

## Article

# Tension and Transaction: Dynamics of Religious Recomposition from a Multiscopic Perspective

Alfredo Teixeira 

CITER-Research Centre for Theology and Religious Studies, Faculty of Theology,  
Universidade Católica Portuguesa, 1649-023 Lisboa, Portugal; alfredo.teixeira@ucp.pt

**Abstract:** This review article is based on re-reading the Joas vs. Weber discussion about the macro-concept of “disenchantment”. For Joas, the Weberian thesis brings together, in a single explanatory model, different social processes that must be differentiated. Joas’s proposal highlights the need to build research models sensitive to the interaction and the play of different logics of action between tension and transaction. The collection of some of the most recent tendencies shows how research on religion and modernity has renewed its interest in “visible religion”, granting a fundamental place to study the different modalities of religious agency in the recomposition of the public domain. Reading these results allows the reconstruction of an epistemological model centered on the logic of action, considering that religion can no longer be studied only on the terrain of its institutional reproduction. Instead, the plurality of religious agency requires observation at different scales: a multiscopic and multisite perspective.

**Keywords:** secularization; disenchantment; tension; transaction; religious action; visible religion; multiscopic observation



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## 1. Introduction

In the studies of religion developed in European and North Atlantic geography, the macro-concept of “secularization” has invariably pointed to an attempt to read a vast set of transformations, particularly from the 17th century onward. In terms of a macroscopic reading, the model can focus on two axes. In the political-legal axis, the focus is the passage of goods, services, and powers from the religious to the temporal sphere, structuring logics of separation. In a second axis, the hermeneutical dimension is privileged insofar as the macro-concept aims at interpreting a diversified set of transformations: desacralization of the world; the decadence of religion in modern societies; an increase in interest in the world and growing disinterest in the supernatural; retreat of the public influence of religion; transfer of representations and beliefs to the sphere of secular activity; social overcoming of a religious state of dependence toward emancipation; and transformation of the religious field toward its internal secularization. This short enumeration shows that we face a concept that covers a pervasive and complex reality (Fontaine 2017; Gendron 2006; Dobbelaere 2002; Tschannen 1992).

The concept of secularization, taken in its most persistent features, has proven effective for interpreting the modern phenomenon of statehood that restructured the social environment concurrent with a broad reshaping of religious apparatuses. This form of state regulation informed territorial organization and legal frameworks and dispossessed the ecclesiastical enterprise of many of its functions and benefits. This paradigm can thus be fruitful in interpreting the effects of this generalization of state domination, which promoted autonomy, individualization, demographic mobility, and the pluralization of the supply of symbolic goods. Unfortunately, this repertoire of dissolving effects is limited to the indicators provided by religious institutions. In this sense, the model of secularization is often exhausted in observing the crisis of the institutional reproduction of religion and its correlation: the increase in the population without religion (Woodhead 2016).

The concept of secularization was also mobilized to interpret changes in the cognitive sphere. From this perspective, it is emphasized that the modes of knowledge once rested on empirical and analogical systematizations that appealed to the transmitted religious tradition. The credibility of religious representations was based on the perception of superior mysterious forces at work in nature, in daily life, in history, in processes as elementary as biological reproduction, health and disease, or the growth of plants and animals. In this interpretative logic, Weberian, secularized social spaces have effectively experienced the loss of credibility of the “marvelous”. Religion was an essential resource in elaborating frameworks for knowing the world. Its superimposition on the different dimensions of space/time (domestic, administrative, or relative to agrarian cycles) forms a legitimizing religious ideology. The impossibility of reproducing this model of knowledge would be at the base of a fundamental change. The famous study by Y. Lambert on a village in Bretagne, France, underlined that this change translated into the collapse of the religious monopoly on structuring world views. In the French sociologist’s analysis, this collapse was a consequence of cultural pluralism and the subsequent phenomenon of relativization. In this context, it is also emphasized that this process has also materialized in the form of internal secularization of the Churches. In mainstream religion, the unknown was increasingly seen as “not yet known” and no longer supernatural (Lambert 1985).

The secularization paradigm underwent constant critical revisions, generating broad, often incommensurable debates (Stark and Finke 2019; Bruce 2011, 2002). Beyond its oft-criticized Eurocentrism or Christianocentrism, it has been observed that the concept of secularization has functioned as a legitimizing category of the grand narrative of modernity. That is, a legitimizing category of the self-affirmation of the subject as the center of the world—whether by transferring the theological-political attributes of divine sovereignty to the human subject or by dissolving the theological-metaphysical categories that condensed the question of the meaning of social experience (Blumenberg 1991). With broad consequences in the field of research, secularization has been transformed into a meta-social category that promotes a specific evolutionary direction for societies and into a hetero-explanatory model that has removed examination from the religious field in so-called secularized societies, contributing to the invisibility of religion. Moreover, certain theses of secularization have worked from a contested presupposition: the affirmation that there has existed a religious epoch par excellence to which secularized modernity is opposed. In this context, the anthropologist A. Piette, the protagonist of an “ethnography of detail”, proposes a framework of “desacralization” of both the notion of religion and the concept of secularization. It was a strategy of returning research interests to the domain of action (Piette 2000, 1999). In the context of such a saturated field of knowledge, the present study proposes to revisit the Weberian heritage, constitutive of the theoretical DNA of secularization. In this trajectory, it is shown how research in the last two decades expresses a renewed interest in observing “religion visible” (Campiche 2010), in a multiscope framework of diverse scales. This scope of inquiry requires the concept of secularization to abandon its linearity so that it can interpret the paradoxes of modernity. Thus, the “science” of secularization needs to understand itself as a “science of the imprecise” (Moles and Rohmer-Moles 1995).

## 2. A Review of the “Disenchantment” Thesis

The genealogy of the macro-concept “secularization” has already been covered in consistent studies (Casanova 2012). The same is true of its modeling and critical review (Latré 2015; Martin 2005; Dobbelaere 2002; Tschannen 1992). Also, its geographical diversity (Joas et al. 2009; Burchardt et al. 2015), the limits of its scope (Davie 2006), the fallacies of the argumentation (Moniz 2017), or the need for its reversal (Berger 1999) have known total contributions in recent scholarship. In the context of this conceptual review study, we aim to understand how recent research trends are related to this theoretical heritage. In the context of this discussion, the visitation of Weber’s posterity is an unavoidable path since no other author of classical modernity has had such an influence on the discourses on

secularization. Moreover, it is a category that, with roots in the history of Christianity, has assumed an epochal pertinence (Blumenberg 1991) and is therefore exposed to the changes that affect societies.

