

# Introduction

## Negotiating the Religious and the Secular in Modern German History

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In August 2016, the *New York Times* published an article under the headline, 'From Burkinis to Bikinis: Regulating What Women Wear'. The article is illustrated with two photographs. The first one shows a very formally dressed policeman on the beach of Rimini, on the Adriatic Coast of Italy, in 1957, writing a ticket for a woman wearing a bikini. Wearing a bikini (a swimsuit named after the Bikini Atoll Islands in the Pacific, which had become famous after the American nuclear bomb tests of 1946 in that region) was prohibited. At that time, the Italian government as well as most Italians argued in favour of the bikini ban on religious grounds. Following this line of argument, the bikini offended the Christian, in this case Catholic, religion. The second photograph shows three French policemen, dressed just as neatly as their Italian colleague decades before, forcing a woman sitting on the beach of a French town to remove her long-sleeved shirt. This photo was taken in August 2016, and the policemen are enforcing a ban on 'inappropriate clothing on beaches', colloquially referred to as the 'burkini ban', which had been issued some days earlier. Those who are supporting this ban argue that they are defending the secular, which is violated by religious, particularly Muslim, clothing habits.

There were neither bikinis nor burkinis in the German Empire, even though the most common bathing suits at that time were very similar to what is understood nowadays as a burkini – nor had there been major conflicts about Muslim or Catholic clothing habits. However, the recent burkini debate and the steadily growing research field that deals with these and similar contemporary conflicts are perfectly suited as a starting point for an exploration of the religious landscape of nineteenth-century Germany. Until recently this landscape has been described with analytical notions such as secularization or the revitalization of religion.

Since the 1990s, many historians have argued that those common explanations are misleading and that a new set of analytical tools and perspectives is needed to comprehend the significance of religion in the period. However, the question of which methodologies are most appropriate is still open to debate. I argue that contemporary debates concerning the place of the 'burkini' in the public sphere can provide us with helpful points of departure for future research concerning nineteenth-century Germany.

What we can learn from these debates, as I want to show in this Introduction, is that we firstly should connect religious and secular studies. As illustrated with these recent examples from European beaches, and as scholars like Talal Asad have convincingly argued, our understanding of the secular is closely linked to our understanding of the religious, and vice versa. The religious and the secular are anything but stable categories, let alone unproblematic articulations of universal meaning. They are instead relational categories, mutually shaping and reshaping each other as much as different confessions shape each other's identities.<sup>1</sup> Following this perspective, debates on religious phenomena are also always discussions about the frontiers of the secular and thereby about the making and unmaking of the religious and the secular.<sup>2</sup> However, connecting secular with religious studies is easier said than done – this is, first of all, due to research deficits regarding secular studies within historical disciplines. While religious histories have been increasing in popularity for several decades, historians – in contrast to sociologists and anthropologists – have only very recently detected the secular, secularity or secularities as topics of historical research. Historians, therefore, rely on the help of disciplines such as anthropology and sociology, where secular studies have been in steady growth for some years, and where a whole range of ideas on how to think about the secular have emerged.

Secondly, transnational perspectives are crucial here, because, during the long nineteenth century, and above all at the turn of the twentieth century, debates concerning the religious and the secular almost always referred to spaces beyond a given state's borders. In our own times, the Burkini debate, while reflecting French national legislation, has expressed and reinforced cultural concerns beyond the republic's borders. However, the transnational or even global perspectives that are needed for such an opening up of national frameworks are not without pitfalls, which is something particularly emphasized by postcolonial studies, pointing to some crucial shortcomings concerning topics such as religion and secularity. On the one hand, therefore, we need to account for processes of global entanglement, but simultaneously need to acknowledge the limitations of transnational approaches themselves.

## **How to Put the Religious and the Secular in One Analytical Frame?**

The common sense among many historians of the modern period, 'that "religion" is a specific sphere which can be left to a few specialists', to quote John Seed,<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>"Negotiating the Secular and the Religious in the German Empire: Transnational Approaches"  
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has lasted for a very long time, particularly among historians working on imperial Germany. This long-lasting ignorance was particularly widespread among German historians, who all shared the same Weberian vision of nineteenth-century Germany as a country experiencing an increasing disenchantment and decline of religious worldviews. The underlying assumption – not always openly declared – was that modernity is secular *per se*.<sup>4</sup> And as the foundation of the German nation state, in 1871, was defined as a crucial hallmark of modernity, it seemed to be a logical consequence that the German Empire would be framed as a period that lacked strong religious forces and that, therefore, studies in religion would be superfluous. With only some rare exceptions, such as Wolfgang Schieder's article on Catholic pilgrimage, published in 1974,<sup>5</sup> German historians tended to ignore religious phenomena or to understand religion from a quite narrow, functional, point of view, either highlighting Catholicism as a form of clerical social control, or Protestantism's role as a legitimizing ideology for state and dynasty.<sup>6</sup>

It was mainly due to the works of British and American historians such as Richard Evans, David Blackbourn, Jonathan Sperber and Lavina Anderson, all four pioneers in the field of modern German religious history, that the topic was liberated from this shadowy and peripheral existence.<sup>7</sup> They not only claimed that religion was worthy of study in its own right, but also broadened the perspective beyond questions of its alleged backwardness and repressive dimensions. Step by step, the assumptions that nineteenth-century Germany was characterized by a process of secularization became less and less convincing. E.P. Thompson's seminal book, *The Making of the English Working Class*, doubtless also had some impact in this context, underlining as it did the religious origins of social protest movements in Britain. And certainly, the debate, initiated by Barbara Welter, dealing with the question if there had been something like a specific feminine religiosity in the nineteenth century, opened up new perspectives on the relationships between religiosity and gender.<sup>8</sup> Last but not least, nineteenth- and twentieth-century historians learnt much from early modernist and medieval historians' works, such as Lucien Febvre's *Luther* and the studies of Natalie Zemon Davis, pointing out the symbolic, political as well as economic powers that religion was able to develop.<sup>9</sup> These new studies also benefited from a broader understanding of religion, which had emerged in cultural and social anthropology from scholars like Clifford Geertz, defining religion as a system of meanings.<sup>10</sup>

Little by little, an ever-growing number of studies made it obvious that religion could neither be reduced to a Marxist perspective of religion as the 'opiate of the people', nor to a Foucauldian understanding of religion as a form of social discipline and control. Above all, it became clear that modernity and religion are anything but mutually exclusive. A couple of historians began to draw attention to Jewish history,<sup>11</sup> others to Protestantism, the dominant confession in Germany during the long nineteenth century, which had long been neglected, or simply treated as part of the ideological furniture of the imperial state after

1871.<sup>12</sup> As a consequence, the religious nature of charitable associations, particularly those of female origin, were explored and an entire new world of female middle-class life – be it in these associations or as deaconess or in Catholic congregations – was discovered.<sup>13</sup> Finally, the prominent roles of inter-confessional rivalry within the emergence of German nationalism in the nineteenth century came clearly into focus, as well as the salience and importance of the culture wars waged during the 1870s between Catholics and liberals.<sup>14</sup> At the same time, these and many other studies opened up new perspectives as they led to a rereading of Max Weber's secularization thesis and, therewith, initiated a debate on how to understand German religious sociologists, as well as other scholars such as Emile Durkheim, who are still highly influential among historians today.<sup>15</sup> It became more and more obvious that these theories also need to be understood in the light of confessional debates, and that they are, therefore, rather contributions to the then ongoing culture wars than narratives offering a timeless theory.<sup>16</sup>

Along with this growing field of research, an until then overlooked highly vibrant religious landscape was discovered, consisting of dozens of different religious, spiritualistic and sectarian groups, including mission associations at home and abroad.<sup>17</sup> Instead of a decrease in religion's significance over the nineteenth century, an increase in religious associations and religious engagement, far beyond the narrow range of churches, was brought to light. Some even spoke of a 'devotional revolution', a term first used by Emmet Larkin to describe Irish religious life in the nineteenth century.<sup>18</sup> However, this revisionist interpretation has also been subject to criticism, because it was only some parts of society that could be described as becoming increasingly religious, whereas others were turning their backs on the churches and piety. On top of that, the relationship between the state and the church was undergoing fundamental changes.

