

Introduction

When Religion is Not a Choice

This is a book about religion and belonging. It tackles the question of religion as a source of people's identity by looking at what I call *collectivistic religions*. These religions are public in manifestation and have an institutional authority structure. They are culturally specific, historically embedded, and defined in part by the presence of some religious Other. They shape identities that distinguish their members from other religious groups, identities that members are often willing to die for. One does not choose to belong to these religious traditions; one is born into them.

This last point is central for appreciating the unique feature of collectivistic religions, since we live in an age when language about religion is the language of choice. Even religious fundamentalisms, a term that here refers to contemporary religious groups that claim to be returning to an orthodox or pure interpretation of religious traditions, are founded in choice. They are, to use Olivier Roy's words, built "from the perspective of [the] rediscovery of religion."¹ As such, contemporary religious fundamentalisms are profoundly modern in character and have features of the "born again" religious experience. While enthusiastic in public manifestations, they are individualistic in the locus of experience and absolute in personal commitment. Not surprisingly, scholars of religion are in agreement that modern *homo religiosus*, whether "belonging without believing" or "believing without belonging,"² chooses her religious identity.

The analytic perspective that focuses on choice correctly recognizes one large part of contemporary religiosity, but omits its other major component: the millions of people around the globe who were "born into" some religious group rather than religiously "born again." They experience their religion as ascribed to them rather than chosen by them, as fixed rather than changeable, despite *and* because of the fact that their religious identities are profoundly shaped by the historical and cultural particularities of their social location. Examples of such collectivistic

1 On the "born again" character of contemporary Muslims, political and radical Islam included, see Olivier Roy, "Islamic Evangelicalism," *IWM Newsletter*, Fall 2004, No. 4, 25-26. On the relationship between fundamentalism and modernity, see Adam Seligman, "Ethics, faith and politics of tolerance and tradition," *Forum Bosnae*, No. 11/01, 2001; <<http://www.ifbosna.org.ba:91/publikacije/bosnae/11-01/11.htm>>.

2 See Danièle Hervieu-Léger, "The Role of Religion in establishing social cohesion," <http://ec.europa.eu/research/social-sciences/pdf/michalski_210503_contribution01_en.pdf>; see Grace Davie, *Religion in Modern Europe: A Memory Mutates*, Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

religious traditions are not limited only to those with long-recognized ethnic origins and history, such as Judaism or Hinduism. Even Christianity—which to most people signifies an identity that crosses ethnic, gender, national, or class boundaries—developed collectivistic traditions.³ It is too often forgotten that in a number of cases Christianity became a constitutive, often *the* constitutive, element of people's collective memory. In some Orthodox Christian churches—the Bulgarian, Russian, or Serbian Orthodox, to name a few—the Church as an institution and Christianity as a religious tradition were often inseparable from the political establishment, and have long been critical in defining the boundaries of the collective identities of Bulgarians, Russians, or Serbs.

Although the Roman Catholic Church explicitly understands itself, and is commonly studied, as a universal Church, some historical applications of Roman Catholicism also resulted in collectivistic traditions. These traditions are not simply grounded in the localization of universal meanings or rituals, processes that happen with Christianity all the time. Collectivistic Catholicisms developed in very specific historical contexts—such as Poland, Ireland, or Croatia—domesticating themselves most clearly with regard to the existence of a religious Other. While different in the extent of their institutional sovereignty—the extent of independence of their ecclesiastical polities—all collectivistic Christianities have in common a Christianity that is embedded in specific histories.⁴ Being Serbian has for centuries meant being an Orthodox Christian, and being an Orthodox Christian in Serbia has long meant being Serbian. Being Polish for centuries has meant being a Catholic, just as being a Catholic in such a geo-political context meant being Polish. To be sure, the contents of the categories “Serbian” and “Polish,” “Orthodox Christian” and “Catholic,” and their relationship to other aspects of collective identities—territory, language, ethnicity—changed over time. But, the key element of all collectivistic Christianities has been *belonging* to a religious community defined or shaped by birth “to particular persons and birth in a specific territory,”⁵ which gives these communities the primary meaning of primordial, rather than of universal, communities of salvation.