In the context of the so-called advanced modernity (Voyé 1999), the new dynamics that relate the individual and collectivities (the agent and the system, and the local and the different scales of the global) modify the contours of the concept (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002). It can be said that research tends toward the abandonment of a nomothetic conception of secularization, permanently testing the heuristic value of the concept. On the other hand, tendencies that aim at the cancellation of the idea, its inversion, or its relativization persist. In the agenda pursued here, we avoid its dogmatization. Still, we explore the possibility that the macro-concept secularization can incorporate the results of the multiscope research on religion, particularly concerning the agent–system and individual/group–society relationships beyond the Church–State axis.

### 2.1. Joas vs. Weber

Following the erosion of the materialist sociological model current in the 1960s and 1970s, Max Weber's legacy became hegemonic in the sociology of religion (Giddens and Pierson 2013; Forte 2008; Gendron 2006). The reception of Weber's social theory emphasized the concepts of rationalization and disenchantment. From this point of view, rationalization is the key to understanding the complexity of modern social life (administration, legal systems, economic and financial dynamics, politics, cultural practices, and religion). Therefore, the new empire of formal and instrumental rationality is concurrent with de-traditionalization. The rationalization process unfolds on three levels: (a) on the interpersonal level, motivations are ordered according to the instrumental logic of cost–benefit; (b) on the organizational level, rational-legal forms of power replace regimes of traditional and charismatic authority; (c) on the status of social order, principles that privilege scientific knowledge, formal order, and meritocratic modes of governance become prominent. *Entzauberung* (disenchantment) precisely describes the historical process leading to this demythologization of society and nature and the supremacy of scientific explanations (Joas 2020, pp. 136–62).

According to Hans Joas, “disenchantment” is a metaphor intended to interpret complex social processes (Joas 2020, pp. 163–87). But this goal has produced many ambiguities in Weber's works and posterity. “Disenchantment” is a broad-spectrum concept. Joas notes that the notion agglutinates three phenomena not assimilable into a single process: (a) de-magification, the decline of the influence of magical thinking; (b) de-sacralization, the rise of secular forms of understanding the world; and (c) de-transcendentalization, the decline of narratives that invoke “otherworldliness” (an extramundane otherness). For example, scholastic logic promoted a process of de-magification that predates the Protestant *Sola Gratia*.

On the other hand, investigations into the interdependencies between religion and technology have shown that the religious field has not excluded specific dimensions of the modern technological narrative. And technological imaginaries have not excluded religiosity. Indeed, in recent decades, studies on techno-rituality and the internalization of technology in the religious field have multiplied (O'Leary et al. 2022; Han 2015; St. John 2004).

These processes are constitutive of modernity (without exclusivity) but are not agglutinable into a single macro-concept. They are social processes that may or may not be linked. Joas notes that concepts such as “religious”, “transcendent”, and “sacred” cannot be confused since they represent different phenomena (the religious is in opposition to the secular, and the transcendent is the opposite of the immanent). Joas takes up the notion of “sacredness” in its Simmelian ascendance, stressing that it is an anthropological quality associated with human experiences of “self-transcendence” (Montemaggi 2017). According to Joas, the uncritical diffusion of Weberian conceptuality has contributed to deepening the disinterest in sacredness's role in modern social life. In general terms, Joas approaches the

set of critics who read in the narrative of disenchantment an explanatory model that is too evolutionary, one-dimensional, and Eurocentric (Malešević 2022, pp. 370–74)—the West becomes the culminating place of a quasi-evolutionary trajectory of development, according to a teleological dynamic, that stretches between ancient Judaism and Protestantism.

The focus of Joas's critique rests in two texts by Weber: the essay "Zwischenbetrachtung" and the study "Religionssoziologie" included in volume II of "Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft" (Weber 1996, pp. 410–60; Weber 2003, pp. 145–409). In the Weberian interpretation of modernity, the logic of tension (*Spannung*) and conflict (*Konflikt*) characterizes religion–world relations. Weber explored this dialectic within the framework of five spheres of reality. (a) The first is the economic sphere. Weber notes that in primitive religions, wealth is a divine blessing. The impersonal character of economic processes—via monetarization—clashes with the centrality of ethical value in salvation religions. Through depersonalization, the modern economy does not oppose ethics but excludes it from its internal logic. (b) Weber finds a similar tensional regime in the political sphere. In this case, rationalization processes lead to its organization based on objective interactions and laws. This pragmatism dispenses with any religious ethics and is independent of the citizens' beliefs. (c) The tension between aesthetics and religion requires consideration since there is a deep affinity between the aesthetic and the religious spheres. In Weber's view, the tension is evident in the separation between "content" and "form". Salvation religions live in the quest for the meaning of life in the world. Art developed as an expression of this meaning. But the dynamics of rationalization in art have allowed the emancipation of the domain of form, promoting the substitution of ethical judgment for aesthetic judgment. (d) The erotic sphere and religious ethics also live a tension that derives from their affinity. The link between erotics and religion is evident in the ancient orgiastic manifestations. Erotica is the place where excess experiences transcend the normality of everyday life. According to the Weberian interpretation, salvation religions developed ethical systems intending to orient sexuality toward the structuring functions of biological and social reproduction. In this case, the emancipation of the erotic sphere calls into question the structure of many religious interdicts. (e) In Weber's perspective, the tension within the intellectual sphere has the most significant cultural impact. The development of scientific knowledge via empirical research calls into question the consistency of religious postulates that aim to give ethical meaning to the world. As Weber pointed out, intellectualism propelled the religious field into a more rationalized work of dogmatic reformulation. But, paradoxically, this rationalized religion creates the conditions for the appearance of an emancipated secular thought.

Joas's critique starts from the observation that the Weberian analysis of "religion–modernity" tensions forgets that the experience of self-transcendence is constitutive of human beings. It is this experience that structures the processes of sacralization. Joas emphasizes the human phenomenon of idealization (Joas 2021). Human action, in its creativity, is influenced by various kinds of otherness—respected ideals, traumatic experiences, festive memories, the example of other human beings, etc. Forming these ideals as an expression of the creativity of human action takes very different historical forms. As an anthropological structure, the dynamism of self-transcendence does not translate into a one-way historical process. And modernity is not the place of its erosion but instead its proliferation.

Joas's theses deviate from the axiom about the universality of religion to affirm the universality of experiences of "self-transcendence", processes of sacralization inseparable from types of power. The self-sacralization of tribal organizations, the sacredness of the Sovereign, the People's Nation, and the Person are socio-symbolic configurations that translate historically situated experiences of "self-transcendence". The historical dynamics are diverse: the axial displacement from particularist state instances to universalist divine models, the passage from these to the democratic revolutions of human rights affirmation.