Against the backdrop of this still growing, rich research field, it is all the more surprising how little we know about the secular. Almost all historians seem to take the secular for granted and, therefore, consider it to be a worthless subject. With the exception of Michael Gross's and Ari Joskowicz's studies on liberal anti-Catholicism, as well as studies of the 1870s culture wars arguing for a more nuanced portrayal of liberal views, the secular side remains undiscovered.<sup>19</sup> The secular is an almost blank space on the historical research map. However, even though almost nobody seems to make the effort necessary to analyse what exactly was understood by the secular, secularities or secularization, almost all studies share the rarely spoken about but extremely widespread assumption that the secular is somehow the opposite side of religion or the mere absence of religion, and that it is needless to come to a precise definition, let alone to study this absence. However, there are some exceptions, like the study of Hermann Lübbe, analysing the concept of secularism in Germany's intellectual world from a 'history of ideas' perspective, and a rare handful of studies on freethinker societies or the atheistic school programmes pioneered by social democrats.<sup>20</sup> It has only been very recently that a new, however quite narrow, interest in the secular has

emerged among historians. Studies like Todd Weir's book on *Secularism and Religion in Nineteenth-Century Germany*, published in 2014, focuses e.g. on free-thinking associations which explicitly defined themselves as secular.<sup>21</sup> The works of Lübke as well as Weir are rare studies of this subject, exceptions proving the general rule.

Having pointed out this surprising lack of studies of the secular (which is not a German exception but very typical for almost all aspects of European history),<sup>22</sup> it is all the more remarkable that the number of studies of non-European secularities – in India, Japan and Egypt, to name just a few<sup>23</sup> – is steadily growing. One can even say that the new interest in historical secularisms in recent years has been sparked off outside and not inside Europe. This remarkable disinterest in the history of secularities, as well as the open ignorance of what was understood by whom under the term 'secular' in European history, is, I would argue, no mere coincidence. It is rather due to the very history of the historical discipline – one only has to think of Prussian state historians such as Treitschke and many others. Their self-understanding relied heavily on the notion that they had liberated themselves from the shackles of theology.<sup>24</sup> This almost total lack of historical research on the secular self-fashioning and self-understanding in the long nineteenth century must be understood as a clear and eloquent sign of a particular professional blindness due to epistemological constraints within the academic discipline of history. Among these constraints, what stands out as most pervasive is the rather narrow definition of the secular as a universal category referring to a mere lack of religion. By perpetuating this essentialist and ahistorical definition, historians until today, metaphorically speaking, are still working in the shadow of Max Weber.

Against the backdrop of this particular professional blindness, it comes as no surprise that other disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, and religious studies have been less reluctant to study the secular and secularities.<sup>25</sup> Even more, some argue that secular studies within these disciplines are already declining.<sup>26</sup> And again, the debate among anthropologists, apart from a few exceptions, such as studies on East Germany,<sup>27</sup> was fuelled by scholars focusing on non-European spaces or entangled spaces, like the French beach where Muslim women and French state representatives meet. Whereas public debates had already launched in the 1990s, the discussions within these academic disciplines gained momentum in 2003 with the publication of Talal Asad's book on *Formations of the Secular*.<sup>28</sup> Under his influence the alleged self-evident character of the secular as a blank space or as something that exclusively refers to the separation of church and state, opening up the possibility for modernity and the making of nation states, which bans religion to the private sphere, came under criticism. Instead of following this line of argumentation, Asad and others argue that the secular and the religious are rather more relational and, therefore, more fluid than essentially fixed categories. Following Asad, there is no such thing as one universal meaning of the secular – instead, the secular as much as the religious depends on time and place.

Further, he replaces the classic modernization theory narrative in so far as he rejects the assumption that the secular emerged as a religion-free space out of a sphere dominated by backward-looking religious authorities. Instead, he tells another story, asserting that the category religion first came into use in the early modern period, precisely at the moment of closer contact between Europeans and non-Europeans when the one group became defined as 'Nature Folk', believing in fetishes, and the other as 'Culture Folk', who had religion.<sup>29</sup> Finally, in the eighteenth century, a secular concept of superstition was developed: no longer defined as 'heresy', using canonical terminology, superstition was now regarded as a state of being that deserved to be pitied, a state of 'illusion and oppression before people could be liberated from them'.<sup>30</sup> Lastly, another important definition, developed by Talal Asad, is the term 'secularism'. Secularism is defined as a political doctrine, emerging in Europe, something made and remade by the modern state, and needing a clearly demarcated space that it classifies and regulates and that is closely connected to modernity, while excluding the non-European space from that very modernity.

To be short, Asad's deconstructionist view opens up new possibilities of understanding and interpretation. Particularly challenging for historical studies are three aspects of his understanding of secular and secularism. First of all, he needs to be credited for having drawn our attention to the long overlooked and only at first glance self-evident fact that the secular is more than a lack of religion, and that secularism is more than the idea of separating church and state, and cannot therefore be reduced to a narrow legal perspective, let alone ignored as a whole topic. Against the backdrop of his ideas, nineteenth-century debates, such as those initiated by Max Weber and Emile Durkheim, as well as by representatives of the Catholic Church and members of parliament, such as the centre party deputy, Ludwig Windhorst, should be understood less as a fight between a new group of liberal secularists and backward-looking representatives of a passing religious order, than as the very moment where an essentialist understanding of the secular was developed and theorized by exactly these scholars and politicians. Secondly, Asad shows that the religious and secular landscapes are constantly being made and remade, and thereby lack a fixed, essential identity.<sup>31</sup> Thirdly, his suggestions are stimulating in so far as he shows how these categories are part of power relations, and, thereby anything but neutral.<sup>32</sup> Instead, they are very often connected to other value-laden notions such as 'modernity' and 'civilization'.<sup>33</sup>

However, even though we owe stimulating new insights to the work of Talal Asad, we should not underestimate the objections brought forward by a range of critiques. Nor do I want to argue for a wholesale adaptation of Asad's suggestions. On the contrary, from a historical point of view, further criticism can be added. First and foremost, I cannot share his definition of secularism as a particular liberal ideology equipped with almost overwhelming power. This concept of secularism is far too static, leaving out all dynamics between Europe and other parts of the world.<sup>34</sup> It is also far too state centred, assuming an extremely powerful and, at the same time, abstract state, ignoring the forces of

civil society as well as daily life routines, without mentioning emotional aspects. What is more, the dominant role of the state in the making of secularism, and with that the dominance of a political secularism, is anything but convincing.<sup>35</sup> Narrowly linked to this critique is the objection that Asad neglects the roles that competing religious groups have had in the formation of secularism.<sup>36</sup> Todd Weir criticizes Asad for assuming far too narrow a linkage between secularism and Western liberalism, which ignores a large group of radical socialist activists who were engaged in a straightforward secular agenda, at least in nineteenth century Europe.<sup>37</sup>

Another critic addresses the way the making and unmaking of the secular is often described as a process taking place in splendid isolation from other processes. Many sociological secular studies, and most of all Asad's genealogical narrative that starts in an early modern history of conquest in the New World, and leads to the liberal modern state, ignore the broader picture of these negotiations of the secular and religious, and therefore tend to simplify and lead to misunderstandings. For instance, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the new boundaries between the secular and the religious were narrowly connected to questions of class and gender, mutually shaping and reshaping each other – one only has to think of the obvious link between female bodies and French secular policies concerning the Burkini.

However, by taking up these critical arguments, I do not want to throw the baby out with the bathwater. Instead, I think a fresh look on these debates among anthropologists could challenge historical studies, irrespective of whether they follow Asad's perspectives or not. Some suggestions made among secular studies scholars of anthropology and sociology might well turn out to be helpful for empirical historical analysis. However, regardless of which perspective seems more valuable, Asad's understanding of the secular as something constantly undergoing definition and redefinition in dialogue with the religious, opens up new perspectives beyond classical, diametrically opposed theories of secularization on the one hand, and religious revival on the other.