In the contemporary world, collectivistic religious traditions are generally viewed with suspicion. Public in character and defining people's group identities, these religions are perceived as the remnants of some premodern time. They are seen as traditional, ethnically shaped identities, which oppose the late modern

3 For an excellent discussion of the complex relationship between primordial and universal in early Christian communities, see Steven Grosby, “The category of the primordial in the study of early Christianity and Second-Century Judaism,” *History of Religions*, Vol. 36, No. 2, November 1996, 140-163.

4 Most Eastern Orthodox collectivistic Christianities are today autocephalous, national churches, while the Catholic Churches belong under the umbrella of the Pope.

5 See Grosby's definition of “primordiality,” 1996, 142.

religious inclination toward universal communities and which will ultimately disappear.⁶

The fact that collectivistic religious traditions are easy to find in some former communist countries—Russia, Poland, Ukraine, Croatia, or Serbia—also reinforces the view that collectivistic religion, especially collectivistic Christianities, are only a carry-over phenomenon from some earlier times.⁷ For many observers, the Christianities in post-communist societies are a powerful source of group identification because they were oppressed during the communist regimes for decades; they managed to survive because they existed in a type of historical vacuum. Once they encounter Western European modernity and secularity, it is suggested, these collectivistic religions should lose their strength and importance.⁸

Such readings of, and predictions about, collectivistic Christianities have two premises: first, the idea that collectivistic religiosity as a model of being religious is a dying phenomenon to be ultimately replaced with voluntary religious affiliation,⁹ and second, the argument that Western Europe is both secularized and secularizing. Neither of these premises takes into consideration the distinctive religious legacies that each post-communist society brings to the processes of integration into the Western European context.¹⁰ Moreover, predictions about the eventual disappearance of collectivistic religions do not take into account the view

6 Even José Casanova's theoretically sophisticated and historically rich account of public religions suggests that religions that have the function of normative integration—those that shape collective identities—are not compatible with the modern notion of civil society, see Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994, 43; also 213.

7 On the dynamics of the public role of religions in post-communist societies, see Gabriel Partos, "Religion and Nationalism in the Balkans: A Deadly Combination?," in *Religion, Ethnicity, and Self-Identity: Nations in Turmoil*, ed. Martin Marty, Hanover: University Press of New England, 1997; Michael Sells, *The Bridge Betrayed: Religion and Genocide in Bosnia*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998; Srđan Vrcan, *Vjera u vrtlozima tranzicije*, Split: Glas Dalmacije, Revija Dalmatinske Akcije, 2001; Vjekoslav Perica, *Balkan Idols: Religion and Nationalism in Yugoslav States*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002. On the need to study these religions as they are, see Slavica Jakelić, "Religion, Collective Identity, and Violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina," *The Hedgehog Review*, Spring 2004, Vol. 6, No. 1.

8 For this statement, see Peter L. Berger, *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics*, eds. Peter L. Berger, Jonathan Sacks, David Martin, and Tu Weiming, Washington, D.C.: Ethics and Public Policy Center/Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1999.

9 On the argument about the processes of religious disestablishment and the accompanying voluntarization of religions, see Casanova 1994, 213.

10 It is indeed surprising that Berger does not raise this question, as his more recent work on globalization comes with the awareness of the question of localization; see Peter L. Berger, and Samuel P. Huntington, eds., *Many Globalizations: Cultural Diversity in the Contemporary World*, Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

that modernity is not one, but many.¹¹ We have learned, sometimes the hard way, that modernization does not have identical paths everywhere. Industrialization and urbanization are not accompanied by the same cultural implications in all places, and they do not always or exclusively result in the secularization or individualization of religion.

Several questions are therefore in need of asking. First, are the collectivistic religions a remnant of some premodern time, or are they—similar to contemporary fundamentalisms—another component in the continuous religious pluralization of the world? In the face of empirical evidence and theoretical appraisal of classical theories of modernization and secularization, how plausible is it to continue to think of Europe as the place where modernization necessitates individualized religion? Finally, if they are partially constitutive of late modernity, what do collectivistic religions tell us about the relationship between human desire to belong to specific communities and religion as a framework of that belonging? I take up the last question in the conclusion of this book. The other questions will shape the discussion throughout. What emerges is a larger argument that religious pluralization is indeed a condition of late modernity, but that this condition does not establish only religious markets, it also helps sustain ascribed religious identities.¹² The latter, I propose in this book, is *also* due to the largely understudied phenomena of collectivistic Christianities, which are a significant presence in contemporary Europe. Numerous scholars describe Europe as a secular place, yet there are processes that counter this secularity.¹³ The first and oldest component in these processes is the difference between Catholic and Protestant countries. While the Catholic European South exhibits a rather Western European trend of

11 On one of the earliest uses of the notion of “multiple modernities,” which suggests that the result of modernization of societies is not a single civilization, or one institutional pattern, see S.N. Eisenstadt, “Multiple Modernities in an Age of Globalization,” *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 24, No. 2, Spring 1999, 283-295; 285.