Concretized in the ideal of individual human rights, the sacralization of the Person is, in his view, one of the nuclei of the modern sacred. Joas's sociological project included an interest in knowing the genealogy of human rights (Joas 2016). His analysis seeks to

historicize the constitution of human rights, taking into account the social contexts of their affirmation, the expectations, and moral propositions of the actors from their everyday experiences. The value of the declaration of human rights, in Joas's view, derives from the process of sacralization of the Human Person. In this sense, he distinguishes himself from Durkheim, renouncing the assumption that society is religious in its genesis, and from Weber, deviating from an explanatory model focused on rationalization processes. Joas's pragmatism leads him to think that the Person, human action, the action of the subject, and the community are the matrix of human rights. The affirmation of these rights responds to resolving problems in a specific historical sequence. Hence, it has an *événementiel* character, in a sense proposed by Paul Ricœur (Ricœur 1967). It is necessary to know the social traumas and how human creativity reacts to these contexts to understand the genealogy of human rights. He takes as an example the anti-slavery movement as a model of moral mobilization. The denunciation of the abjection that affects the bodies of enslaved people, generating a tension between violence and dignity, is a way of sacralization. However, the strength of this process does not rest on a universal moral. Instead, it depends on subjective evidence and affective intensity linked to the historical event. Joas's proposals thus emphasize the need to go beyond the explanatory models of "functional differentiation" and "rationalization" to analyze the interactions between the institutionalized logics of action.

## 2.2. *Secular and Post-Secular: Different Configurations*

Joas's argument requires discarding a univocal reading of the configurations of the "secular". This perspective has, by the way, several contacts with the discussion about the "secular" and the "post-secular" (Gorski 2012). These two categories, and their explanatory models, can suggest different semantics. Casanova summarized this diversity from three perspectives (Casanova 2018).

First, the category "secular", taking up the medieval heritage, concerns the autonomization of the mundane sphere of action. The idea of a "secular" clerical entity, distinct from the world of monasteries, brought with it the possibility of a legitimate autonomy of the world as a place of action. This affirmation of the "secular" clergy was a vehicle for the passage of ideals of perfection of life and following Christ into medieval urban life, with significant consequences in the economic arena (Thomas 2014, pp. 55–86; Taylor 2007, pp. 150–60). In this sense, the post-secular would describe a process of re-sacralization.

From a second perspective, led by Taylor, the category "secular" has an eminently modern meaning (Taylor 2007). It concerns the emancipation and differentiation of the cosmic, social, and moral spheres. In this context, religious belief has become a matter of choice without the possibility of being an organizing center of the consensus necessary for social life. In this sense, the "post-secular" would approach what authors like Berger have called "desecularization". This view emphasizes the evidence of the dynamics of the resurgence of religion in multiple modern settings (Berger 1999).

In the third perspective—the secularist secularity—the "secular" is a category of the philosophy of history. History (at least that of the West) is understood teleologically as overcoming any religious stage. The Habermasian notion of "post-secular" is an antithesis of this perspective. For Habermas, the democratic State does not need a religious narrative or a supernatural referent. Instead, the philosopher believes that the participation of all in the democratic process guarantees the construction of legal ornaments based on the values of public reason (Habermas 2008, pp. 120–40; Costa 2022).

This process requires that participants learn to see reality from the other's perspective. This culture of alterity is essential in consensus building. In the framework of communicative rationality, Habermas thought the believer and the non-believer discover the need to understand their differences in constructing the public sphere. The democratically constituted State does not limit itself to guaranteeing the negative freedoms of subjects concerned with their well-being. By facilitating contexts favorable to the realization of communicative liberties, it mobilizes citizens for public debate about what worries them. In this sense, how can citizens participate in this debate by bracketing their worldviews,

including those grounded in a symbolic religious system? Paradoxically, some symbols of modern citizenship have openly mobilized their religious convictions to defend civil rights. Habermas goes further, seeing a possible source of wisdom in religious traditions as valid for constructing the consensus necessary for a public reason.

Thus, Habermas explores the ways of rationality open to new learning, in which it is possible to criticize social practices based on religious wisdom. But it also means that within this communicative society, religions suffer from the impact of inner-modernization processes. The Habermasian perspective reinforces the need for social places of negotiation. Post-secular society, in this view, emphasizes the need for policies of coexistence and co-presence between religious and secular worldviews. The reception of this Habermasian view has been of particular importance in studies on multiple modernities (Rosati and Stoeckl 2016). Other authors have also stressed that this “post-secular” context opens a new space for discussions about the need for a “public sociology”: a sociology engaged in the knowledge and development of different transactions between othernesses or a sociology that chooses one of the fields of dispute (Burawoy 2005; Hashemi 2016).

### 2.3. *The Individual and the Collective*

The regulation of conflicts has been very dependent on ways of negotiation from the communities of religious belonging to collective representation mechanisms, which are not always easy to implement. The social dynamics are also readable from a symbolic oscillation between the projects of salvation through joint construction and the choices of salvation through individual conversion. The central caesura may not reside on the border between politics and religion. This opposition stems from the impact of social and individual discontinuities. The individualization of meaning and self-validation of projects of existential orientation affect the resources available for constructing the social bond. With a notable impact on both political socialization and religious communitarianization, in the context of these reshapes, religious institutions, in terms of the forms of socialization, may present more remarkable plasticity than political institutions (Hervieu-Léger 2001, pp. 141–79).

Nevertheless, the intersections between the liberalism of individual conversion and the announcement of a redeeming social order have not ceased to occur. Some diagnoses consider the political crisis as a successor of the crisis of the religious. Are these crises two sides of the same tension that inhabits the dynamism of liberal democracies? This avenue of analysis pursues the hypothesis that at the center of modernity is not the separation of State and Church, assigning them the sphere of the temporal and the sphere of the spiritual. On the contrary, the most critical tensions and transactions may account for another separation: the universe of the social and the pluriverse of the individual (Blaquart 2010, pp. 61–63; Willaime 2004, pp. 202–35; Hervieu-Léger 1999, pp. 157–200).

Laicity, as a political narrative, is intended to protect public order and individual freedom of conscience. The law and freedom of conscience are paradoxically connected. The law, in a democracy, requires the development of skills that mobilize the consensus of citizens. But it can also be said that there is no way to guarantee individual freedom without the law in society. Paradoxically, the law constrains individuals and, at the same time, guarantees their freedom of conscience. The gap that prevents the total coincidence between a collective order and irreducible individuality may be the locus of most modern tensions. It is testing the hypothesis that the “separation” that best describes the center of politics in modernity is not found in the religion/politics antinomy but in the dissociation between the sphere of the subject (personal, interpersonal, affective, ethical) and the world of collective objectivity (economic, political, and social) (Blaquart 2010, p. 65; Willaime 2004, pp. 235–49; Pace 1997, pp. 339–46).