## **How to Entangle the Secular and the Religious?**

If one aim of this volume is to come to a better understanding of the long nineteenth century beyond classical theories of secularization by connecting the study of phenomena, groups, topics and conflicts, named by contemporaries or today's experts, either religious or secular, into one analytical frame, another leading idea is to widen the perspective in geographical terms. Thanks to the ongoing Burkini discussion and to related debates, this idea is not new. In recent years, historical and other disciplines have begun to look beyond their national framework and detected that a denser net of transnational connections is a much less recent development than many sociological globalization theories had assumed.<sup>38</sup> Economic, political, as well as many other kinds of contacts are of considerable longevity,

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even though the intensity and the character may have indeed changed over the last centuries. However, historians, as well as others, used to link processes of globalization, understood in a rather broad sense as a time–space compression and as a denser net of contacts, to modernity and, therewith, as aforementioned, almost automatically to secularity, understood as a mere lack of religion. It took some time until historians found out that not only the economy and politics but also religion may have been of global character.

It was moreover around 2000 that a growing number of studies, analysing the religious history beyond national boundaries, gathered momentum. Many new insights were gained. One of the important ones, brought to light by these studies, is the fact that a much larger and much more important net of religious contacts already existed in the nineteenth century all around the globe, connecting Europe with Africa, Asia with America, and Australia with India, just to name a few surprising contacts. Missionaries, for instance, established worldwide networks, connecting not only people but initiating an almost global trade in books and religious symbols, but also in travelling concepts, clothing regimes and normative orders.<sup>39</sup> Related to these studies, a whole group of scholars began to explore philanthropic associations and early NGOs, and their construction of a web of global humanitarianism.<sup>40</sup> Other studies, focusing on transnational entanglements, concentrated on the European dimension of culture wars, and compared the entangled modes of working-class religion in Europe and North America,<sup>41</sup> or analysed transnational flows of religious personnel, such as the export of French nuns to England.<sup>42</sup>

Another crucial insight gained by these studies is concerned with the dynamics emerging from these contacts. Knowledge studies, like the seminal investigation of Tomoko Masuzawa on *The Invention of World Religion*, show that categories such as religion, magic and fetishism, as well as, the notion of 'world religion' itself, emerged at the end of nineteenth century as a result of colonial encounters, and that they became increasingly important via academic writings and events, such as the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago.<sup>43</sup> Further effects of religious encounters can be observed in the fostering of already existing belief systems and even in the emergence of political movements, which were engendered by religious contacts. Peter van der Veer, for instance, outlines how British missionaries in India contributed to the formation of a national muscular Hinduism in this period.<sup>44</sup>

Other studies, openly labelled as world histories, such as Bayly's *The Birth of the Modern World*,<sup>45</sup> published early in the new millennium, were less interested in the emergence of new notions of difference due to religious encounters, emphasizing instead the similarities of religious phenomena that could be observed all around the world. He, for instance, detected 'a growing uniformity of styles and social functions' in Christian as well as Muslim and other religious communities.<sup>46</sup> Bayly also emphasizes a new worldwide religious trend of highlighting the rational, and 'condemning superstitious ... and magical beliefs'.<sup>47</sup> A similar argument underlines the unifying force of worldwide contacts, which concerned



the global role that religion played in processes of nation building in the nineteenth century.<sup>48</sup>

To summarize, transnational, global and world histories have enlarged our understanding of the nineteenth century's religious landscape. Furthermore, these studies can claim an even more important merit: while revising the earlier assumption that globalization and religion are mutually exclusive, these studies showed that religion is linked to processes of globalization and that the most influential global players, at least in the nineteenth century, were religious men and women, like missionaries, connecting entire continents, sometimes even before a worldwide net of trade had been established. Religion, therefore, turned out to be a driver of globalization, one of the most crucial modernizing processes, instead of constituting a 'backward' or 'irrational' phenomenon.

Having emphasized the broad and innovative field of global and transnational historical studies in religious history brings me to the question of how secular studies beyond national boundaries emerged in history. Is there a field of global historical studies of the secular that is understood, on the one hand, less as a religion-free space (in the Weberian perspective) but as something constantly made and remade, and, on the other hand, as a specific ideology? Is there a global or transnational history of the making and unmaking of the secular and of different secularities? Or are global history approaches as uninterested in the secular as national history approaches have turned out to be? To be up front with the answer, the degree to which secularisms are understudied in transnational let alone global histories does not differ in any respect from what we have seen in the field of national history writing.

This lack of interest becomes most obvious when taking a closer look at the world or global history of the long nineteenth century, the subdiscipline aiming at a total coverage and therefore most likely to pay attention to a phenomenon, such as the making and unmaking of the secular. Although most recently published world histories criticize the Weberian secularization thesis, and even though some replace it with more precise descriptions, and others like Bayly emphasize that 'the nineteenth century saw the triumphal re-emergence and expansion of "religion"', there is no global or world history that investigates what the secular actually looked like.<sup>49</sup> Even those studies that emphasize that a Weberian style of secularization as the only possible way of contemporary self-understanding,<sup>50</sup> do not take into account, or even investigate, other concepts of the secular and the plurality of possible secularisms. Some pages on *laïcité* and atheism, as a peculiar and culturally specific development in France, or on philosophical objections to superstition and the foundation of the theosophical society as a product of globalization, is all that is expounded in these works.<sup>51</sup> Global and transnational history thereby suffer from a similar imbalance as the aforementioned studies' focus on national histories: in both cases a growing field of religious history studies is counterbalanced by an almost total lack of historical research on secularism or the secular.<sup>52</sup> On top of that, the rare global histories that do address the secular share the same essentialist conception

of the phenomenon as those historians focusing on a narrow national level: the secular as a set of ideas put forward by associations such as the Freethinker Society in Europe and North America. Set against the backdrop of this surprising continuity in research gaps between national and global histories, it goes without saying that there is no world history putting the secular and the religious into one analytical frame.

Despite global history's enormous merits, (particularly when it comes to a re-evaluation of religion's roles within global processes), the approach not only shares some of the blind spots observed in national histories, but also adds new problems to the research field. First of all, and very generally speaking, global histories, at least those focusing on the nineteenth century, tend to ignore all parts of the world beyond Europe, North America, and those parts of Asia that belonged to the British Empire.<sup>53</sup> Examples, or even in-depth analysis, of African and Australian regions, or places in New Zealand or New Guinea, are rare. To be very clear about that, it can be conclusively justified to leave out a region for more or less pragmatic reasons, even though that contradicts the claim raised by the term 'global history'. And indeed, concentrating on particular regions, such as Europe, Asia and North America, while other regions only 'appear scantily in world historical interpretations' – as Manning has recently pointed out<sup>54</sup> – has for a long time been also due to pragmatic reasons, as world history is mostly based not on first-hand research but on the studies of others, most of which is written in English.<sup>55</sup> But, given the tremendous increase in research resources concerning these global regions in recent years, such excuses are no longer valid. Some scholars have even argued that this ignoring of Africa and Oceania is not due to mere coincidence but rather to a particular blindness that has a history as long and powerful as the history of the blind spots concerning the secular, for which academic historiography has to be held accountable. The left out regions follow a long and powerful tradition – partly established by Hegel – of mapping Europe and Asia as the alleged realm of progress, modernity and, therefore, history, juxtaposed in opposition to regions such as Oceania and Africa, described as lacking civilization, history and the ability to progress.<sup>56</sup> To put it in a nutshell, these histories tend to offer double perspectives, which we know to be extremely problematic, at least since we learned from postcolonial studies to be more aware of the age-old politics of ignorance. Or to quote Patrick Manning, the logic of world histories and their practice of modelling the past contribute to a 'prioritization of elite and civilizational perspectives – stemming from one-sided understanding of human innovation'.<sup>57</sup> These exclusive perspectives of world histories, therefore, whether deliberate or not, are in danger of creating the impression that all other regions are less, if at all, important places in terms of innovation.