12 This claim is a critique of the view of “religious preference” and “religious market” as developed in Berger’s *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Theological Theory of Religion*, New York: Anchor Books, 1990 [1967] and *The Heretical Imperative: Contemporary Possibilities of Religious Affirmation*, Garden City: Anchor Press, 1979.

13 For indications that Europe is, especially compared to America, the last bastion of secularity in the world, see the works of Berger, Hervieu-Léger, Rodney Stark, and Casanova. These authors offer different interpretations of European religious heterogeneity and exceptional status with regard to secularization. For a discussion about the religious heterogeneity of Europe and suggestions about the influence that the world religious developments have on Europe, see Grace Davie, “Is Europe an Exceptional Case?,” *The Hedgehog Review*, Spring and Summer 2006, Vol. 8, No. 1 and 2. For an argument that religious diversification of Europe with new religious phenomena is not the result of an advanced stage of secularization that establishes religious market, see my essay “Secularization, the European Identity, and ‘The End of the West,’” *The Hedgehog Review*, “After Secularization,” Spring and Summer, 2006, Vol. 8, No. 1 and 2.

secularization—an overall decline in Church-centered religiosity¹⁴—levels of religious practice in Italy, Spain, and Ireland remain higher than in the Netherlands or Great Britain.¹⁵ Most importantly, levels of individuals' self-identification with Catholicism remain strong in Italy, Spain, and even France; they are certainly stronger than individuals' self-identification with the Protestant (often national) churches in most of the European North.¹⁶ Put simply, the historical role of Christianity in shaping what some see as the European post-Christian culture is at least as important as the roles that different churches had in shaping the *distinctive cultures* of individual European societies.¹⁷

The second, more recent component of European religious pluralism is the emergence of new religious movements, with their individualistic character and “here-and-now” spirituality. Religious studies scholar Paul Heelas suggests that European religiosity, both the traditional and the less traditional one, is shifting from religion toward spirituality, from God-centered beliefs affirmed by and organized around institutional authority toward experience of the divine here and now.¹⁸ The latter is particularly embodied in the contents and manifestations of New Age “spiritualities of life,” to which an average European appears to be rather open.

While Catholic-Protestant differences and new religious movements are pertinent to any discussion of European religious heterogeneity, neither seriously challenges the dominant narrative of progressive secularization within Europe. The former has been a hallmark of European religious history, while the latter may be perceived as the other side of secularization.¹⁹ But there are two other processes that do test the view of Europe as a secular continent, particularly the common

14 See Steve Bruce, *Religion in the Modern World: From Cathedrals to Cults*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

15 See Davie 2000, 11.

16 As always, there are some notable exceptions, so that even in Northern Europe one needs to look carefully at different histories and societies. In Denmark, for example, 90 per cent of the population pays taxes for the national church, see Richard Jenkins, “Different Societies? Different Cultures? What are Collectivities?,” in *Making Sense of Collectivity: Ethnicity, Nationalism, and Globalization*, eds. Mark Haugaard and Siniša Malešević, London: Pluto Press, 2002. Hervieu-Léger sees this as an example of “belonging without believing,” <http://ec.europa.eu/research/social-sciences/pdf/michalski_210503_contribution01_en.pdf>.

17 For an account of post-secular European Christianities, see Davie 2006.

18 See Paul Heelas, “Detraditionalizing the Study of Religion,” in *The Future of the Study of Religion*, eds. Slavica Jakelić and Lori Pearson, Leiden: Brill, 2004; see also Paul Heelas and Linda Woodhead, *The Spiritual Revolution: Why Religion is Giving Way to Spirituality*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2005.

