Habermas’s arguments remain embedded within secular Enlightenment structures that maintain the divisions between secular and religious reasoning and privilege scientific rationalism (Mavelli and Petito, 2012, p. 936; Pabst, 2012, pp. 1003–4). His proposition holds that religious argumentation has an important contribution to make within civil society, but he draws the line at religious arguments being employed within the parliamentary sphere and in public law- and political decision-making (Habermas, 2006, p. 10). Considered in this light, his proposals are not so revolutionary and in fact do not depart that much from the parameters laid out by John Rawls (1999). Indeed, Dallmayr (2012, p. 968) points out that the notion of secular public reasoning to which all people have access is a myth of the Enlightenment. Key secular thinkers, like Rawls and Habermas themselves, have constantly required interpretation and translation, as have the judgments of the courts, to

make them more accessible by a majority of people (Ibid.). Consequently, secular public reasoning is not the neutral, self-contained, and wholly intelligible discourse that Habermas makes out and thus not so different from religious reasoning (Ibid.).

Yet what both Habermas and his critics have in common is a recognition that the liberal secular political project, at least within the West, is in trouble. We suggest that Habermas's argument, along with those of other post-secular theorists (e.g. Beaumont and Cloke, 2012; Barbato, 2010; Camilleri, 2012; Mavelli and Petito, 2012) are indicative of a broader malaise affecting many societies. None of the major voices mentioned earlier, from political and economic elites, to global civil society and right-wing reactionary extremists, appear capable of producing a convincing narrative that explains the core dynamics of contemporary global crises. Growing cynicism in Western contexts about dominant forms of politics provides evidence of our thesis. Elections in Australia, the UK, and the Netherlands around the end of the 2000s and more recently in Italy all resulted in hung parliaments, resolving eventually into minority governments. At the same time, levels of voter participation have been steadily declining in Canada, France (Elections Canada, 2003), and the USA (CNN Wire, 2012), with record low voter turnout in the UK (*The Guardian*, 2012) and the highest number of informal votes cast in the 2010 Australian Federal elections since 1984 (Australian Electoral Commission, 2011).

While such events have occurred before, the fact that such tight election results and such poor voter participation are occurring in multiple countries around the world, combined with growing citizens' movements such as Occupy, the Indignants, the 99%, and the Arab Spring, suggests that there is growing dissatisfaction with politics as usual and particularly with neoliberal economics, occurring on a global scale (Agathangelou and Soguk, 2011; Balardini, 2012; Hickel, 2012; Mavelli, 2012b; Sadiki, 2009, p. 211). People around the globe are willing to resist dominant forces in their quest for 'another world'—even if those alternatives have proven to be quite elusive.

Religious Globalisms as Response to Neoliberal Crisis

While many faith-based organizations are proposing alternative visions for society to that being pushed by market-driven processes of globalization, ironically, it is the influence of neoliberalism, in particular globalization driven by neoliberal economic policies, that has contributed to opening up space in contemporary politics for faith-based organizations and religious actors to exercise political influence.

Religious actors have taken this opportunity in a variety of different ways. Some have embraced neoliberal market ideology and adopted it into their theological doctrine and practical activities. Others have vigorously opposed market globalism, through the promotion of more social justice centered policies and doctrines, as well as highly conservative and at times violent and reactionary measures. We briefly outline some key features of these different religious globalisms below.

Neoliberal Religious Globalisms

One way of responding to neoliberal crisis is to argue that markets have not yet been sufficiently 'liberated'. This line of argument—the way out of the Great Recession is more neoliberalism—became particularly obvious during the 2012 US Presidential campaign when Governor Mitt Romney attacked President Barack Obama for seeking to reregulate the US economy in the wake of the Great Financial Crisis (Caldwell, 2012). As the name suggests, neoliberal religious

globalists have embraced large portions of market globalism, endorsing its imperatives of market-driven economic growth, material prosperity, and conspicuous consumption. They promote a view of the common good centered on raising material standards of living through massive participation in market activities (Lynch, 2011). Hence, like market globalists, neoliberal religious globalists place great faith in the market and finance to solve their own and the world's most pressing problems.