The narrative of the autonomy of the modern subject—the same one that previously justified the theories of the end of religion—can now explain the recompositions of the religious on the public stage. The reinvestment in the social functions of the religious feeds on the values of individual freedom, in particular, freedom of conscience. In the debates

and confrontations raised by specific normative interventions, which aim at diminishing the impact of the more muscular religious identities, in the name of a common ideal of citizenship, the “religious” criticize the state intervention starting from the claim of individual liberty. But their claims are not presented, on the public scene, under the imperative of a revealed “logocracy” or the urgency of the perpetuation of a tradition. The religious thus recomposes itself at the core of an ultra-modern narrative (Willaime 2004, pp. 229–58; Davie 2000, pp. 176–94; Hervieu-Léger 1999, pp. 201–52). Incidentally, in contexts of discussion on French *laïcité*, the right to religious difference is often justified by mobilizing a core value of the French Revolution, equality (Belhaj 2022).

This approach does not preclude a systemic perspective on the interconnections between religious agency and other social dynamics. But it requires attention to the dynamics of the actor (individual or group). In this interpretative framework, confrontation with Niklas Luhmann’s conceptualization can be constructive. For Luhmann, modern societies reflect a systemic-functional model marked by differentiation processes, which are not confined to the religious subsystem but encompass the entire social system. These societies experience a passage from a situation in which the religious institution was dominant (“model of hierarchical differentiation”) to a condition in which it becomes a subsystem oriented toward the global system. This functional redefinition of societies (“functional differentiation model”) includes the functional re-design of the relations between religion and its social environment (Luhmann 2021, pp. 226–32).

For Luhmann, the privatization of religion is the first consequence of the secularization process. This privatization would be the condition for the individual to be able to determine his form of participation in the different social subsystems. This is part of a conception in which the public/private dialectic is one of the critical points of the secularization processes (Teixeira et al. 2022). In this model, the privatization of decisions affects the social relevance of religion and its claims to universality. It can no longer determine the motivations for individual adherence to religious beliefs and groups. Given the relevance of religion in the context of the assignment of meaning to life, this context does not render the continuity of religious experience unsustainable. Still, it requires a repositioning of the religious subsystem. Thus, religious communication depends on the commitment of conscience to the individual decision. In Luhmann’s view, the dynamics of modernization lead to a more intense internalization of religious belief as a singular and intimate experience (Luhmann 2021, pp. 232–42).

In this functional-systemic sociology framework, secularization consists of the dynamics of integration. Integration presupposes that each partial system becomes an environment for other systems. Briefly, integration is the correlation dynamic that organizes the various social systems, inhibiting interference. According to the Luhmannian perspective, the religious system had to accept its reduction to a partial system, integrated into an environment of other systems. Thus, it experiences the need to limit its functional goals to not interfere with the other systems. This self-limitation is a condition of inter-systemic equilibrium. The complexification of a social system translates into the multiplication of the number of its elements and the relations among them. This dynamic—which inhabits economic, scientific, political, and other systems—creates problems specific to the religious system. It cannot decompose the One, which is its referential object, into simpler units. This is the domain in which it is essential to test Hirschman’s proposal: the distinction between divisible and indivisible social conflicts (Hirschman 1994). The former—which gives rise to various negotiation mechanisms—is typical of a market society in which the social domain is divided into classes, sectors, or regions. The second ones—of religious, ethnic, linguistic, or moral nature—have a non-negotiable character because they concern non-divisible objects and, therefore, diminish the possibilities of compromise.

The complexity that Luhmann points out translates into a paradox: on the one hand, the complexity that inhabits social systems harms the religious system. On the other hand, the high levels of risk of complexity open new spaces of intervention to the religious function (Luhmann 2021, pp. 242–48). A risk is a place of reconfiguration of individual

identity. This circumstance allows for new possibilities of recomposing religiosity from the dynamics of individual construction, not reducible to the “structuring structures” that characterize religion as a social field. The individual makes experiences an enormous fragmentation of the world of life. This situation has favored the emergence of new or remodeled forms of religiosity.

The weakening of institutions and reception devices has made the individual uncertain (Dubar 2010; de Singly 2003). This is the context in which the individual-given, inscribed in a relatively stable process of social mobility, gives way to the individual-trajectory, which experiences the permanent difficulty of constructing itself. Some of the most flourishing religious offerings in the urban territories of multiple modernities have a special relationship with the need for “salvation” in the face of this existential insecurity. For example, we can observe a religious group that flourished at the end of the 20th century. It is the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God, originating in Brazil. In recent years, in some of its territories, it has implemented an identification on the façade of its buildings that contrasts with its previous practices. Currently, it reads “Spiritual Help Center”, indicating a service line (van der Hoek 2022; Rodrigues and Silva 2014). This remodeling of the offers of salvation presented as therapeutic proposals that aim to treat the wounds of the complexity of existence constitutes an exciting laboratory of contemporary religiosity. Once again, it is essential to consider the modalities of recomposition of religiosity in the most nuclear spheres of modern social experience.

The confrontation of this theoretical discussion with the results of research on religion in public space allows us to identify an essential change in research programs. In his critique of secularization—refusing the hegemony of this paradigm—the anthropologist Albert Piette pointed out that this model of understanding has become a theory of religion and a legitimizing category of modernity (Piette 2022). In his view, this categorization of religion and modernity led to a certain disinterest in religion *en train de se faire*, distancing research resources from the micro level of social reality. This trend observed at the end of the twentieth century found diverse responses in the community of researchers. The development of interest in knowing religion “in progress” in the social frameworks of multiple modernities allows the discovery of a less linear social landscape (Eisenstadt 2002). In recent research trends, one discovers that the interpretative program of secularization requires constructing interpretative models that go beyond the narrative of religious erosion.

### 3. Visible Religion: A Framework for Multiscopic Observation

In the last 20 years in European and North Atlantic geography, many studies have made evident the growing complexity of how religion is regulated in the public scene. This is a diverse agenda, with some similar and comparable features and others notoriously idiosyncratic, resulting from the religious history of each region and the demographic flows that reshape social frameworks (Soper and Fetzer 2007; Willaime 2009; Portier 2011; Milot et al. 2010; Furseth 2018; Kazarian 2019). This diverse body of research proves a renewal of interest in “visible religion”—following a proposal by Campiche—in counterpoint to Luckmann’s “invisible religion” category, one of the most influential in some models of understanding secularization (Campiche 2010; Luckmann 1967). Research on “visible religion” is interested in the religious agency on the public scene, the practices, the materialities, the commitments, and the transactions between distinct actors and groups (Hjelm 2015). In this domain, some lexical shifts are observed. The language of “tension”, “conflict”, “erosion”, “erasure”, “decline”, and “privatization” now coexists with the vocabulary of “transaction”, “compromise”, “recomposition”, “resistance”, and “cohesion”.