19 The sacralization of Western European societies can be viewed both as a part of secularization processes and as its counterpart—the former because this “here-and-now” spirituality is highly individualized and the latter because it may be perceived as opposing the argument regarding increased rationalization of people's worldviews.

assumption that European religious heterogeneity creates a religious market. The first process is Islam. It is impossible to overemphasize the general cultural impact, and specifically the religious and political impact, that the public presence of Muslims is already generating and will continue to generate in European societies. There are now more than 12 million Muslims in Western Europe.²⁰ This number is only growing, especially as new countries such as Bosnia and Herzegovina and Albania attempt integration into Europe. Were Turkey to be granted membership in the EU, the number of Muslims within the European borders would increase by more than 60 million.

The second phenomenon, which is studied less than Islam but which also intensifies the creation of the European religious pluralism, is collectivistic Christianities—those of Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia, Lithuania, or Poland. Students of religion usually see these Christianities as something that connects the “old” and the “new” Europe, not as something that further complicates the European religious scene.²¹ On the basis of survey data, social scientists suggest that collectivistic Christianities are suffering the same enervation as Western European Christianity.²² Such statistics notwithstanding, there should be no confusion about the fact that European collectivistic Christianities are a novel religious phenomenon for the continent because their key aspect is belonging. Even when this belonging is without believing, it has a different character than in Western European Christianity: it is rarely private and it is rarely deinstitutionalized.

The Bulgarian, Croatian, Serbian, or Polish collectivistic Christianities were all historically shaped by the presence, and sometimes the dominance, of some religious Other. By entering the European religious scene, these Christianities encounter new others—European Muslims, post-Christian European spiritualists, and European secularists. One of the most central historical variables in the shaping of collectivistic Christianities—the presence of different Others—is thus perpetuated. When viewed against such a background and, more generally, when considered with regard to multiple modernities as a theoretical and historical notion, European collectivistic Christianities emerge as a way of being religious that might not die away but could, in fact, become even more potent in years to come. Collectivistic Christianities, in other words, should not be dismissed as some ghost of the past. Rather, they raise two important questions: can Christianities that

20 For the number of 10 million Muslims in Western Europe and a discussion about their acceptance and accommodation in some Western European societies, see Joel S. Fetzer and J. Christopher Soper, eds., *Muslims and the State in Britain, France, and Germany*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

21 See Silvio Ferrari, “State and Church in Europe,” unpublished article.

22 The studies of religious and religious institutions in the post-communist societies—where collectivistic Christianities are primarily located—seem to show that the level of religious practice is generally lower now than it was during communist period, approaching the European West in numbers; see Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart, *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004, 113.

so explicitly define group boundaries partake in, and contribute to, the definition of public spheres defined by plurality, and, if so, how?

The answers to these questions, just like the questions themselves, are profoundly normative in nature and have serious political implications. To address them in a world in which everything appears to be defined by choice, we need to be able to appreciate the historicity, complex meanings, and vigor of the ascriptive character of collectivistic religions and move beyond the assumption that these religions are incompatible with modern social life. For that to be possible, it is necessary to revisit two major concepts that still shape the study of religion in both the social sciences and the humanities—the notion of the “heretical imperative” and the notion of “religious nationalism.”

Peter Berger’s term “heretical imperative” articulates an old and central sociological concern with the relationship between pluralism and religion in modern societies. Berger offers a bold restatement of this fundamentally sociological observation—addressed already in the works of Max Weber and Émile Durkheim—speaking of religion and choice. Seeing religion in economic terms and as one of many choices that modern individuals have to make, Berger was already writing of the “religious market” in the late 1960s.²³ A decade later, he went even further, asserting that pluralism affects religion more than any other area of life by moving it from the realm of fate to the realm of choice. Modernity universalizes heresy, Berger declared, as the occupation that was once reserved for marginal and eccentric types now becomes the destiny of every individual.²⁴

Since the 1980s, Berger abandoned the conviction of the irreversible relationship between modernization and the decline of religion. But Berger still claims that modernity changes the very nature of being religious. If modernity did not change *what* people believe, he wrote recently, it did change *how* they believe.²⁵ This subtle point is arguably the most enduring contribution that Berger has made to our understanding of modern religion—it identifies choice as one of the most constitutive modes of being religious in contemporary, Western societies.

Scholars of religion have widely adopted a view expressed in the concept of the heretical imperative, if not the entire concept itself. The most radical theoretical articulation of this view is the rational choice theory, whose advocates suggest not only that the logic of the free market can be employed to understand some religious phenomena, but that economic insights can fully explain all of them.