Ignoring Africa and Oceania, furthermore, has serious effects on which kinds of belief systems are left out and which are paid attention to. This narrow scope results in ignoring all belief systems beyond what became known in the nineteenth century as 'world religions',<sup>58</sup> such as so-called fetishism, magical customs, voodoo, natural religions or simply superstition. They thus tended to overlook everything

that did not fit the definition of a scripture-based or monotheistic belief system. By losing sight of all belief systems beyond world religions, the concept of world religion<sup>59</sup> is doubled instead of deconstructed. What that means can be seen best when taking a short look into the two most prominent world histories of the nineteenth century. The global histories written by Bayly and Osterhammel mention belief systems beyond world religions only in so far as they refer to European missionaries and their often futile attempts to spread the gospel among non-Christians, who often had little to say about the variety of religions, faith and belief systems that existed in the so-called mission field in the first place.<sup>60</sup> The effects of this form of silencing are as powerful as the silencing of entire continents – they often go hand in hand. This leads to an impression of the nineteenth century as an era dominated by world religions whereas other belief systems somehow vanished, or at least lacked the power to, for example, fuel politics, count as an identity marker, or serve as ingredients of new hybrid belief systems. Against the backdrop of what we know about the mechanics of empowerment by religion, particularly within subaltern communities in general, and for many independence movements in particular, this implicit assumption is anything but convincing. Moreover, this exclusion and silencing, above all, helped to foster elite and western-oriented approaches, reinforcing categories such as the notion of ‘world religion’, which is neither innocent, nor an analytically useful term.<sup>61</sup>

To sum up, even though global histories have enriched the field of religious and secular studies by emphasizing the role religion played within globalization processes, as a means of hybridization and homogenization as well as beyond, they are prone to serious shortcomings.<sup>62</sup> As postcolonial studies have argued, one might even presume that world history contributes as much to a specific perspective on globality, which is not beyond postcolonial legacies, as national histories used to reinforce a particular nineteenth-century version of power, modernity and progress, which was allegedly located exclusively in European nation states.<sup>63</sup>

These critical remarks should not be misunderstood as a plea for a re-nationalization of historical approaches. The contrary can be learned from these debates.<sup>64</sup> Historians interested in studying the making and unmaking of the religious and the secular in long-nineteenth-century German history can benefit from the questions raised in these debates about the limits and challenges of entangled perspectives, as much as they can benefit from the discussions about secular studies within anthropology.

## **The Secular and the Religious Entangled in Modern German History**

Even though the Burkini debate, as well as others, made it very clear that questions concerning the secular and the religious are closely bound together, shaping and reshaping each other in a way that urges us to engage more in the study

of the secular, as well as to broaden its scope beyond national boundaries, the concrete new insights we might gain for a study of modern German history are still hard to grasp. Moreover, the perspectives and tools, I have tried to outline in this Introduction, seem to be full of pitfalls and shortcomings, further hampering, or at least complicating, historical explorations.

A number of this volume's contributors met at the European Studies Centre of St Anthony's, Oxford, in spring 2014, to try to rethink the secular and the religious in the German Empire from a broader perspective.<sup>65</sup> Some of the contributions in this volume were discussed there, while others have been added separately, in order to paint to a fuller picture of the religious as well as the secular landscape in the long nineteenth century, and especially the decades around the turn of the century. The aim was to cover a broad range of different historiographical approaches, such as intellectual history, conceptual history, history of science, social history, and approaches that trace discursive traditions or follow a biographical perspective. Another aim was to combine studies that focus more on the religious with studies that address more the secular side of a given phenomenon. And finally, the global dimensions and conditions of the making and unmaking of the religious and the secular was paid special attention.

The volume is divided into three parts. Part I discusses the production of knowledge around 1900 in two academic disciplines, the sociology of religion and Protestant theology, that were of major importance for the formation of new understandings of the secular and the religious. The second part sheds light on the contemporary debates in the field of secular and religious matters, that go beyond academia. The central questions at stake here are: what was understood by religion, and what was meant by secular; and how were these meanings related to each other and how (far) did the given definitions contradict each other? The third part brings together contributions that deal with phenomena as diverse as political anarchism and missions. The aim here is to explore how and where exactly negotiations of the religious and secular took place, and to better understand the exact meaning these debates had in the German states and empire.

However manifold and varied the emerging field of religious studies was around 1900 – among them titles on missionary activities, religion psychology and anthropology – it can be said that the sociology of religion and Protestant theology were probably the two most influential, academic disciplines, at least in the German academic landscape. The volume, therefore, starts with the headline 'Religious and Secular: Scientific Debates', with two chapters that illuminate how and which new borders between religion, and secularity and secularism emerged within sociology of religion and Protestant theology. Although these two starting chapters focus on different groups of scholars, there is no doubt that they are negotiating similar and entangled questions of how to define religion as well as secularity/secularism.

Wolfgang Knöbl's chapter on 'A Secular Age? The "Modern World" and the Beginnings of the Sociology of Religion' focuses on the beginning of the

sociology of religion in Germany and France, and traces the very making of the terms 'religion' and 'secularity/secularism' within academia around 1900. He argues that even though the evolvement of religious studies was the result of transnational entanglements, the particular outlook of this new academic field in France and Germany was due to particular and very different national traditions. Max Weber's concepts of religion, which emphasize religion as a safe haven for the autonomous individual, as well as his understanding of secularity and secularism, varied in many respects from the French model of Emile Durkheim. The latter understood religion as a crucial and even indispensable part of any given society, and is, therefore, less concerned with questions of secularism. This comparative perspective enables us to see the particular traditions that Weber's concept of the secular is based on, and hence sheds new light on how particular intellectual as well as political challenges that German intellectuals had to deal with at the turn of the century shaped Weber's secularization thesis. But Knöbl's analysis does not stop here. He also reminds us of the heavy Eurocentric baggage that we have inherited from the sociology of religion, whether in its Weberian or Durkheimian versions, and their different concepts of religion and secularity/secularism.

Paul Michael Kurtz's chapter on 'The Silence on the Land: Ancient Israel versus Modern Palestine in Scientific Theology' illustrates how the growing interest of Protestant theology in Palestine around 1900 contributed to a new idea of Christian religion as well as to a religionizing of the scientific and, thus, negotiated new borders between the religious and the secular. He studies the emergence of a new interest in Palestine, that can be observed among German Protestant scholars from 1880 onwards. He describes an ever-growing number of inquiries into biblical texts, and an almost endless number of philological works on ancient Israel, which went hand in hand with countless contemporary efforts to decipher a whole range of ancient languages, all leading to a rewriting of the Old Testament. This rewriting led to a new rift between Israel and Judaism, on the one hand, and the emergence of a narrative about a clear historical continuity between Christian religion and ancient Israel, on the other hand. It resulted in a new mapping of what was understood as Christian religion. At the same time, this new interest in the Bible pushed scholars to Palestine, looking for a past that could allegedly still be found in the present day, and, thus, establishing new academic associations and research institutes. But Kurtz not only describes how modern German Protestantism and Christian religion were made and remade around 1900 by digging in places that remained part of the Ottoman Empire, but also shows how these studies and archaeological sites helped to colonize a present place, and how scientific enterprises and disciplines, such as archaeology, were endowed with a spiritual quality.

The second part of the volume is headlined 'Religious and Secular: Public Debates'. Even though the various debates dealing with issues of religion and secularity that reached out to a broader public were all related to the academic sphere, and clear distinctions cannot be made, the two chapters in this

part broaden out perspectives, and focus on how notions of the secular and, thereby, of the religious, were negotiated within different layers of the society. Lucian Hölscher takes a closer look at the debates that mostly took place within Protestantism, and underlines the varieties of secularisms negotiated within these circles, while Rebekka Habermas tries to come to a better understanding of the essential core of what, at that time, was understood by 'the secular'.

