

some scientific findings. But these inconsistencies do not demonstrate a zero-sum relationship between faith and science. This is because there is no universal rule whereby other belief systems have to conform or support the claims of the Medieval Catholic Church, and the Church was already able to adapt itself to a new era in which scientific findings are taken into consideration more than they had been. However, although it is not possible to claim that there is a zero-sum relationship between faith and science, it can be argued that scientific advances can be held responsible for rendering religion and theology less visible and/or influential in modern-day society in different fields such as explaining sickness and natural disasters.

### **THE ROLE OF CAPITALISM IN THE SECULARIZATION PROCESS**

It is a truth, (almost) universally acknowledged, that industrial capitalism is one of the key dynamics that led to Europe becoming the world's most secular continent. The aim of this section is to build a theoretical framework whereby it can be shown that there is a positive correlation between industrial capitalism and secularization. Hence, in this section, I will briefly touch first on the meaning and structural characteristics of capitalism. Then, I will indicate how capitalism is a key accelerator of secularization at the theoretical level by focusing on four major corollaries of capitalism:

1. Rules of Economy and Secularization
2. Disintegration of Traditional Family Structure and Secularization
3. Increase in Welfare and Secularization
4. Downsizing of the State and Secularization

### **Capitalism**

Capitalism is an economic system in which labour and capital are separated and wherein the means of production are privately owned. In such a system, the state is expected not to decide how, where and how much to be produced; goods and services are voluntarily

exchanged; people are free to sell their products and labour force at a price determined by a largely impersonal market; and competition among producers is considered one of its main pillars (Machan, 1993; Barry, 2002; Hazlitt, 2012). As Nigel Ashford (2003: 28) neatly summarizes it, capitalism is an economic system “based on the voluntary exchange of goods and services, in which the people determine their own economic affairs, by deciding where they work, or invest, how to spend or save the fruits of their labour, and with whom they trade.” In such an economic system, the rules for a functioning economy do not stem from any historical-dogmatic teachings or dictation by political leaders.

Production for the masses and not just for a certain class in society is another feature of industrial capitalism. The well-known Austrian economist Ludwig Von Mises mentions continuous improvement of the average standard of living and increase in wealth as some of the benefits of this system:

It is this ascension of the multitude in which the radical social change brought about by the Industrial Revolution consists. Those underlings who in all the preceding ages of history had formed the herds of slaves and serfs, of paupers and beggars, became the buying public, for whose favor the businessmen canvass (1972: 1).

Since state ownership of production is restrained as much as possible in favour of the private sector, it means that first the economic power of the state and then, parallel to it, its political power are bound to decrease. Ashford indicates a very limited role for government in a free market economy:

The role of government is to provide the rules or framework that enables everyone to be free, to protect them from infringements on their freedom by others. The free market is associated with economic freedom or freedom of choice: the freedom of the consumer to buy, the freedom of the trader to fix the price of his goods and services (and of the consumer to accept or refuse to pay it), the freedom of the worker to choose his job or profession, and the freedom of the producer to produce what he wishes and to employ whom he chooses (2003: 36).

These freedoms provided by capitalism reduced the capacity of any one person or group to seize the state and to dictate their own values on society.

The aforesaid characteristic features of capitalism allow a more rational and organic society to emerge, reducing in the process the social prestige and influence of religion, folk religions, religion-like mechanisms and all forms of superstitious beliefs. Although there is no zero-sum relationship between capitalism and faith, it can be statistically shown that countries with a free economic system are more secular than those with a command economy (Norris & Inglehart, 2008; Gwartney, Lawson, & Hall, 2013). The data supplied by World Value Survey and European Value Survey (pooled in 1981-2001) support what has been asserted above. Table A6 (Norris & Inglehart, 2008: 105), Table A7 (Norris & Inglehart, 2008: 70) and Table A8 (Norris & Inglehart, 2008: 57) indicate the direct correlation between capitalism and secularization.

**Table A6.** The Perceived Functions of Religious Authorities

Type of Society	Moral Role (% Agree)	Spiritual Role (% Agree)	Family Role (% Agree)	Social Role (% Agree)	Total Function Scale
Postindustrial	39	34	39	58	1.6
Industrial	59	53	59	76	2.4
Agrarian	75	72	75	80	3.0

NOTE: “Generally speaking, do you think that the religious authorities in your country are giving adequate answers to ...

- *The moral problems and needs of the individual,*
- *The problems of family life.*
- *People’s spiritual needs.*
- *The social problems facing our country today.”*

(Yes/No) Percentage who agree.