23 See Berger in Slavica Jakelić, “The Sixties: Secularization and the Prophecies of Freedom,” in *Prophecies of Godlessness: Predictions of America’s Imminent Secularization, from the Puritans to the Present Day*, eds. Charles Mathewes and Christopher Nichols, Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

24 See Berger 1979; see also Wade Clark Roof, “Review Symposium: Berger’s The Heretical Imperative,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, June 1981, Vol. 20, No. 2, 181-196; 192.

25 See Berger, “Protestantism and the Quest for Certainty,” *Christian Century* 115, Aug/Sept 1998, 782-784.

When applied to the realm of religious life, the principles of supply and demand answer why religion is alive in the religiously heterogeneous US and not in other Western societies.²⁶

The focus on choice and preference in contemporary religious life is not without reason. In the United States, religious choice has even been translated into a legal norm and there are strong indications that Western European societies are moving in the same direction.²⁷ The view that being religious in a modern way means choosing religion accurately identifies both what has been happening with religion, religiosity, and religious identity in many places and how we commonly think about it. But, instead of resulting from scholarly analysis, the conviction that modern religion implies choice became the origin of the study of religion and, moreover, the evaluative framework for whether specific religions were modern.

This theoretical development had numerous sources, two of which are particularly relevant to our discussion. First, it was the result of an (over)intellectualized approach to religion in the modern world—the idea that everyone who is religious is fundamentally concerned with theology.²⁸ Secondly, it was the result of the teleology implied by the “heretical imperative” thesis—an accompanying suggestion that, as the world becomes more plural, it necessarily approximates the model of a religious market.

It was through this latter suggestion, in particular, that the “heretical imperative” thesis became the framework for how very different religions are examined and understood in the West and beyond. Collectivistic religions and collectivistic Christianities are cases in point. Although “Durkheimian” in character—they do bind individuals to a historically particular moral community and are *never* just a matter of belief—collectivistic Christianities have also been analyzed within the framework of religion-as-choice. They have been measured from the vantage point of the individual’s intellectual assent to the theological and institutional frameworks of Christianity. This angle marginalized their major feature, belonging, which individuals most often experience as ascribed, not chosen, and understand as fixed, not changeable.

26 See, for example, Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, *The Churaching of America, 1776-1990: Winners and Losers in our Religious Economy*, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992; Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity*, San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1997; Lawrence A. Young, *Rational Choice Theory and Religion: Summary and Assessment*, London: Routledge, 1996.

27 Michael Sandel, “Religious Liberty: Freedom of Conscience and Freedom of Choice,” in *Secularism and its Critics*, ed. Rajev Bhargava, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998; Silvio Ferrari, unpublished article.

28 In assessing Berger’s ideas, Donald E. Miller wrote that, while “intellectuals may agonize over the ‘truth’ of religion...the person-in-the-street is not so much a ‘rational-truth-quester’ as he or she is in quest of community, consolation, renewal and comfort,” see Miller and Berger’s reply in *Review Symposium, Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, June 1981, Vol. 20, No. 2, 181-196; 189.

Notwithstanding the possibility that collectivistic religions could be replaced by individualized religion and become a matter of choice in the future—an important point to which I turn in the conclusion—I argue here that it is vital to appreciate different collectivistic religions as they are, not as they will or ought to be. This is important both analytically and normatively. On the one hand, we are dealing with a forceful religious phenomenology that is shaping the public life of many societies and cannot be fully explained and understood using the notion of choice. On the other hand, one of the most powerful elements of the phenomenology of collectivistic religions is the relationship of those who belong to these traditions with their religious Others, which makes these religions central to any conversation about religious freedom and pluralism in democratic polities.

The fact that the phenomenology of collectivistic religions is rooted in the ascriptive character of religious identity raises questions about another concept that has long governed our thinking about collectivistic religion—that of “religious nationalism.” There are again good reasons why scholars in the social sciences and humanities have used the notion of religious nationalism extensively: it correctly identifies one specific and very modern development of collectivistic religion—the link between religious and national identities. However, while locating one kind of collectivistic religiosity, the notion of religious nationalism came to serve as the main concept for the study of *all* of them—a common denominator for all different kinds of religious identifications that shape collective identities.