Lucian Hölscher's chapter, 'What Does It Mean To Be "Secular" in the German Kaiserreich? An Intervention', is mainly focusing on Protestant Germany against the backdrop of Britain and France. In contrast to the approaches of Knöbl and Kurtz, which can be described as intellectual history, Hölscher, as a conceptional historian, is mainly focusing on the debates that took place in intellectual circles. The methodological tools of conceptional history bring the inseparable interconnectedness of secular and religious perspectives within German Protestantism to light. Instead of an antagonistic concept of the secular and religious, Hölscher underlines the broad variety of notions of the secular within Protestantism, and stresses how the interconfessional situation within Protestantism, and not only the culture wars of the 1870s, played a crucial role for the religious, and thereby secular, landscape of the German Empire. This led to the development of several peculiar German secularisms, and one of these, as he argues, was a new kind of religion, civic in character, combining aspects of what was considered secular combined with elements of liberal Protestantism.

Rebekka Habermas's chapter on 'Secularism in the Long Nineteenth Century between the Global and the Local' also tries to come to a more precise definition of the secular. She chooses a broader frame, although the German Empire is the starting point and main focus. The turn of the century is privileged to address the entanglements between the German metropole and its recently acquired colonies. It is within this entangled nation that notions of the secular, as put forward not only in the freethinker associations and among social democrats, but by men from various backgrounds, in most cases not very prominent at the time and completely forgotten nowadays, are analysed. Tracing this production of the secular in weekly magazines and other journals, the chapter shows that the secular was something more than just a lack or absence of religion, it was at the core of a highly emotional debate. Many groups such as confessional charitable associations as well as liberal party leaders were involved in these debates, and even though they disagreed on almost every point, they shared two basic convictions. They defined the secular as something more common among men than women and as an almost exclusively European phenomenon. Everything else was open to an increasingly spirited and vibrant debate, which, as the chapter argues, gives us new insights into the high degree of emotionality at stake in the making of the secular and the religious.

At first sight, the three chapters in Part III have little in common, since they are contributions that deal with leading Jewish anarchists, Catholic women's congregations, and missionaries in German colonies around the turn of the

century. And yet, all three contributions of this third part, entitled 'Religious and Secular: Negotiating Boundaries', deal with the same phenomenon: the constant making and unmaking of the religious and secular. This happens in places as diverse as anarchist circles, the everyday life of religious women and African contact zones. The contributions explore how fluid the boundaries between the religious and the secular were, and argue that these constantly renewed borders can be seen in connection with global entanglements – some more, some less.

Carolyn Kosuch's chapter 'Retrieving Tradition? The Secular–Religious Ambiguity in Nineteenth-Century German-Jewish Anarchism' on the two leading Jewish anarchists, Gustav Landauer and Erich Mühsam, opens up the arena, leaving the almost exclusively Christian frame, while simultaneously combining questions concerning the secular and the religious with political issues. She chooses a comparative biographical approach combined with a history of ideas, asking how the political concepts of Gustav Landauer and Erich Mühsam, and their ideas of a transnational anarchism were related to the secular, as well as their Jewishness. As Kosuch argues, much of the anarchist programme was also due to a specific legacy of acculturation, which Landauer and Mühsam were less able to cope with compared to their fathers. Studying anarchism from a biographical perspective and in relation to secular ideas, as well as Judaism, enriches the history of political ideas in that it is able to show that even seemingly atheistic theoretical constructs and political programmes owed a great deal to religion. At the same time, she shows how difficult it is to come to a clear-cut definition of what might be called secular, atheistic or worldly.

Relinde Meiwes's chapter 'Catholic Women as Global Actors of the Religious and the Secular' traces the global networks of female congregations, and explores how their daily work always transcended the border to the secular, even though these were women bound by oath to genuine religious work. Meiwes places religious women at the forefront and shows that the very success of the congregations in the German Empire was due to the possibility of crossing the border between the secular and the religious, even though religious orders, particularly those for women, had a long tradition of mainly emphasizing the positive effects of a cloistered life removed from all worldly affairs. At the same time, this transcending of borders seemingly opened up new opportunities, which was particularly attractive for women. Instead of fostering the boundaries between the religious and the secular worlds, the nuns were steadily blurring the lines and, thus, changing notions of religious and secular work. No less surprising is the extent to which these religious orders, which depended on transnational networks, built up new connections. It is needless to underline that the transnational experience also shaped the work in Europe.

Richard Hölzl and Karolin Wetjen's chapter, 'Negotiating the Fundamentals? German Missions and the Experience of the Contact Zone, 1850–1918', follows the work of Catholic as well as Protestant missionaries in the colonies and at home, studying how they shaped and reshaped the boundaries between the secular and the religious and, at the same time, occupied a central role in

European colonialism. Wetjen and Hölzl centre their perspective on the making of the boundaries between the secular and the religious by missionaries in colonial discourse, in theology, and in their practical work. Focusing on the practical as well as on the performative aspect of missionary work, and comparing Protestant to Catholic missionaries in German East Africa, they are able to shed new light on how concepts of the superstitious, the magic and the religious, as well as the secular, emerged in the mission field and how this affected the perspectives that were brought forward in Germany. Here, the interconnectedness includes not only Europeans but also Africans, as well as Protestants and Catholics, and those believing in so called fetish religions. At the same time, it becomes obvious that German colonialism was considerably less secular than is currently acknowledged in many studies.

If we try to summarize the main insights these three parts have to offer, focusing on scholarly debates as well as on discussions beyond academia, and on some few episodes of the political and social life around 1900, it quickly becomes clear that the German Empire can neither be described as a place where religion either decreased or increased, nor is there convincing evidence for a rise or a fall in secular ideas, let alone practices. Instead, some examples, such as the female congregations, show a growing influence of religious work, while other chapters bring to light an increasing importance of so-called civil religion, which was very similar to the secular and atheistic ideas of Jewish anarchists like Mühsam and Landauer.

Instead of unambiguous evidence of either a rise or a fall in religious belief and practice, the chapters show that men and women were steadily working and reworking the boundaries between what they considered to be secular and religious. In their daily work, missionaries never really made clear distinctions between a religious and a secular colonial sphere, even though they wrote entire books on the nature of religion. Sisters from congregations had no difficulties blurring the lines between religious and worldly work; anarchists, like Erich Mühsam, called themselves atheists even though their programme was deeply rooted within Jewish traditions. Max Weber fought for a seemingly academic definition of the secular, which contained nakedly anti-Catholic elements. Neither do we find clear evidence regarding global dimensions, be it among Anarchists, missionaries, sociologists or secularists. Instead, some, like the missionaries, developed increasingly intense ties to Germany, while others, like the French sociologists, stayed within rather national intellectual traditions.

It must therefore be conceded that these chapters do not contribute to the debate concerning the levels of religious practice in the German Empire, nor do they reveal a totally new Kaiserreich. However, they may change some questions and, little by little, rearrange some of the assumptions still to be found at the heart of many historical studies. Against the backdrop of these chapters and many other aforementioned titles, a more nuanced and ambivalent but also more vivid picture of the last decades of the nineteenth century and of the beginning of the twentieth century emerges. This seems to have been a time



when many theoretical concepts and legal reforms, but also everyday practices and intellectual mindsets, concerning such terms such as religion, atheism, secularism, fetishism and superstition, were negotiated with a newfound intensity. To put it in a nutshell, this period of German history should be described as a time of negotiations about the secular and the religious rather than as a moment of secularization or religious revival. It was a time when notions such as 'world religion' came into being,<sup>66</sup> when other terms like 'secularization' gained new significance, and when debates emerged between those who feared and those who welcomed falling levels of church attendance and challenges to established religious practices.

Rather than delineate an increase or decrease in religion or secularism in nineteenth-century Germany, the contributions of this volume bring to light a multitude of secular worldviews, belief systems and rituals. They thus uncover a large number of differences in how the borders between the secular and the religious are made and remade. The ideas about what was considered secular or religious varied between civil religion and atheism; some understood certain missionary practices as belonging to a secular sphere, while they themselves believed in their deeply religious nature. Even though some of these practices and worldviews were surely more powerful than others, able to influence legislation processes or determine what would be written down in school books and what would be left out, these many differences are of crucial importance if one wants to understand the signature of the era, which can best be described as one of multiple secularisms.<sup>67</sup> These differences are as well particularly relevant as they bring to light what Talal Asad defined as a secularism, a particular state policy, as well as a specific liberal ideology, which needs to be understood as part of a dynamic field with many different agencies rather than as the singular dominant discourse.