Several examples of the alignment of neoliberalism with religious movements exist within national contexts, such as Hindu nationalism in India (Rao, 1998; Saxena and Sharma, 1998, p. 249) and Confucianism in Japan and China (though this link is contested; Hussein, 1998, pp. 304–5). Yet arguably the most significant marriage between neoliberalism and religion at the global level has occurred in certain forms of Christianity (primarily, but not exclusively Pentecostalism) (Vasquez, 2008, pp. 164, 174). Examples include the Hillsong Church, which originates in Sydney but maintains a vibrant web of churches across five continents (Hillsong Church, 2012), Joyce Meyer Ministries, Joel Osteen's Lakewood Church, T.D. Jakes's Potter's House (Olsen, 2006), the Catholic El Shaddai Ministries in the Philippines (Wiegele, 2005), and the Redeemed Christian Church of God, a Nigerian church with global networks (Knibbe, 2011). All of these churches promote a view of the Christian life and faith that is globally applicable and consistent with neoliberal assumptions such as a strong emphasis on the individual (Maxwell, 1998); the belief that wealth is essential for a good life; that the market and global finance are essentially benign and governed by the Invisible Hand of God and therefore are beyond rational criticism (Rosin, 2009). The following excerpt from a pamphlet written by Mike Verlade, pastor of El Shaddai ministries in the Philippines and strongly influenced by Pat Robertson's *The 700 Club*, provides a clear example of how prosperity gospel operates:

And believe me, God's glorious source of miracle supply in Christ Jesus is not affected by recession, political unrest, inflation, strikes, fire, bankruptcies, earthquakes, and other calamities. Hence anyone who believes and puts into practice continuously this miracle of seed-faith principle, by faith expressing itself through love of God and neighbor, wins God's favor and protection. And as naturally as a seed of palay [rice] sown on fertile soil grows and multiplies, so does your seed faith offering, given to the right mission or ministry, open God's source of miracle supply! (Verlade, 1994, pp. 4–6 cited in Wiegele, 2005, p. 20)

These assumptions are also reflected in the commodification of various dimensions of Christian rituals, including sermons and worship music. Hillsong Church, for example, has a multimillion dollar business based on the sale of its worship music albums (Price, 2011).

The doctrine behind these global Christian networks that fits so tightly with the claims of market globalism is known primarily as the prosperity gospel (Hladky, 2012, p. 82; Vasquez, 2008, p. 164). Prosperity gospel makes use of verses in Christian scriptures, such as the prayer of Jabez, in 1 Chronicles 4:10, that proclaim God's desire to bless all people (Houston, 2002; Wilkinson, 2000). Prosperity doctrine explicitly preaches that such blessings take the form of material wealth and that people must 'bless' others—give their money away (primarily to the church)—in order to make way for God to bless them. Christians who give generously will also reap generously, receiving immediate and manifold blessings from God (in monetary form) in their earthly life, not just as their 'heavenly reward' (Hladky, 2012; Houston, 2002; Wiegele, 2005; Wilkinson, 2000).

Critiques of prosperity gospel are numerous. Some theologians argue that by placing such a strong emphasis on the individual and market forces, prosperity gospel becomes centered on human beings rather than on God, and hence contradictory to much Christian doctrine (Lioy, 2007). Sociologist Paul Gifford notes that prosperity gospel's strong emphasis on the individual

privatizes responsibility for social problems and discourages people from challenging the established economic order (Gifford, 1991, pp. 65–6 cited in Maxwell, 1998, p. 351). In this way, prosperity gospel works to reinforce the core claims of market globalism: that no one is in charge of global markets, that neoliberal globalization benefits everyone, and that it is divine providence at work in markets and finance that will resolve the world's problems (Steger, 2009). Neoliberalism becomes a means not only by which people can help themselves, but by which God provides assistance and reward. It promotes very specific understandings of what human flourishing and the common good are that are in many ways at odds with other aspects of Christian doctrine and practice.

Religious Justice Globalisms

In almost complete opposition to the ideological claims of neoliberal religious globalism, other religious organizations have responded to the current crisis of neoliberalism by seeking to transform the dominant paradigm. They challenge the views that financial wellbeing should primarily be considered an individual responsibility and that the market and finance provide the primary means through which social ills can be overcome. These religious justice globalists project the post-secular as the kind of popular resistance envisioned by thinkers like Habermas (2006), Barbato (2010), and Beaumont and Cloke (2012). Articulating a sense of urgency as the global financial crisis or large-scale food crises are ravaging the Global South, many religious justice globalists employ sacred imagery and stories to generate alternative visions for how politics and society can operate in ethical ways that are rooted in religious values. Let us briefly examine two concrete examples: the World Council of Churches (WCC) and some forms of Islamist activism in the Middle East.

The WCC has been actively opposing neoliberalism and defending the rights of the poor since the 1970s.² It provides the framework for a global network of churches, NGOs, and indigenous communities that engage in campaigns and research relating to the multiple crises of neoliberalism. The religious justice globalism of the WCC is strongly influenced by liberation theology, particularly the 'preferential option for the poor' (WCC, 2005).³ In this way, the WCC echoes global Catholic networks that have championed liberation theology and placed emphasis on social welfare against the rising influence of privatization and neoliberalism, particularly within the Latin American context (Gutierrez, 1998).