Furthermore, the concept of religious nationalism emerged from within the framework of theories of nationalism and, accordingly, its main focus has always been on national, rather than on religious, identity. While understandable in the context of the study of nationalism, this focus has had problematic historical and theoretical implications for the study of religion and group identities. All collectivistic religious identities came to be perceived as epiphenomenal to national identities²⁹ and the association of religion with nationalism is taken as a sign that religion *is* secularized. What has been overlooked is that all religions, including Christianity, have been linked to people’s collective identities for centuries, certainly long before the age of modern nationalisms. No historian would consider discussing premodern group-identity religions as somehow “secularized.” This book shows that there are many collectivistic Christianities that precede the rise of modern national ideologies and argues that the study of collectivistic religions should not begin with the assumption that the connection between nationalism and religion secularizes religion. Rather, it should ask whether and how the association between religious and national identities in modern societies differs from premodern links between religions and group identities.

The idea that collectivistic religions are always reduced (or reducible) to something else because they are identity-oriented is not only historically, but also theoretically, problematic. It contains an implicit theory of religion, which

29 See David Martin, “The Secularization Issue: Prospect and Retrospect,” *British Journal of Sociology*, September 1991, Vol. 42, No. 3, 465-474; 466.

understands religion to be about beliefs and rituals (i.e. theology) and not about the kind of belonging that shapes communal boundaries (i.e. identity, culture, or politics).

In this book, I propose that this implicit theory of religion—which suggests that modern *homo religiosus* chooses her religion, and will necessarily become individualistic in her religious sensibilities and universalistic in her theology—is at the foundation of both the “religious nationalism” and the “heretical imperative” models. This theory of religion, however, disregards two realities of late modernity: first, collectivistic religiosity is still the most common form of being religious and, second, religious universalism is not the only way of being religious that is conducive to pluralistic world.³⁰ In fact, religious universalism is problematic not only for cultures marked by collectivistic religiosity, but for *any* pluralistic societies. Stemming from the specific theological developments of Protestant Christianity, which are not shared by other Christian and non-Christian religious traditions, religious universalism is grounded in a philosophical anthropology that assumes true religiosity is an individualistic experience and, consequently, marginalizes the sociological manifestations of religious traditions. As other authors have convincingly argued, people deem the latter sacred and are rarely willing to give that up.³¹

The purpose of this book is not to suggest that the notion of religious nationalism, or the view that modern religions are the subject of choice, should be altogether abandoned or rejected. As maintained earlier, the accounts of “religious nationalism” and “heretical imperative” correctly identify important phenomena. But, as evaluative frameworks rather than descriptive categories, such accounts neither attempt to nor can bring into focus the reality and the distinct challenges of collectivistic religions in the world of late modernity. The presence of collectivistic religions in the public arena brings both potential *and* problems, and it is the distinction between the two that is difficult but necessary.

30 For an example of the thesis that individual, personalized Christianity is a solution for the peacemaking role of religions, see Željko Mardešić, “Political Religions and Modern Peacemaking,” *Regional Contact*, Vol. XII, No. 13, 1998, 102-109. For the idea that people have to recognize the common, underlying principles common to all religions, see Joseph V. Montville, “Religion and Peacemaking,” in *Forgiveness and Reconciliation: Religion, Public Policy and Conflict Transformation*, eds. Raymond G. Helmick, S.J. and Rodney L. Petersen, Philadelphia and London: Templeton Foundation Press, 2001, 97-116, especially 109-110. For the view that that the radical universality of the Christian faith serves as a foundation for reconciliation and the embracing of the “other,” see Miroslav Volf, “Forgiveness, Reconciliation, and Justice,” in *Forgiveness and Reconciliation*, 27-49.

31 See Marc Gopin, *Between Eden and Armageddon: The Future of World Religions, Violence, and Peacemaking*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000; see Peter Ochs, “Interview with Peter Ochs,” *The Hedgehog Review*, Spring 2004, Vol. 6, No. 1, 90-102; see Seligman, ed. *Modest Claims: Dialogues and Essays on Tolerance and Tradition*, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004.