Source: WVS data, pooled 1981-2001

As shown by Table A6, the influence of religious authorities declines alongside the transition from an agricultural to industrial society. While individuals in an agricultural community still have confidence in the religious authority at a rate of up to 80% when it comes to moral problems, individual needs, family problems, spiritual desires, and social problems facing their country, the rate decreases as the community distances itself from structures with an agricultural character.

**Table A7.** Social Characteristics of Religious Participation

	Agrarian	Industrial	Postindustrial	All
All	49	25	22	28
<b>Sex</b>				
Women	49	26	26	30
Men	49	22	18	26
<b>Age Group</b>				
Younger (Under 30 years old)	49	22	15	26
Middle (30-59 years old)	47	23	21	26
Older (60+ years old)	47	29	35	34
<b>Education</b>				
Low education	55	34	21	36
Medium Education	47	23	16	28
High Education	48	22	24	28
<b>Employment Status</b>				
In paid work	49	29	26	27
<b>Income</b>				
Lowest income deciles	56	30	22	34
Highest income deciles	45	17	22	26
<b>Social Class</b>				
Manager/professional	52	22	23	28
Lower middle	46	22	17	22
Skilled working	42	21	17	23
Unskilled working	52	30	19	31
<b>Marital and family status</b>				
Married	49	24	23	28
With children	48	25	23	29

**NOTE:** Religious Participation: *“Apart from weddings, funerals, and christenings, about how often do you attend religious services these days? More than once a week, once a week, once a month, only on special holy days, once a year, less often, never or practically never.”* The percentage attending religious services *“more than once a week”* or *“once a week.”*

**Source:** World Values Survey, pooled 1981-2001.

Table A7 shows that the level of religious participation decreases in so far as a society distances itself from any social structure with an agricultural stamp. We observe and examine religious participation under headings such as gender, age, education, employment status, income, social class and family status. Religious participation is much greater within agricultural societies than within societies with an industrialized structure.

**Table A8.** Religiosity by Type of Society

	Agrarian	Industrial	Postindustrial	Eta	Sig.
<b>RELIGIOUS PARTICIPATION</b>					
Attend church at least weekly	44	25	20	.171	**
Pray “every day”	52	34	26	.255	***
<b>RELIGIOUS VALUES</b>					
Religion “very important”	64	34	20	.386	***
<b>RELIGIOUS BELIEFS</b>					
Believe in life after death	55	44	49	.229	*
Believe that people have a soul	68	43	32	.169	***
Believe in heaven	63	45	44	.094	*
Believe in hell	59	36	26	.228	***
Believe in God	78	72	69	.016	N/s

**NOTE:** Significance (Sig.): \*\*\*P = .001; \*\*P = .01; \*P = .05. N/s 0 not significant.

*than once a week, once a week, once a month, only on special holy days, once a year, less often, never or practically never.*" The percentage attending religious services "more than once a week" or "once a week." Frequency of prayer: Q199: "How often do you pray to God outside of religious services? Would say ... Everyday (7), more than once a week (6), once a week (5), at least once a month (4), several times a year (3), less often (2), never (1)." The percentage "every day." Religious values: Q10: "How important is religion in your life? Very important, rather important, not very important, not at all important?" The percentage "very important." Religious beliefs: "Which, if any, of the following do you believe in? Yes/No." The percentage "yes".

**Source:** World Values Survey / European Values Survey, pooled 1981-2001.

Table A8 also shows that religious beliefs are more dominant in agricultural communities. Communities with an agricultural character show higher rates in the criteria of belief in life after death, belief in heaven, belief in hell, and belief in God. The number of people who say that religion is "very important" tends to shrink in industrial and postindustrial societies compared to agricultural ones. As is shown in Table A8, the rates of weekly church attendance and daily prayer are also higher in agricultural societies.

I will now examine one by one how the aforementioned characteristics of capitalism render religion less influential at least at the social level.

### **Rules of Economy and Secularization**

The ethos of capitalism is incompatible with the traditional social structure adorned with religion. Most religions, by definition, are based on an *other world* and see *this world* as only temporal. Weber (1930/2005) saw no possibility of a compromise between bourgeois morality and traditional religious teachings. The success of a capitalist in trade is based on a number of rational decisions involving many religion-free factors. The reason of all decisions, choices, measures, precautions and judgments of a capitalist is only concerned with this world. Capitalism, largely viewed by traditional societies as the origin of greed, leaves no room for the supernatural or divine in running this world. Like Weber, Von Mises (1981) also claims

that traditional social structure is a barrier to a free economy, since the ethos of capitalism cannot compromise with old traditions, laws, rules and morals that are mingled with religion.