#### 3.1. New Social Landscapes

The metaphor of landscape has become a recurrent one for interpreting social change. It is a perspective that pays great attention to changes in social settings and context, valuing both the impact of new practices and the plasticity of representations (Ferguson 2021). Appadurai’s work on this concept-metaphor is particularly relevant. The anthropologist

proposes the neologism *ethnoscape* to speak of a human landscape marked by mobilities of various kinds. Starting from a critique of the notion of “native”—individuals and groups enclosed in the ecology of a place—Appadurai seeks new tools for an anthropology of mobility, an anthropology that can read the changing worlds built by people on the move—as fact or as representation (Appadurai 1996). Networks and structures that seek the conservation of social stability remain. However, as a prominent feature of “modernity at large”, this anthropological perspective stresses that mobilities permanently impact all these networks and structures. This conceptual proposal is close to other categories that aim to emphasize the same phenomenon: “border cultures” (García Canclini 2004), “globe time” (Sloterdijk 2005), or “cultural hybridity” (Burke 2009).

This is also the context that explains the return of the category “bricolage” to the field of social sciences. Lévi-Strauss used this metaphor to characterize the mythic imagination that plays with the possible recompositions of the stock of fragmented, heterogeneous, and heteroclitic materials (Lévi-Strauss 1962). These materials are accumulated through tradition, importation, or deviation. The concept, mainly used in analyzing mixed-race societies (colonial and postcolonial), has thus shifted to the geography of hypermodernity (Mary 2001). Cultural bricolage practices can involve paradoxical work on memory. Admittedly, one can document phenomena that attest to the tendency to homogenize religion in regions such as Western Europe (Pérez-Agote 2018). But we can also observe the dynamics of rehabilitation of pre-Christian or pre-colonial religious memory, in a context of differentiation and strengthening of local or regional identities, in the face of the impacts of globalization (Hardy and Whaanga 2019).

In this social framework, symbolic transhumance practices are frequent in metropolitan territories, favoring the possibility of contact between diverse cultural fragments. The large metropolitan areas or global cities are today the central laboratory for observing a cultural change of vast dimensions—the passage from the geography of stable universes to the pluriverse of intercultural maps. These territories have become settings for the explosion of difference—including in that phenomenon of religious diversification—prompting new agencies and reshaping old ones, state and non-state (Coutinho 2022; Franca 2022; Rüpke 2020; Becci et al. 2013). Transnational demographic flows are one of the most decisive factors for diversifying the religious landscape across different geographies (AlMasarweh 2022; James 2017).

These flows put pressure on different actors regarding the management of “visible religion”. The religious issue thus re-emerges on the public scene from the discussion about the impact of migration flows on models of social cohesion. The results of various studies seem to point to the fact that, in European and North Atlantic geography, tolerance toward ethnic and religious differences is dependent on demographic balances (Duru et al. 2017; Beaman 2017). The nations that experience the integration of new religious identities more tensely are territories more pressured by the demographic weight of new residents, particularly visible in the so-called global cities or large metropolitan areas.

Religion is, therefore, often mobilized by liberal governance, as a resource to ensure social cohesion (Martikainen and Gauthier 2013). Research in the 1990s focused on the various forms of “state control over religious phenomena” (Fontaine 2017). More recent lines of research privilege the observation of the political uses of religious diversity. In the domain of the practices of “government through community” (Tezcan 2007, p. 59), religious communities play the role of mediation in different processes of social ordering. In this context, the secular State incorporates technologies of governance that classify individuals from the categories of religious diversity (Burchardt 2017). In particular, liberal policies value the devices proper to the “inter-religious” field: rites, colloquia, conversations, practices of reconciliation of memories, etc. The different forms of interreligious dialogue stage liberal political options concerning diversity management. These options meet interreligious dynamics in the religious field (Dussert-Galinat 2013).

In certain situations, religious identity can be the facilitating *medium* for integrating other dimensions of identity. The concept of “ethnic transcendence” intends to identify the

processes in which religious identity is the stage of integrating distinct racial and ethnic groups (Marti 2015). The experience of association with a single religious congregation of individuals belonging to different ethnic communities within the framework of transnational flows can facilitate the consciousness of belonging to a moral community that transcends ethnic and racial determinations. On the one hand, “ethnic transcendence” mobilizes the members of a religious congregation to the solidarity of a joint religious mission. On the other hand, it allows the sublimation of ethnic and racial boundaries toward a different kind of social cohesion. Thus, amid advanced modernity, religious identities can mediate the construction of a social space that is not reducible to racial-ethnic particularisms (Synnes 2022; Marti 2009; Mitchell 2006).

### 3.2. From State to Local

Characterizing the modalities of state regulation of religious pluralism tends to focus on observing the national scale (Zylberberg 1990; Champion 1993; Luca 2003). However, it is necessary to remember that this type of regulation from “above” coexists with other forms of public regulation. This diversity will depend on the conditions of the organization of the territories and the morphology of local and regional powers. Therefore, paying more attention to these other regulation scales is necessary. Here, different agents are identified, and various forms of reappropriation of national legislation are discovered according to logic that only the local scale can explain. Many of the problems triggered by the impact of religious civilities involve, in the first instance, local regulation factors: places of worship, places of pilgrimage, seasonal events, funeral rituals, the impact of diets on the organization of nearby public spaces, etc. In Frégosi’s perspective, the study of the “local regulation of religious pluralism” includes three sets of processes: (a) cognitive devices or modes of apprehension of religious pluralism, which frame the action of political, administrative, and religious agents; (b) the modes of insertion of religious communities and institutions in the local dynamics of the territory; and (c) the policies implemented for the regulation of religious freedom in the domains of lived religion and its impact on the local public space (Frégosi 2001, pp. 23–26).

Municipal regulation policies often have a wide margin of maneuver. Their intervention in the field of religious dynamics aims at the planning of the urban space and the integration of religious claims in a plan of recognized civilities. Ultimately, it seeks to avoid religious confrontation or the relativization of the values of liberal secularism. In his studies on Catalonia, compared with other European regions, Griera has shown that several criteria are combined that tend to observe religious expressions as civic practices that can be integrated into the management of pluralism or as disintegrating religious expressions—in this case, the “visible religion” is read under the prism of its admissibility. This implicitly or explicitly constitutes a policy of categorizing admissible and non-admissible religions. On the other hand, religious expressions readable within the framework of recognized logics of action tend to be considered acceptable: art, heritage, narratives in favor of a shared ethos, and festivals (as a display of an assimilable exotic). One would say that this is a translation of religious practices and discourses into other spheres of civic action (Griera 2012, 2016).