Understanding Collectivistic Religions in Specific Contexts

The first chapter of this book explores the dominant theoretical approaches to religion and identity. I begin by looking at three influential theorists of nationalism—Ernest Gellner, Benedict Anderson, and Anthony Smith—and their understandings of the relationship between religion and national identity. Despite significant differences among the three thinkers, the observations that Gellner, Anderson, and Smith make about religion constitute the foundation for conceptualizing collectivistic religiosity as a quintessentially modern phenomenon, that is, as religious nationalism. The analytic usefulness of the latter concept is evident from India to Israel, from Iraq to Ireland. However, the idea of religious nationalism within the framework of theories of nationalism, and the focus of these theories on national rather than religious identities, shape the analytic and historical angles in ways that, by default, treat religious identity as epiphenomenal to national identity. Within this theoretical framework, religion that shapes a sense of belonging to some specific group is perceived as a preparation for, or a function of, national identity and nationalism, rather than as an aspect of collective identity in general. As a result, theories of nationalism do not allow for a more thorough exploration of collectivistic religions as a genuine mode of religiosity in the modern world.

On the other hand, scholars of religious studies—Jonathan Z. Smith, Russell McCutcheon, and Timothy Fitzgerald will be particularly considered here—critique other scholars in their field for a tendency not to consider religion in relation to culture and identity. Smith, McCutcheon, and Fitzgerald all argue that the extrapolation of religion from culture and its definition as a *sui generis* phenomenon are a consequence of a Christian—and, more specifically, a distinctively Protestant—theological view of religion. These critiques of the dominant definitions of religion in religious studies offer important insights into the study of religion as a cultural phenomenon. Yet, these scholars are not concerned with the intersection between religions and collective identities. In fact, McCutcheon and Fitzgerald’s critique of religion as separate from culture results in the conceptualization of religion as the other “stuff” of social life, making their conclusions, as we will see, remarkably similar to those of the scholars of nationalism.

Neither theories of nationalism nor the more recent contributions to theories of religion can advance our understanding of the dynamic and complex relations of religion to collective identities. The concept of collectivistic religions attempts to do precisely that: to emphasize that collectivistic religions are not the result of some specific group identity but can, and still do, actively shape it. By defining religion both as institutional and symbolic phenomena, the notion of collectivistic religions places religions in relation to collective identities in different historical contexts and ascribes these religions with a certain agency.

The empirical exploration of collectivistic religions in Europe begins with Roman Catholicism in Bosnia, Croatia, and Slovenia. The study of these three cases serves as an example for relating collectivistic religions to the notion of religious nationalism. The former Yugoslav societies became the model for negative

manifestations of religious nationalisms, in which the link between Catholicism and collective identity has been perceived exclusively as a recent phenomenon. This book suggests a different angle: while previous studies of Catholicism in Bosnia, Croatia, and Slovenia often start and end with their similarities, the analysis here begins with their differences. Thus, in the second chapter of the book, I contrast the contemporary Bosnian, Croatian, and Slovenian situations and recognize that while Catholicism is central for the collective identities of the Bosnian and Croatian Croats, it is not for the Slovenes. I then ask why and how that happened.

I propose that neither the differences among the three cases nor the specific features of the Bosnian and Croatian collectivistic Catholicisms can be explained by referring (solely) to the wars in Bosnia and Croatia, by discerning the distinctive nature of their communist or post-communist experience, or by viewing collectivistic Catholicism as a distinctly Balkan or post-Yugoslav religious phenomenon. On the one hand, Bosnian and Croatian collectivistic Catholicisms exist within the larger phenomenology of collectivistic Christianities, which developed in very different contexts—they can be traced from Poland to Ireland, from Lithuania to Greece. On the other hand, the Bosnian and Croatian cases reveal the rich narratives, and historical and institutional legacies, of collectivistic Catholicisms, which do not exist in the Slovenian case. Church elites in Bosnia and Croatia draw on the legacies of collectivistic Catholicism to offer competing notions of Catholicism today and define its past in light of present concerns, thus establishing Catholicism once again not in universalist terms, but as a major constituent of the collective memory of particular groups.³²

In the third chapter of the book, I offer an example of a historical and sociological approach to the phenomenology of collectivistic religions, looking at the symbolic and structural differences among Bosnian, Croatian, and Slovenian Catholicisms. This chapter traces the historical legacies that provided the platform for contemporary narratives of the ascriptive character of Catholicism and its specific communities of belonging. It retrieves the genealogies of these Catholicisms following a two-layered approach. First, it focuses on three specific variables: contextual, structural, and symbolic. Second, following Edward Shils's understanding of elites as the agents who both articulate and embody the central values, beliefs, and symbols that govern some society,³³ this chapter locates the