Employing explicitly religious language, the WCC has put forward a proposal titled 'Alternative Globalization Addressing Peoples and the Earth' (AGAPE). This alternative to market globalism deliberately employs biblical imagery in its acronym, *agape*, the Greek word for the sacrificial love described by St Paul in 1 Corinthians 13:

The churches and the ecumenical family will be called to move beyond critique of neoliberal globalization to stating how God's grace can *transform* this paradigm. The call will be for an ecumenical vision of life in just and loving relationships, through a search for alternatives to the present economic structures. (WCC, 2005, Foreword)

In line with other critics of neoliberal globalization, the WCC argues that neoliberalism's focus on wealth creation means that everyone and everything is perceived as a commodity that can be bought, sold, and traded. Money and wealth become privileged over all other dimensions of human life; competition between the individual and the community increases. Such commodification on the global scale has detrimental effects on the wellbeing of both people and the environment (WCC, 2005, pp. 3–4). Hence, the WCC promotes a globally coordinated

response to neoliberal crises rooted in the alternative values of diversity, cooperation, and global solidarity. It insists that resources are managed democratically and sustainably so that coming generations may enjoy an equal share in the abundance of God's grace and provision (Ibid., pp. 4–5). This overarching vision of 'justice globalism' is then translated into concrete policy proposals addressing global poverty, climate change, health, peacebuilding, and a host of other concerns.

Similar expressions of such justice-globalist values and concerns can also be found in the Arab world where both Christian and Islamic communities have articulated an equally strong concern for human rights, justice for the oppressed, and opposition to market globalism with particular emphasis on the Middle East (Kassab, 2009, p. 174). In Islamic articulations of religious justice globalism, the critique of secular rationalism is more explicit than in Christianity, primarily because in the Middle East secularism has become associated with what many people perceive as the failed project of nationalism. As Sadiki (2009, p. 208) notes, 'Islamists from al-Turabi to al-Farhan consider the state's providential role towards its poor citizens both a civil and religious duty.' The failure of several Middle Eastern states—such as Jordan, Sudan, and Egypt—to protect their citizens' rights to food, education, basic health care, and housing has been a primary catalyst for numerous forms of open resistance throughout the region. Indeed, the so-called 'Arab Spring' represents but the latest and most powerful of such events (Hickel, 2012; Kassab, 2009; Sadiki, 2009, pp. 207–8).

The core concept of 'redistributive justice' links Islamic justice globalisms to more secular political versions of justice globalism. As Sadiki points out,

Formulations of social justice in Islam may vary in practice and scope according to context, but what makes its conception paradigmatically distinct and common to all Muslim societies is its community-based redistributive system. Through this system, the offsetting of material inequalities and injustices is equally binding on all members and groups constitutive of the Islamic community. (2009, p. 203)

Such an emphasis on redistributive justice also reveals important ideological affinities to other justice-globalist core concepts such as equality and solidarity. Resonating with the WCC argument that humans ought to be good stewards of the resources that God has given to them,⁴ Islamic justice globalists hold that 'Godly bounties or favours (*ni'am*) must be managed in accordance with God's sanctions, by balancing the earthly with the heavenly as well as the individual with the communal' (Sadiki, 2009, p. 202).

The widespread current phenomenon of so-called 'bread riots' in the Middle East, including but not limited to the Arab Spring, encapsulates Islamic opposition to neoliberal economic practices and the pursuit of socially just alternatives. Some scholars have speculated that the increasing frequency of bread riots reflects growing popular dissatisfaction with the dominant social, economic, and political realities in the Middle East. As Sadiki (2009, p. 201) puts it, "'Bread" is used here in a generic sense to refer to free education, health care, and other services.' Bread riots have frequently occurred in countries in the region that have had to implement World Bank and IMF austerity reforms as a condition of loans. Islamist opposition parties, such as the Islamic Action Front (IAF) in Jordan, have been instrumental in opposing these measures, utilizing social justice arguments from Islamic theology. For example, IAF-connected theologian Abu Faris argues that anything that impinges on the believers' dignity (*karamah*) and upsets the moral and social fabric of society, as do price increases on food items, must be opposed (Ibid., p. 208). This Islamist critique of market globalism clearly converges with a central claim of secular justice globalism: neoliberalism causes widespread social crises.