Finally, the chapters bring to light that many, though not all, of these negotiations were connected to different but always very particular parts of the world. This entanglement created new networks, as well as forms of hybridization or homogenization, and fostered new ideas and interests, as underlined by Knöbl for the new discipline of sociology of religion. The missionaries, for example, as Hölzl and Wetjen argue, brought back home strange and, until then rarely heard of, religious, magical and superstitious belief systems,<sup>68</sup> while in the meantime more and more religious women gained global working experiences because congregations were founded and maintained all over the world. However, these networks did not prevent the emergence of particular national concepts of the religious, as Hölscher shows. On the contrary, many national peculiarities were born out of precisely these global entanglements.

Against the backdrop of these peculiarities, it is perhaps surprising that Germany's beaches have not yet served as stages for a new round in the negotiation of the religious and the secular. However, evidence is growing that changes lie ahead in the Federal Republic, and, as in the long nineteenth century, the key question will not represent a straightforward choice between secularization

or a revitalization of the religious, but rather how and where we should draw the boundaries between these fluid and contested categories.

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## Notes

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1. H. Walser-Smith and C. Clark. 'The Fate of Nathan', in H. Walser-Smith (ed.), *Protestants, Catholics and Jews in Germany, 1800–1914* (Oxford: Berg, 2001), 5–7.
2. By the term 'religion-making', the agency of the many can be brought to light, instead of exclusively focusing on the power of the state. Even if it has to be admitted that the terms 'religion-making from above' and 'religion-making from below', as proposed by Dressler and Mandair, are not without shortcomings, as they silence the interconnectedness of both, they open up new possibilities for understanding questions of change and for escaping from the state-centredness of Asad's concept of secularism. M. Dressler and A.S. Mandair, 'Introduction: Modernity, Religion-Making, and the Postsecular', in idem (eds), *Secularism and Religion-Making* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 3–37. For the related notion 'Christianity-making', see the excellent analysis of K. Wetjen. 'Religionspädagogische Resonanzen und die Mission: "Christianity Making" im missionarischen Bildungsraum am Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts', in D. Kaebisch and M. Wermke (eds), *Transnationale Grenzgänge und Kulturkontakte: Historische Fallbeispiele in religionspädagogischer Perspektive* (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2016), 23–38.
3. J. Seed, "'Secular" and "Religious": Historical Perspectives', *Social History* 39 (2014), 3. M.L. Anderson, 'Die Grenzen der Säkularisierung', in H. Lehmann (ed.), *Säkularisierung, Dechristianisierung, Rechristianisierung im neuzeitlichen Europa* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997), 194–222, argues that German historians only discovered religion very late because German academia is dominated by protestants, which mainly means members of the so-called *Kulturprotestantismus*. Another reason might be the long-lasting dominance of the *Sonderweg* thesis.
4. Prominent is e.g. M. Weber, 'Wissenschaft als Beruf (1919)', in D. Kaesler (ed.), *Schriften 1884–1922* (Stuttgart: Kröner, 2002), 488.
5. W. Schieder, 'Kirche und Revolution: Sozialgeschichtliche Aspekte der Trierer Wallfahrt von 1844', *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 14 (1974), 419–54.

6. R. Evans, 'Religion and Society in Modern Germany', *European Studies Review* 12 (1982), 249–88. The most important exception is F. Schnabel, *Deutsche Geschichte im neunzehnten Jahrhundert*, 4 vols (Freiburg: Herder, 1929; repr. Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch, 1987). He dedicated one entire volume of his comprehensive multi-volume study on German history to 'religious forces'. The second important exception is T. Nipperdey, *Religion im Umbruch Deutschland 1870–1918* (Munich: Beck, 1988).
7. Evans, 'Religion and Society in Modern Germany'; J. Sperber, *Popular Catholicism in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984); D. Blackbourn, *Marpingen: Apparitions of the Virgin Mary in Bismarckian Germany* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993); M.L. Anderson, *Windhorst: A Political Biography* (Oxford and New York: Clarendon Press, 1981).
8. B. Welter, 'The Feminization of American Religion: 1800–1860', in M.S. Hartmann and L. Banner (eds), *Clio's Consciousness Raised: New Perspectives on the History of Women* (New York: Octagon Books, 1976), 137–57.
9. L. Febvre, *Un destin. Martin Luther* (Paris: Rieder, 1928).
10. C. Geertz, 'Religion als kulturelles System', in idem (ed.), *Dichte Beschreibung: Beiträge zum Verstehen kultureller Systeme* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1983), 44–95.
11. For other as well historically grounded reasons, a third strand of German research of the 1990s began to focus on Jewish history, also beyond anti-Semitism. Cf. M. Kaplan, *The Making of the Jewish Middle Class: Women, Family and Identity in Imperial Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); T. van Rahden, *Juden und andere Breslauer: Die Beziehungen zwischen Juden, Protestanten und Katholiken in einer deutschen Großstadt von 1860 bis 1925* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000); U. Jensen, *Gebildete Doppelgänger: Bürgerliche Juden und Protestanten im 19. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005).
12. L. Hölscher, 'Die Religion des Bürgers: Bürgerliche Frömmigkeit und protestantische Kirche', *Historische Zeitschrift* 250 (1990), 595–630; R. Habermas, 'Weibliche Religiosität oder: Von der Fragilität bürgerlicher Identitäten', in K. Tenfelde and H.U. Wehler (eds), *Wege zur Geschichte des Bürgertums* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994), 125–48.
13. C.M. Prelinger, *Charity, Challenge, and Change: Religious Dimensions of the Mid-Nineteenth-Century Women* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987); R. Meiwes, *Arbeiterinnen des Herrn: Katholische Frauenkongregationen im 19. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt/Main: Campus, 2000).
14. H.G. Haupt and D. Langewiesche (eds), *Nation und Religion in Europa* (Frankfurt/Main and New York: Campus, 2004); M.B. Gross, *The War against Catholicism: Liberalism and the Anti-Catholic Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2005); C. Clark and W. Kaiser (eds), *Culture Wars: Secular–Catholic Conflict in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); M. Borutta, *Antikatholizismus: Deutschland und Italien im Zeitalter der europäischen Kulturkämpfe* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010).
15. Particularly important, for the broad field of studies of religious emotions, see the pioneering work of Monique Scheer: M. Scheer, P. Eitler and B. Hitzer, 'Feeling and Faith: Religious Emotions in German History', *German History* 32(3) (2014), 343–52.
16. M. Borutta, 'Genealogie der Säkularisierungstheorie: Zur Historisierung einer großen Erzählung der Moderne', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 36(3) (2010), 347–76.
17. D. Sawicki, *Leben mit den Toten: Geisterglauben und die Entstehung des Spiritismus in Deutschland 1770–1900* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2002); C. Ribbat, *Religiöse Erregung:*