32 I consider these legacies to be founded, to paraphrase Anthony D. Smith, "on living traditions of the people...[that] serve both to unite and to differentiate them from their neighbors;" see Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism*, London and New York: Routledge, 1998, 45-46. On the manner in which the past can be remade in the present for present purposes, see Jeffrey Olick and Joyce Robbins, "Social Memory Studies: From 'Collective Memory' to the Historical Sociology of Mnemonic Practices," *Annual Review of Sociology* 24, 105-140.

33 See Edward Shils, *Center and Periphery: Essays in Macrosociology*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975, 3.

role of Church elites as they shaped and reshaped the collectivistic meanings of Catholicism over time—in specific historical moments and in specific contexts, with or without significant religious Others.

The ensuing analysis reveals the rich narratives of collectivistic Catholicisms in the Bosnian and Croatian cases that precede the rise of modern national ideologies and are not reducible to national identities. Religious nationalisms in these three societies do exist, but they were and still are only one possible expression of collectivistic religiosity, rather than its overarching reality. Furthermore, the Slovenian case—which is often presented as the role-model for other former-Yugoslav societies due to its (mostly) peaceful transition from communism to democracy—shows the limitations of secular liberal democracy as a framework of religious plurality. Some forms of collectivistic Catholicism in Bosnia, on the other hand, have much to offer for public life in religiously diverse societies, certainly more than the religious universalistic rhetoric of the Croatian church elites.

The fourth chapter of the book places the Bosnian and Croatian Catholicisms within a broader European context, and in relation to three different cases of collectivistic Christianities—Irish Catholicism, Polish Catholicism, and Greek Orthodox Christianity. This analysis demonstrates that, although they developed in very different circumstances, all of these Christianities have three important features in common: first, they have been a constitutive, often *the* constitutive, element of people's collective memory and identity; second, they are defined by a sense of *belonging*, or ascription; and third, they are public, even political, in character. Due to their historicity, ascription, and publicness, European collectivistic Christianities are radically different from the private and individualized Christianities to which the Europe has become accustomed. Moreover, almost one fifth of the European population affirms some form of collectivistic Christianity. These facts seriously challenge several commonly accepted narratives: Europe as a post-Christian place, collectivistic religions as resulting from social conflict or the post-communist transition, and collectivistic Christianities as a phenomenon peculiar to the Balkan world.

Religion as Identity

My book describes the complex symbolic and institutional histories of Catholicism in Bosnia, Croatia, and Slovenia, and places them within a contemporary European context to establish a larger claim: that some collectivistic religious traditions may be a better resource for the public life of religiously plural societies than different versions of religious universalism or secular liberal nationalism. In doing so, the book points out the analytic and historical problems of using the concepts of “heretical imperative” and “religious nationalism” to analyze and evaluate all collectivistic religions. In the concluding chapter, the book calls for a more charitable view of collectivistic religions: it approaches these religions not as vestiges from the past, but as historical manifestations of even the most

universalistic religious traditions, as expressions of the universal human desire to belong, and as modes of belonging that have long been and still are an important characteristic of religious and social existence.

This book introduces a new conceptual tool to contemporary debates about public religions: the notion of *collectivistic religions*. It suggests that this concept can appreciate the ascriptive character of religions in late modernity, not just in Bosnia or Croatia, but also in Poland, Ireland, or Greece. In all of these cases, it is argued, the notion of collectivistic religions can help us to recover public and historically embedded religions from their epiphenomenal status with regard to nationalism.

I have both analytic and normative stakes in making these claims. First, I hope to show that religious pluralism is the condition of late modernity that is conducive not only to the emergence of religious markets, but also to the preservation of ascribed religious identities. Second, I want to indicate the ways in which the notion of collectivistic religions can retrieve traditions that contribute to public life in religiously pluralistic societies. This book begins and ends with a belief that it is the responsibility of the scholars of religion to ask not whether people *should* exist without belonging to a specific religious community, but *how they can* live with their religious Others while also belonging to their own traditions. The book is ultimately driven by one question: how can people live together while seeing their religious Others as a mode of their own affirmation?