Economic success in a free market economy does not depend on the relationship with spiritual powers or with the ideologies of leaders. To be successful, what people need is to be able to make the right, rational, religion-free decisions regarding trade at the right time and place. While free market entrepreneurs have to take into consideration various independent dynamics to ensure success in trade, they have to compete not only with other entrepreneurs in their own city, but also with tradesmen from other cities and countries, often with other religious beliefs. When they seek to produce goods of good quality in a more economical way than their competitors, religious teachings, doctrines, practices, rituals and methods play no part whatsoever in that effort. Things which were previously considered sinful or improper in the light of religion become an indispensable part of life by reason of capitalism.

The institutionalization and proliferation of “loan with interest” in a particular society wherein usuriousness used to be prohibited or conceived as a misdeed because of religion, is one clear example of the penetrative power of capitalism. In traditional society, the system of making money from money was actualized in the form of lending money to the poor by the rich. This process follows a different path in the capitalist system. It is obvious that in an agricultural society, in which industrialization and capitalism are not dominant at all, people tend to need money from a “usurer” relatively less frequently than people living in a capitalist society. In traditional home-based societies, loan with interest was not used to invest, but to relieve one’s grief or get over the devastation caused by natural disasters or diseases. Loan with interest, which often happened in very difficult times, could result in the confiscation of all property by the end of the day. Since those loans with interest were not used to finance a particular production or produce any added value, after

a period of time borrowers might find themselves in a more difficult situation. For that reason, humiliation, degradation or vilification of those usurers were not unusual in traditional societies. Like moneylender Shylock in Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, it comes as no surprise that moneylenders are characterized as the villains in many literary works. Regarding the notorious moneylenders of times past, the articles by Celeste Turner Wright, "Some Conventions Regarding the Usurer in Elizabethan Literature" (1934) and "The Usurer's Sin in Elizabethan Literature" (1938) may supply some important insights. As can be seen in these articles, moneylenders were considered "a fix type monster" in pre-capitalist societies. Besides, expressions like "(...) usury offends Goodness divine, and disengage the knot" were also frequently used in Dante's (1555/2005) widely known work, *The Divine Comedy*. Like Dante, Balzac (1830/2013) characterized his moneylender in *Gobseck* as a cheapskate, pirate and petty, and those who had to take loan with interest from moneylenders as "victims".

Although it is understandable that interest on loan was considered diabolical and dirty money in religion-dominated societies in which traditional forms of production pervaded, that same interest has become one of the most fundamental features of the modern world economic system. With the increase in capital accumulation, moneylenders (banks) have taken up the central role in modern economies (Hayes, 1919: 68; Rowen, 1960: 580). Wright (1938: 178) depicts the beginning of this transformation in English society as follows: "About the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, English law and business began to ignore the medieval injunctions against usury. Despite the continued opposition of the Church, economics was being gradually divorced from religion."

With the development of capitalism, two structural differences arise with regard to loan with interest. First, since the middle and upper classes also need money for various reasons, like investing, increasing their living standard, producing more goods, *etc.*, wealthy

people as much as poor ones start to take out loans with interest. And taking out loans with interest has led to the revival of economies as well as bringing about a rise in the living standards of people. With the help of such loans, people are able to buy houses, cars, properties, make investments, and establish businesses without having to save money for years on end in order to reach the required amount. The second structural difference is that although only rich people were able to make money from money in pre-modern economies (namely, whoever lent money was rich, and whoever took out loans was poor), in present times ordinary citizens can realize additional income by depositing their money with interest in banks. So, unlike traditional society, in capitalist economies, lending money with interest might happen between ordinary citizens and banks except that the roles have now been reversed.

In addition, religious preferences are now forced to retreat while utility imposes itself due to the nature of free market economies themselves. As the free market economy does not allow for religious intolerance, it leads to indifference towards different beliefs. Voltaire, who is one of the most influential and prominent philosophers of the Enlightenment, penned some letters on English religious life and politics during the period he had to live in London when he was not allowed to enter Paris. At the very beginning of the fifth letter, *On the Church of England*, Voltaire (1980: 37) depicts England with this sentence: "This is the land of sects. An Englishman, as a free man, goes to Heaven by whatever route he likes." Voltaire was talking about something quite new for his native France, where Catholicism had been upheld as the only belief system for ages. For Voltaire, the reason why there was religious tolerance among Londoners from different religious backgrounds, and why religious bigotry was less prevalent in England than it was in France, had to do with the fact that there was no traditional economic system in England, but free trade. In fact, religious differences or prejudices tend to lose their power to guide social behaviours if humans are

able to come together and benefit from each other. The economic interests of societies belonging to different faiths exert greater weight than religious preferences. Since trade has to be impersonal and free from all human or religious biases, it paves the way for very different groups to come together to collaborate on a shared interest while the very impersonal character of it naturally restrains religious preferences from interfering with the economy. As Wendy McElroy (1998, June 1) states, a Jew who wishes to do business with a Muslim, or a Christian who wishes to trade with a Jew, has to ignore cultural and religious differences, and avoid the biases and prejudices of his own religious affiliation for such a trade to happen.