- Protestantische Schwärmer im Kaiserreich* (Frankfurt/Main: Campus, 1996); U. Linse, *Geisterseher und Wunderwirker: Heilsuche im Industriezeitalter* (Frankfurt/Main: Fischer Taschenbuch, 1996). H.W. Smith, *Protestants, Catholics and Jews in Germany, 1800–1914* (Oxford: Berg, 2001). For the role of missionaries, see R. Habermas and R. Hölzl (eds), *Mission Global: Eine Verflechtungsgeschichte seit dem 19. Jahrhundert* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2014).
18. E. Larkin, 'The Devotional Revolution in Ireland', *American Historical Review* 77(3) (1972), 625–52.
  19. Gross, *The War against Catholicism*; A. Joskowicz, *The Modernity of the Others: Jewish Anti-Catholicism in Germany and France* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2014); Clark and Kaiser, *Culture Wars*; Borutta, *Antikatholizismus*; H. Walser-Smith, *German Nationalism and Religious Conflict: Culture, Ideology, Politics, 1870–1914* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995).
  20. H. Lübke, *Säkularisierung: Geschichte eines ideenpolitischen Begriffs* (Freiburg: Herder, 1965). S. Enders, *Moralunterricht und Lebenskunde* (Bad Heilbronn: Julius Klinkhardt, 2002). And even from a broader historical perspective the secular only begins to obtain attention as French *laïcité*; see J.W. Scott, *The Politics of the Veil* (Princeton, NJ and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007); and in respect to Jewish history, for instance: L.M. Leff, 'The Jewish Oath and the Making of Secularism in Modern France', *The Baeck Institute Year Book* 58 (2013), 23–34.
  21. T.H. Weir, *Secularism and Religion in Nineteenth-Century Germany: The Rise of the Fourth Confession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014). Indeed the merit of his study was to raise the question of what it was exactly that contemporaries understood under the umbrella term 'secular'. Weir studies the members of the rather small but in many respects influential group of secularists organized in associations like the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für ethische Kultur* or as part of the Social Democrat Party, ranging from worldview secularists emphasizing the insights of natural science to more overtly political advocates of state secularization, and it underlines the variety among these groups. However, this study cannot (and does not intend to) reach to the emotional or everyday life of the secular, let alone to the interplay between the religious and the secular beyond these quite small and elitist groups in the city. Nor does it include institutional questions of the secular and the religious. See also T. Matysik, 'Secularism, Subjectivity, and Reform: Shifting Variables', in G. Eley, J. Jenkins and T. Matysik (eds), *German Modernities from Wilhelm to Weimar: A Contest of Futures* (London, Oxford and New York: Bloomsbury, 2016), 215–34.
  22. There are a number of studies of French *laïcité*, the most recent and prominent study focusing on the latest regulations concerning 'the veil' of the French government, is Scott, *The Politics of the Veil*, particularly 90–123; studies concerning the United States can also be found, see S. Jacoby, *Freethinkers: A History of American Secularism* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2004). It is worth noting that Judaism as well has been studied for some years under the perspective of secularism: see A. Joskowicz and E.B. Katz (eds), *Secularism in Question: Jews and Judaism in Modern Times* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015). Also the making of modern Turkey has been studied under a perspective of secularism: see C.V. Findley, *Turkey, Islam, Nationalism, and Modernity: A History, 1787–2007* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010); M. Dressler, *Writing Religion: The Making of Turkish Alevi Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).
  23. S. Tejani, *Indian Secularism: A Social and Intellectual History, 1890–1950* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008).

24. See Lübke, *Säkularisierung*, 29–31 and 56–59.
25. Needless to say that studies published under the broad umbrella term of ‘religious studies’, which in some national traditions are part of sociology departments, in others of anthropology or even of theology departments, discussed secular phenomena from their very beginnings. Even though religious studies is a discipline of its own, I subsume and reduce it here for the sake of the argumentation to anthropology and sociology.
26. A.B. Lebner, ‘The Anthropology of Secularity beyond Secularism’, *Religion and Society: Advances in Research* 6 (2015), 62–74, refers to a statement of Hussein Agrama.
27. M. Wohlrab-Sahr, U. Karstein and T. Schmidt-Lux, *Forcierte Säkularität: Religiöser Wandel und Generationsdynamik im Osten Deutschlands* (Frankfurt/Main and New York: Campus, 2009). See also the fascinating recent study on British humanists by M. Engelke, ‘Christianity and the Anthropology of Secular Humanism’, *Current Anthropology* 55(10) (2014), 292–301.
28. T. Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003).
29. T. Asad, ‘What Might an Anthropology of Secularism Look Like?’, in idem (ed.), *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), 35. I am here referring to R. Habermas, ‘Piety, Power, and Powerlessness: Religion and Religious Groups in Germany, 1870–1945’, in H.W. Smith (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Modern German History* (Oxford University Press, 2011), 453–80.
30. For a very similar line of argumentation, emphasizing that during the nineteenth century the notion of religion was already being shaped by the newly invented academic discipline of religious studies, see A.L. Molendijk and P. Pels (eds), *Religion in the Making: The Emergence of the Sciences of Religion* (Leiden: Brill, 1998). Here it is argued that this new scholarly discipline defined religion as an autonomous sphere, clearly to be separated from a secular sphere and more like an inner state of feelings than something that is also interconnected to various sides of economic, political and cultural life.
31. Others showed that the notion of religion itself, and with that the notion of world religion, has only been constructed very recently, mostly by European anthropologists and missionaries; see T. Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions, or, How European Universalism Was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005). Allegedly very old categories such as Hinduism, Buddhism and Fetishism were in fact invented at this time, serving as powerful instruments in the administration of imperialism.
32. Joan W. Scott (*The Politics of the Veil*), for example, brought to light that the use of the secular language in the so-called veil politics of the French state, which not only banned Islamic symbols from French schools but also defined veils and other clothes such as the Burkini as identity markers, defining a group of people from former French colonies as fanatically anti-modern and backward looking. At the same time, politics like the above-mentioned beach actions shaped boundaries between an allegedly modern, democratic and genuinely French space of the secular and a non-European, Islamic and therewith religious space of backwardness. Following this line of argument, it has recently been maintained that the secular realm has sometimes been constructed in a manner ‘that implicitly privileges one type of religion, while more or less expressly delegitimizing other sorts of religious engagement’; C. Calhoun, M. Juergensmeyer and J. Vanantwerpen, ‘Introduction’, in idem (eds), *Rethinking Secularism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 16.

33. This also means that there are multiple secularisms, beyond the established 'European ways of understanding the world'; see R. King, 'Imagining Religions in India: Colonialism and the Mapping of South Asian History and Culture', in M. Dressler and A.-P. S. Mandair (eds), *Secularism and Religion-Making* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 39. See for the term 'multiple secularities', see M. Wohlrab-Sahr and M. Burchkardt, 'Multiple Secularities: Toward a Cultural Sociology of Secular Modernities', *Comparative Sociology* 11 (2012), 875–909.
34. Lebnner, 'Anthropology of Secularity', 67. Even more, many argued that the concept of secularism as a Western-made ideology is as problematic as Edward Said's book *Orientalism* had been problematic, because instead of a coproduction of ideologies both assume an all too easy picture of a perpetrator on the one side and victims on the other side. Such a perspective is in danger of losing sight of powerful voices of non-European countries as well as dynamics between different parts of the world.
35. Similar arguments were put forward by those more interested in the different ways of negotiating secularism in everyday life beyond the normative setting; see N. Dhawan, 'The Empire Prays Back: Religion, Secularity, and Queer Critique', *boundary 2* 40 (2013), 193. Other scholars such as Rajeev Bhargava asked how many different forms of secularism existed in Europe and North America, emphasizing the main difference between a French model, advocating a state that should be protected from religion, and an American model, separating state and church for the sake of religious liberty; see R. Bhargava, 'How Secular is European Secularism?', *European Societies* 16(3) (2014), 329–36.
36. S. Bruce, 'The Other Secular Modern: An Empirical Critique of Asad', *Religion and Society: Advances in Research* 4 (2013), 79–92, argues that secularism was a product of schismatic actions of religious minorities.
37. Weir, *Secularism and Religion*, 13.
38. The global dimension of religion and of secularity has already been under investigation for some time in anthropology and religious studies, as well as in sociology; see the work of Jose Casanova as well of Charles Taylor, among many others. M. Juergensmeyer and W. Clarke Roof, *Encyclopedia of Global Religion* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2012).
39. See R. Habermas, 'Mission im 19. Jahrhundert: Globale Netze des Religiösen', *Historische Zeitschrift* 287(3) (2008), 629–79. A first wave of studies was initiated by J. Comaroff and J. Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: Vol. 1 – Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Idem, *Of Revelation and Revolution: Vol. 2 – The Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997). Others, like Patrick Harries, emphasized transnational perspectives showing how missionaries transferred knowledge from South Africa to Switzerland and vice versa: see P. Harries, *Butterflies & Barbarians: Swiss Missionaries & Systems of Knowledge in South-East Africa* (Oxford: Currey, 2007); and see H. Hodacs, *Converging World Views: The European Expansion and Early Nineteenth-Century Anglo-Swedish Contacts* (Uppsala: Uppsala University Press, 2003), on connections between England and Sweden. Also see M. Hill, 'Gender, Culture and the "Spiritual Empire": The Irish Protestant Female Missionary Experience', *Women's History Review* 16(2) (2007), 203–26; K. Rüter, *The Power Beyond: Mission Strategies, African Conversion and the Development of a Christian Culture in the Transvaal* (Münster: LIT, 2001).
40. T. Ballantyne, 'Humanitarian Narratives, Knowledge and the Politics of Mission and Empire', *Social Sciences and Missions* 24 (2011), 233–64, emphasizes the interconnect-edness of missionaries with humanitarian narratives. I. Tyrell, *Reforming the World: The*