This line of inquiry makes it possible to understand political work on what religion is considered legitimate or illegitimate—as in the case of “anti-sect” lobbies—and also, local perceptions about “threatening” religion or “tolerated” religion (Birt 2006; Roy 2013). Thus, research findings show that policies may be more favorable to religious groups that can be seen as easily framed within public policy, despite their dissimilarity to local cultures. Others, although closer to the dominant religious tradition, are seen as destabilizing social cohesion. N. B. Weibel demonstrated that the Alsace population more easily accepted Buddhism’s presence in the Alsatian religious landscape than the Islamic presence (Weibel 2020). Differently, in Portugal, a country with a Catholic majority, feelings of religiophilia are more recurrent toward Islam than toward the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (Minga 2022; Mapril et al. 2021). On the one hand, Islam is not perceived as a competing religion—its proselytizing activity is scarce. But on the other hand, Islam is

part of the historical memory of the Portuguese territory, facilitating its circulation in the field of heritage strategies. Differently, the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God, whose implementation dates back to the 20th century, in a period of consolidation of the democratic regime, brought a way of practicing Christianity ostensibly differentiated and with very active proselytizing strategies.

The studies by Martínez-Ariño and Griera, carried out in Göttingen and Barcelona, as part of research on religious governance modalities in cities, using qualitative methodologies, identified six dominant criteria in the framing logics of minority religious practices (Martínez-Ariño and Griera 2020, pp. 225–33): (a) decency (obscene and scandalous or aesthetic and festive), (b) disturbance (interpellant or discreet), (c) frequency (extraordinary or ordinary), (d) individual agency and freedom (emancipated or imposed), (e) relation to modernity and secularity (secularized or pious), and (f) legibility from the socio-symbolic frames of reference (legible or incommensurable). However, the researchers emphasized that the boundaries between permissible and non-permissible religions change. Furthermore, the politics shape these changes and the context within which they occur (religious history of the territory, characteristics of the majority religion, dynamics of radicalization, the profile of social mediators, etc.).

### 3.3. Social Uses of Conflict

As noted earlier, the category “conflict” is one of the keys to the Weberian interpretation of the religion–modernity binomial. But the logic of conflict does not necessarily express itself on the level of incommensurability of worlds. Instead, the logic of conflict is used as an instrument of social requalification. In this sense, it can either lead to the marginalization of religious identities or favor dynamics of recognition and promote dynamics of transaction of legitimacies.

Firstly, conflicts are drawn from the logic of strategies and interest groups, particularly in relations between religious organizations and public powers. These conflicts recurrently concern the diverse forms of religious visibility and institutional recognition. Take the case of the claims and negotiations concerning the construction of places of worship or buildings that may be vehicles for transmitting religious memory (monuments, museums, interpretation centers, etc.). As far as places of worship are concerned, negotiations particularly mobilize municipal or regional policy agents. A historical area of Lisbon, Portugal’s capital city, was the object of a mediation policy dedicated to the problem of the religious diversity concentrated there. Mapril’s research made evident the role that the identification or construction of places of worship can have in the dynamics of identity remodeling—in this case, the recomposition of Bangladeshi Islam in a transnational framework (Mapril et al. 2021).

In this logic of conflict lies one of the most critical modern tensions: the tension between rights dependent on God’s will and rights anchored in the free nature of human beings (Ferrari 2018). Public opinions see this kind of conflict as highly pernicious for society. But this model of analysis should not be absolutized. From a legal point of view, different jurisprudences subsist, for example, at the European level (Christians 2019). “Multisite” socio-anthropological research allows us to observe that complex and fragile links describe the relationship between religious worldviews and the action of individuals. Situations in which individuals sharing the same worldview make contrasting decisions, and act in markedly different ways, abound. On the other hand, sometimes a specific statement of interest is taken as concerning a community of religious belonging when, in fact, it concerns a set of actors within that group. Analyzing these conflict situations requires knowledge of the internal pluralism of a given religious field (Lamine 2013a, p. 217).

Conflicts can also be analyzed, in a second way, by observing the boundaries between groups. The distinction between “us” and “others” is at the heart of social construction processes. When we analyze conflict dynamics in societies, it is helpful to understand what kind of border is at stake. There are social boundaries that are objectified in the unequal forms of access to different goods, material and immaterial. But symbolic frontiers are also constituted from the representations used to qualify and differentiate objects, people, times,

and spaces. The use of religious memory for the construction of national borders varies widely. In a comparative study, Bail showed how this resource had a direct relationship with immigration flows, which favor the constitution in a given territory of groups with distinct religious memories (Bail 2008).

The grammar of value conflict can be at the core of ethnic or religious strife. This can happen in the context of populations with majority characteristics as well as in contexts of minority identities. Discourses about the incompatibility of value systems are one of the substrates of processes of “self-representation” through constructing an image of the “others”. F. Lorcerie has clarified how the 2004 law in France on religious signs was defined in an argumentative framework close to the logic of “moral panic” (Lorcerie 2008). The broad discussions about wearing the full veil proved disproportionate, considering the small number of people involved in the French territory. But this disproportion can also be found in minority contexts. The anthropologist C. Mafra showed how, at the beginning of its implementation in Portugal, the preachers of the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God held the idea of persecution in notoriously disproportionate terms, considering the documentable social facts (Mafra 2002, pp. 29–59).

It should also be stressed that the boundaries between different groups are mobile (Lamine 2004, 2013b). For example, studies conducted in the 1990s on immigrant communities from Islamized spaces showed that several Christian churches played an essential role in integrating these populations. In this social context, Islam was not seen as mainstream in the plural fabric of the supply of religious goods. Often, Muslim immigrants were integrated into social care networks where the Churches have a particular presence—especially in situations where it was not yet possible to reconstitute Islamic civilities and solidarities (de Galember 2003). In another context, when in a popular initiative vote on 29 November 2009, the Swiss population was consulted about the construction of new minarets, the scenarios presented new contours. Fath’s study showed that the tendency to limit new construction was strongly present among evangelical voters, even if their leaders in the public space expressed positions that did not follow this tendency (Fath 2014).

From a third interpretative path, conflicts can be read as a form of interaction, with diverse transactions, with an impact on socialization processes and the construction of social cohesion. An essential part of these new scenarios results from recompositions of local governance and is no longer at the conventional level of central state regulation. The problems related to places of worship, cemeteries, recognition of interlocutors, diets, and other civilities in public establishments pose new issues at the scale of local government. Within the framework of their institutional innovation programs, some municipalities have responded to these new contexts by creating mediation bodies specifically dedicated to intervention in religious pluralism. Religious communities can be favorable contexts for mediation in conflict management. For example, in the Lisbon Metropolitan Area, in Portugal, the Kimbanquista Church was re-housed at the time of the Vasco da Gama Bridge construction. In this context, this church gained some prominence within the policies implemented by municipal authorities, playing a recognized role of moderation and mediation, contributing to the prevention of ethnic conflict (Sarró and Blanes 2009).