Neotraditional Religious Globalisms

A third category of religious globalisms also reacts to neoliberal crisis by opposing the ideological imperatives of market globalism, albeit for entirely different reasons and from an entirely different standpoint than that of religious justice globalists. These neotraditional religious globalisms frequently engage in acts of violent resistance against the encroaching influences of secular neoliberalism. Substantial research already exists on the relationship between religion and violence (e.g. Appleby, 2000; Girard, 1977; Juergensmeyer, 2000, 2008; Laustsen and Waever, 2000; Seul, 1999). Our focus here is particularly those violent neotraditionalist religious movements that oppose neoliberal globalization. The most prominent actors in this category (and consequently, the most researched) are global expressions of 'reactionary' or 'radical' Islamism as embodied in organizations such as al-Qaeda and Jemaah Islamiya (Karam, 2004; Kepel, 2004; Mandaville, 2007; Steger, 2009). These neotraditional versions of Islamism oppose neoliberal market globalism to ensure the global ideological dominance of their own political agenda. Within this worldview, the aggressive reinvigoration of religion becomes a way of dealing with the stresses, uncertainties, and inequalities wrought by the rapid changes in contemporary society, many of which are induced by neoliberalism (Haynes, 2007, p. 85; Spickard, 2013). This militant agenda embraces 'justice' not as a universal value but as a religiously and culturally specific idea rooted in neotraditionalist interpretations of sacred scripture that are frequently used to justify reactionary and exclusionary ideological claims. The primary targets of their 'resistance' to what they perceive as acts of aggression committed by the 'immoral forces of global unbelief [*kufri*]' are the mass consumption and indulgent lifestyles nurtured in the West and encouraged by secular market globalists (Steger, 2009).

Yet other equally violent reactionary global religious movements have also made their mark in recent times. The most recent example is that of Anders Breivik in Norway. Although an individual acting alone, Breivik claimed to be a member of an anti-Islamist organization, the Knights Templar (Pidd, 2012). Breivik's thought was heavily influenced by conservative, reactionary Christian globalist ideology, seeing 'European Christendom' as under threat from Islam (Cohen, 2011). As Cohen (Ibid.) points out, Breivik is far from being alone in expressing such views. Organizations expressing similar views exist around the globe, including Christian Identity in the United States, the English Defence League, and neo-Nazi organizations (Ibid.). The hallmarks of such conservative religious globalisms are violent racism towards non-whites and condemnation of 'liberal whites' (Barkun, 1997). This brand of religious globalism is opposed more to increased migration, the growing porousness of state borders, and the decline in state sovereignty in some areas, rather than to specific dynamics of neoliberalism per se. As such, it is possible to argue that these militant neotraditional religious movements are an attempt to promote strong religious identities in the face of mounting secularist challenges (Juergensmeyer, 2008; Seul, 1999, p. 562). Spickard (2013) points to Hindu nationalists, alongside Islamist movements as examples of this type of aggressive religious identity politics. Yet the phenomena to which such movements are directly opposed are also arguably outcomes of neoliberal globalization. Consequently, these movements represent an alternative form of resistance to the secularist as well as the neoliberal project.

Conclusion

Neoliberal globalization has undoubtedly contributed to the reinvigoration of global public religion, as suggested by Toft et al. (2011), but to date little has been revealed about the specific

dynamics of this relationship. Concurrently, the notion of the post-secular offers a powerful form of alternative theorizing as well as challenge to dominant secular approaches. Yet its possibilities have so far been underemployed at the level of the global (Camilleri, 2012). In utilizing the post-secular to explore religious resurgence in relation to emerging global political ideologies, this article has made a first step towards addressing these gaps. Highlighting the crucial role of neoliberal crisis as a specific dynamic of globalization that facilitates new forms of religious engagement and resistance in our post-secular age, this essay presents the basic outline for a new typology of religious globalisms: neoliberal religious globalisms, religious justice globalisms, and neotraditional religious globalisms.

Yet other types of religious globalisms exist and require exploration such as emerging eclectic forms like Falun Gong, Soga Gakkei, and so-called 'New-Ageisms' (Neumann, 2011). Moreover, careful conceptual mapping exercises of the different strands within the three major types of religious globalisms introduced in this article will also aid scholars and policymakers in their efforts to better understand the ideological dynamics that fuel the global resurgence of religion.

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Notes

- 1 Interview with T. Gilbertson, Research Fellow, Transnational Institute, delegate to COP15, Copenhagen, Denmark, 18 December 2009; Interview with J. Kennedy, delegate to COP15, World Council of Churches, Copenhagen, 17 December 2009.
- 2 Interview with F. Dove, Executive Director, Transnational Institute, The Netherlands, 3 December 2010; Interview with Kennedy, 17 December 2009.
- 3 Interview with Rogate Mshana, Director, Justice, Peace and Creation programme, World Council of Churches, December 2010.
- 4 Interview with Kennedy, 2009.

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