- Creation of America's Moral Empire* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010); and see R. Habermas et al., 'Débat: Reforming the World: The Creation of America's Moral Empire, de Ian Tyrrell', *Monde(s)* 2(6) (2014), 148–68.
41. H. McLeod, *Piety and Poverty: Working-Class Religion in Berlin, London and New York 1870–1914* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1996). Idem (ed.), *European Religion in the Age of Great Cities 1830–1930* (London: Routledge, 1995).
  42. S. O'Brien, 'French Nuns in Nineteenth-Century England', *Past and Present* 154 (1997), 142–80.
  43. Masuzawa, *Invention of World Religions*; J.P. Burris, *Exhibiting Religion: Colonialism and Spectacle at International Expositions 1851–1893* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2001).
  44. P. van der Veer, *Imperial Encounters: Religion and Modernity in India and Britain* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), 94.
  45. C.A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780–1914* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004); J. Osterhammel, *Die Verwandlung der Welt: Eine Geschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Munich: Beck, 2009); S. Conrad and J. Osterhammel (eds), *Geschichte der Welt 1750–1870: Wege zur modernen Welt* (Munich: Beck, 2016).
  46. Bayly, *Birth of the Modern World*, 360.
  47. *Ibid.*, 328.
  48. This perspective is shared by S. Conrad, 'Eine Kulturgeschichte globaler Transformation', in S. Conrad and J. Osterhammel (eds), *Geschichte der Welt 1750–1870: Wege zur modernen Welt* (Munich: Beck, 2016), 565; and Bayly, *Birth of the Modern World*. Osterhammel and Conrad also underline the emergence of 'World Religion' as new category.
  49. Osterhammel, *Die Verwandlung der Welt*, 1240. *Ibid.*, 1240–42; Osterhammel speaks of 'verhaltene Säkularisierung Westeuropas' (1250) and of West Europe taking a *Sonderweg* concerning religion (1253); Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World*, 325.
  50. Conrad, 'Eine Kulturgeschichte globaler Transformation', 592.
  51. Osterhammel, *Die Verwandlung der Welt*, 1245; Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World*, 327; Conrad, 'Eine Kulturgeschichte globaler Transformation', 559.
  52. Studying history beyond the national frame is a very broad description for a still growing field of different approaches, ranging from transnational history to *histoire croisée*, from entangled to connected history, and from world to global history. These approaches differ in a number of respects, and many of them are even bound together by open hostilities, accusing each other of Eurocentrism, methodological shortcomings because of their Western bias, or of other forms of blindness, due to their restricted lingual capacities. Without going deeper into these debates, they all share translocal perspectives beyond the nation state, and they leave older theories such as the dependency theory and Wallerstein's world-systems theory behind them, and no longer automatically presume the existence of fixed global or even universal structures or patterns of transformation.
  53. There is a much broader field of postcolonial studies critique, which I will not go onto here, but will just name the most prominent critique of D. Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000). For a very long time these parts of the world were understudied (which first of all means that English research literature is missing), but this is not true anymore and can therefore not be put forward as a reason of exclusion. See also P. Manning, 'Locating Africans on the World Stage: A Problem in World History', *Journal of World History* 26(3) (2016), 624–25, who writes concerning the exclusion of Africans

- in world histories: 'the problem addressed here is the recognition and consultation of that historiography by those writing at a broader level' (623), commenting on Bayly's and Osterhammel's ignoring of Africans. It is worth noting that 'continent' as a spatial entity is a problematical term in respect to 'its historicity, boundary instabilities, and internal differences – if not fragmentations' – A. Dirlik, 'Performing the World: Reality and Representation on the Making of World Histor(ies)', *Journal of World History* 16(4) (2005), 391–410.
54. Manning, 'Locating Africans on The World Stage', 608.
  55. This linguistic restriction is of crucial importance in so far as it goes hand in hand with epistemological constraints. It needs further investigation, and is less important for smaller academic cultures than for larger ones such as the French and German, which still rely upon a huge national book market.
  56. G.W.F. Hegel, *Die Vernunft in der Geschichte: Einleitung in die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte*, ed. G. Lasson (Leipzig: Felix Meiner, 1917). Even though Hegel also had a very clear and negative picture of America as a continent of savages, the selective perspective of many world histories is very reminiscent of exactly this straightforward construction, which had been at the centre of postcolonial critics.
  57. Manning, 'Locating Africans on The World Stage', 616; see also M.-R. Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995).
  58. Neither Osterhammel nor Bayly refers to these parts of the world. Conrad, in 'Eine Kulturgeschichte globaler Transformation', 617, at least notes that there are 'andere Glaubenssysteme' (other systems of belief).
  59. Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions*.
  60. Conrad, 'Eine Kulturgeschichte globaler Transformation', 617, however mentions that there are broad regions beyond world religion. However, he, as Bayly and Osterhammel, spent many pages on the invention of a 'world religion' system, studying its ordering force.
  61. This critique has been brought forward by Dirlik, 'Performing the World', 403. On the contrary, 'world religion', as a category-ordering belief system in terms of more and less civilized, was closely interlinked with colonialism.
  62. As Andrew Zimmerman wrote: 'the worldview of imperial history'. A. Zimmerman, 'Africa in Imperial and Transnational History: Multi-sited Historiography and the Necessity of Theory', *Journal of African History* 54(3) (2013), 334.
  63. J. Adelman already formulated some of these critical points in his review of global histories: J. Adelman, 'Review: Global History or the History of Globalization?', *Journal of World History* 27(4) (2016), 701–8.
  64. For the broad debate on the local and the global, which here is intertwined, see also A. Epple, 'Lokalität und die Dimensionen des Globalen: Eine Frage der Relationen', *Historische Anthropologie* 21 (2013), 4–25.
  65. 'The Religious and the Secular – The Kaiserreich Transnational Revisited' was generously sponsored by the VW Stiftung. It was held as part of the Richard von Weizsäcker fellowship, which was sponsored by the VW Stiftung as well. Among the attendees were Ruth Harris (Oxford), Gudrun Krämer (Berlin) and Till van Rahden (Montreal). Their work stimulated the lively debate, and I owe a big thank you to all of them. Gratitude also is due to Hubertus Büschel (Gießen) and David Rechter (Oxford), as well as to Paul Betts (Oxford), contributing as chairs as well as attendees. The volume has been enlarged by articles from Carolin Kosuch, Relinde Meiwes and Paul Michael Kurtz, as well as by



- Karolin Wetjen. I am most grateful to all contributors for their patience, and particularly to Paul Betts.
66. Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions*; Burris, *Exhibiting Religion*.
67. M. Burchardt and M. Wohlrab-Sahr, 'Multiple Secularities: Religion and Modernity in the Global Age', *International Sociology* 28(6) (2013), 621–28.
68. For the role of missionaries, see Habermas and Hölzl, *Mission Global*; for missionary medias and their impact in Europe, see F. Jensz and H. Acke (eds), *Missions and Media: The Politics of Missionary Periodicals in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2013). Wetjen, 'Religionspädagogische Resonanzen'; J. Hauser, *German Religious Women in Late Ottoman Beirut: Competing Missions* (Leiden: Brill, 2015).

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