In many circumstances, conflicts can develop a favorable environment for recognition and exchange. The presence of local authorities at significant events in communities of religious belonging has become more frequent, contributing to the normalization of religious diversity. The local authorities create mechanisms of approach that favor interreligious coexistence. Religious agents seek, in concert, a place to legitimize their identity. This is a terrain defined by practices of exchange and negotiation (Davis et al. 2021; Sunier 2021; Botchwey 2007; Lamine 2004; Frégosi and Willaime 2001).

### 3.4. Religion in the Institutions of Modernity

The institutional “places” of modernity are one of the most effective laboratories for observing the new forms of visibility of religion between conflict and transaction. Indeed, these contexts are often the stage for processes of politicization of religious issues. At the

time of the public discussion about the use of religious signs in educational establishments in France in 2003–2004, the political scientist F. Lorcerie showed how this case became a site of reconfiguration of the institutional political scene itself and the renewal of discourses about national identity (Lorcerie 2008). But this was also the context of a broad discussion in French society about the need to make educational devices sensitive to “religious fact” (Debray 2002b). Debray’s report on the *fait religieux* and *laïcité* recognized the need for investment in religious literacy as a way of deepening education for citizenship and as a strategy of cultural transmission (Debray 2002a).

In various national contexts, the school has become a place to learn about the relationships between *laïcité* and religious freedom. Research results show that perceptions of secularism in school contexts are not exclusively dependent on religious socialization factors. Instead, coexistence with religious heterogeneity and involvement in discussion contexts (“discussional” ethics, in the Habermasian sense) are preponderant factors in the construction of open and inclusive secularity (Nyambek Kanga Mebenga 2016).

The spaces of education thus reveal themselves as a terrain of negotiation between religious worldviews and citizenship understood from a secularizing perspective (Zuber 2019). This problem has diverse configurations, but there is a tendency for the agenda of educational policies not to dismiss the issue of religious identities. The scenarios can be various: the interest in the place of the problems of secularism in the formation of Muslim leadership (El Asri 2015); the debate on the need for an educational policy of religious literacy (LeVasseur 2013); or the convergence of religious education and school socialization in combating exclusivist readings of religion or secularism (Essabane et al. 2022).

Recent studies on religious pluralism in prisons have shown how, in some national contexts, it has become possible to have a housing policy that considers religious diversity—as it had been possible before, based on criteria of another nature, such as smoking or non-smoking. In this context, the authentic neutrality of the State may pass, not through the invisibility of the religious in prison life, but through its recognition, requiring new skills and new forms of organization, which improve the conditions of daily life and moderate the possibilities of conflict (Sarg 2020; Béraud et al. 2016).

Beyond schools and prison facilities, it is crucial to take into account that the presence of a religious/spiritual agency in hospital settings tends to be revalued. In this case, affirming the autonomy and authority proper to medicine as a science and profession does not necessarily translate into a retreat of legitimacy applicable to other actors. But it certainly implies negotiations and adjustments. In this context, it is essential to emphasize the ongoing transitions from the chaplaincy system to the spiritual and religious assistance model (Marques 2021) with the emergence of multi-faith teams (MacLaren 2020). On the other hand, the interest in considering the religious and spiritual dimension in clinical decision-making processes and therapeutic follow-up procedures is growing in the area of nursing and associated research (Duarte et al. 2022; Malcolm et al. 2021; López-Tarrida et al. 2021; Rego et al. 2020).

In the context of multiple modernities, research on social action organizations with a religious ideology allows the observation that the dynamics of multiple modernities produce hybrid agencies, which cannot be analyzed from the logic of “separation”. These institutions aim to achieve the triple bottom line of business viability, social missions, and spiritual outcomes. In these circumstances, the logic of action combines, cooperating within the framework of some autonomy. Spiritual development goals can facilitate new business opportunities. The social mission may discover spiritual needs or legitimize certain management decisions. This hybridity does not negate the possibility that these logics of action remain autonomous (Kimura 2021; Sitimela 2016; Joaquim 2012).

But this problem is also relevant in other types of organizations. For example, we can mention the impact of religious diversity in the workplace. From a systematic literature review of scientific articles published in SCOPUS and Web of Science using the preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses (PRISMA), it was possible to map various forms of discrimination (in particular, regarding the use of the veil by Muslim

women). However, the study's authors also identify more significant evidence of management strategies to respond to this problem. The recognition of religious identity, from the pressure of its diversity, is transforming human resource policies (Garcia-Yeste et al. 2022).

The context of the communicative society is also a good laboratory for observing the hybridism of action. The communication policies of religious institutions incorporate exogenous logic. The internal secularization category is insufficient since it focuses on the impact of secular dynamics inside the religious institutional habitat. It becomes necessary to approach the phenomenon from the perspective of social creativity proper to the religious field. The use of marketing techniques can be documented in the area of Christian churches, both in new churches, in the neo-Pentecostal context (White and Pondani 2022), and churches with a broad cultural inscription, such as the Roman Catholic Church in Poland (Sulkowski et al. 2022). We also find evident brand-building work in the context of the renewal of the symbolic capital of large Catholic shrines, such as the Shrine of Fatima in Portugal (Abreu 2005).

#### 4. Logics and Modes of Action: Tension and Transaction

The re-examination of Weber, through the scope of Joas, reinforces the idea that it is necessary to “de-absolutize” the categories of “disenchantment” and “rationalization”. This conceptual revision is an excellent place to develop models for analyzing the interactions between institutionalized logics of action. The previously compared research results bring into play a social science with the logic of action as its object.

In this sense, research in the field of the religion–modernity problematic in the previous two decades reshapes the results of the transformations that took place in the last quarter of twentieth-century social theory. Action and actors have taken center stage in the research of authors such as Alain Touraine, Pierre Bourdieu, Michel de Certeau, Anthony Giddens, Margaret Archer, Luc Boltanski, and Laurent Thévenot, among others. This already widely inventoried theoretical revision can be interpreted as resulting from the impact of the cultural and semiotic turn in the social sciences (Sulkunen 2009).

The notion of “logic of action” should be situated in this lineage. It facilitates the articulation of a theoretical multipolarity by freeing the notion of actor and agency from the limits enunciated by classical approaches to theories of organizations. The focal point of analysis is situated at the crossroads of the dynamics of conflict (tension) and cooperation (transaction) (Bernoux 2016; Croce 2015). The science of the logic of action is crucial to study the factors that explain the agreements and conventions that are established between actors, institutions, and modes of agency. Social space is thus observed in the diversity of positions and interests, mapping power strategies, negotiations, agreements, compromises, rivalries, convergences, etc. The actor or social agent—individual or collective—is understood as a subject of tactics (consumer logic) and strategic entity (producer logic) (Amblard et al. 2005, pp. 187–210; Certeau 1990, pp. 50–73). A social group becomes an “actor” when it becomes aware of its historical condition. Instead of accepting the structural factors that put it in a place of subjection or invisibility, the social actor aspires to become a historical subject, that is, to find in itself the foundation of its action (Forgues 2010, pp. 188–90). This happens in a specific historical and institutional context, considering structures and situations and mobilizing references to justify their action (Boltanski and Thévenot 2008).

This can apply to all kinds of agencies, including religious agencies. In the aforementioned collected multiscope and multisite research findings, individuals, groups, and institutions find new conditions for their actions in the secularized environment. These conditions import both difficulties and opportunities. The contexts of religious diversity, loss of monopoly, symbolic fragmentation, or social marginalization constitute a new map of possibilities offered to social creativity in the religious field. As noted, religious forms sometimes recompose themselves at the center of the very structures of modernity—this is why Hervieu-Léger stressed the need to construct new instruments at the end of the 20th century to understand “religious modernity” (Hervieu-Léger 1999).

Approaching the ontology of social life from the perspective of action requires two aspects (Martuccelli 2016, pp. 104–7). On the one hand, it implies recognizing that action experience is the common substratum of reality. On the other hand, it means considering that the constraints of reality are not reducible to a single logic of action. From Martuccelli's perspective, the history of social reality has been framed by four significant regimes: religion (the regime of relations with invisible beings), politics (the regime of hierarchies and limits), economics (the regime of accumulation and exchange), and ecology (the regime of interdependencies). These regimes have been prevalent in different periods of history. In each period, these regimes tend to represent "the" reality. However, new objects and questions become possible if the perspective of social sciences shifts from the observation of preponderances to the plasticity of social life itself (Martuccelli 2016, pp. 110–12). (a) It is necessary to consider the complexity of the spatial diffusion and temporality of social phenomena—this allows for uncovering blind spots in the perspective of reality. (b) It is essential to incorporate a historiographical perspective to understand the different logic of action in a particular society. This avoids the tendency to consider modernity as a kind of ultimate "place" of the constitution of reality. (c) Abandoning the assumption of a common trans-historical truth, one discovers that the limits of reality reveal an enormous variety of historical expressions.

In this sense, the need to bring the tension–transaction axis to the center of the epistemological discussion is advocated. The Weberian model of "tension" essentially translates a hermeneutics of conflict formulated from ideal models. The analysis of transactions considers that social agents fix and reify behavior patterns, establishing nexuses between past and present. At the same time, this type of analysis assumes that transactions do not occur in an abstract space. Instead, they appear in a territory whose boundaries are drawn by semiotic and historical constraints (Croce 2015). But this analysis route needs to integrate categories that allow interpreting the "situational" characteristics of transactions generated by different modalities of social agency. From an epistemological point of view, a reappropriation of action-centered methodological programs is proposed. It is an opportunity to revisit and update the proposal of the situational analysis method, designed by Van Velsen, although inspired by the approaches of Gluckman and Turner (Van Velsen 1979). In this perspective, religious actors, individuals, or collectivities are studied in their social position and its modulations. The anthropologist F. Barth stressed that the analysis of the most significant structures of culture should not be reduced to the pursuit of their morphology. It must integrate the observation of their distribution since actors are always positioned.

In this sense, a description of social forms concentrated on the work of classification from nomothetic categories is not sufficient. In this epistemological framework, formulations close to Weberian pure types—conceptual, complex, and abstract concentrates—may be the extremes of a series of variants. These extremes can organize a framework of modulations and variations of action and enunciation. Thus, it becomes necessary to discover generative models that identify processes (Barth 2007; Tan 2020). For Norwegian anthropologist F. Barth, the interaction, the interlocution, or the transaction should be the elite unit of analysis as social agents make decisions, mobilize reference values, and signal the system's margins for maneuvering (Barth 1981, p. 76). This angle of study makes it possible to identify the possible agendas of individuals and groups, in their confrontations and alliances, within a specific structure. This type of research must make use of different scales of observation ("multiscope").

Situational analysis privileges the observation of the drama of the dispute. That is the observation of situations in which actors find themselves facing conflicting values or norms. This methodological path requires particular attention to the operations of sorting and assembly that constitute the argumentative activity. Situations of dispute (contest) do not only require lines of separation (tension). They also embody the arts of negotiation. This interpretative path does not reduce action to the result of cognitive and axiological constraints but also includes the perspective of the pragmatics of cooperation

and competition (Barth 1981, pp. 7, 76). In the same epistemological framework, one of the most creative interpreters of the religious crisis of the 1960s, Michel de Certeau, stressed the need for a polemological analysis of culture—to understand how conflicts are articulated, symbolic balances are constructed and compatibility contracts are established (Certeau 1990, XLIV). This approach is eminently modern since it elects crisis dynamics as central to social processes (Del Noce 2014).

## 5. Conclusions

Many authors have been interested in exploring the analytical dimensions of the notion of secularization (Shiner 1967; Dobbelaere 2002). But such attempts have not overcome two essential difficulties: the fact that, in this interpretative context, religion is presented inexorably in a perspective of decadence, assuming that there has been a golden age of religion contrasted with a new era characterized by its obsolescence. Joas's critical revision of Weberian "disenchantment" as an interpretative macro-concept does not necessarily invite its cancellation. It is instead a proposal of "des-totalization", considering that the concept was intended to include a diversity of processes that must be analyzed in a differentiated way. The same can be said of the macro-concept "secularization". The concept's effects on the research itself were pointed out. By becoming a theory of religion, a philosophy of history, and a legitimization of the discourse on the self-determination of the modern individual, this macro-concept can contribute to the distancing of research from the different dimensions of religion "in progress".

The research models collected and the results gathered allow us to observe that a significant part of the social research of the last two decades does not take secularization as a starting point or as the only explanatory model. The identified lines of the research report a research community with a renewed attention to "visible religion", overcoming the risk of a disinterested theorization concerning religious agency and the social creativity proper to the religious field: religious materialities, modalities of public recognition, forms of the inscription on the public stage, communicative remodels, linguistic innovations, strategic cooperation, negotiating tactics, exchanges of legitimacy at the state and local levels, etc. This attention to "visible religion" is attentive to the need for a research program that is not reduced to analyzing the phenomena of institutional reproduction of religion. The research trends that have been census prove the need to have theoretical and practical instruments sensitive to the plurality of religious action between tension and transaction. In this sense, it has been shown how the observed research trends correspond to a remodeling of the models of anthropology and sociology of action, which make the social actor/agent (individual or group) the fulcrum of inquiry.

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