### **Disintegration of Traditional Family Structure and Secularization**

Rural people in pre-industrial societies were able to produce their own clothes, foods, tools and other necessities. Agricultural production was at the centre of life, and there was little diversity or specialization in the production process (Treasure, 1993: 62). By contrast, the capitalist mode of production renders the division of labour, private property rights, working for a salary and private factories part and parcel of modern-day life. This new structure that came onto the scene with the advent of capitalism turns most of the population into a part of economically active population in factories and service sector and accelerates the disintegration of the traditional family structure:

The societal range of role performances of husbands and wives is structurally determined. The range of role performances and, consequently, of statuses of husbands, is much broader than the range of role performance or statuses of wives. An important indicator of the husband's performance status is his income, one of the wife's performance status the "quality" of her housework (Heintz, Held & Levy, 1975: 862-863).

However, a cultural shift comes into play in the perception of women whenever there is a transition from an agricultural society,

where religious values, norms and bans dominate, to a capitalist society, in which secular-rational thinking, values and evaluations pervade. In traditional family structure, women had very limited options in terms of jobs due to the lack of available jobs and social expectations. The existence of women without economic freedom is one of the important dynamics for the continuation of the traditional family structure. Women with little education and without their own income tend to experience issues even in choosing their own spouses. In addition, these women are also expected to comply with the social moral principles legitimized by religion.

However, in societies dominated by the free market system, women tend to make the continuation of traditional family ties difficult when they start to earn their own income due to more job opportunities and better education. They can make friends with people from other cultures, which may not be easy in agricultural communities; and since they have become stronger economically, they are also now entitled to have the last word on marriage. Unlike the situation in traditional societies, in which the number of children per family was often determined by religion-sanctioned traditions, in modern capitalist societies it is no longer tradition or religion but “worldly” concerns such as health and education that decide how many children a woman will have. Such a transformation in daily practices and mind-set also leads to a decrease in birth rate. Needless to say, women are more or less forced into having fewer children to maintain their working life in capitalist societies. Therefore, it is no coincidence that one of the most serious problems facing present-day capitalist societies is a rapid decline in population rate. In fact, the rapid decline in childbirth (Yew, 2012, October 6; East-West Center, 2013) has forced governments to take serious measurements in this regard.

More than ever, women who become “individuals” by gaining economic freedom tend to get rid of the suppressions meted out by traditional social structures mingled with religion. Besides, the age

for the first sexual experience outside marriage has also gone down (Finer, 2007; ChartsBin Statistics Collector Team, 2009), while at the same time the relative number of children born out of wedlock has increased significantly in capitalist societies (Swinford, 2013; Eurostat, 2015).

### **Increase in Welfare and Secularization**

Norris and Inglehart (2008: 109-10) showed statistically in their masterpiece, *Sacred and Secular*, that as the level of human development increases, religious values, practices and beliefs erode. The transition from agricultural production to industrial production, the growth of the service sector, the rise in the ratio of literate people, more comfortable housing conditions, more leisure time, the increase in average life expectancy, the decrease in infant mortality rate, reduction in health care costs, proliferation of communication tools, and a democratic form of government can all be counted as parameters of human development. Negative changes in these parameters, on the other hand, render societies more vulnerable with respect to life's challenges. It is highly likely that societies which are exposed to the destructive power of nature, severe poverty, or state oppression, are more religious or more inclined towards the sacred than those societies which live under secure, peaceful and affluent conditions. As people tend to go to shrines, temples or other holy places for their incurable diseases while preferring hospitals for curable ones, in the same way, the more societies are faced with devastating physical and social risks or ills, the more they use non-secular ways to cope with them.

By reference to Adam Smith's well-known metaphor of the 'invisible hand', in a system where private property and freedom of contract are recognized and trade is free from state intervention, individuals unintentionally increase the welfare of the community as they try to maximize their own gains on a free market. As Mark

Skousen (1994) points out, the idea that capitalism makes the rich richer and the poor poorer cannot be proved by simply looking at the daily life of capitalist societies. Capitalism prevents even protected groups from controlling all the resources, offers a chance to poor people to be able to support their families, and creates opportunities for disadvantaged people to become wealthy. Having changed the historical structure of the discipline of economy, capitalism has brought about a dramatic increase in the national income per capita of countries which adopt it (Kasper, 2002). In addition, it helps new technologies to be developed and become widespread while increasing the level of education (Hartwell, 1965: 165).

As the OECD report about international migration tendencies around the globe indicates, the flow of migration is from closed economies to capitalist ones (OECD Reports on Trends in International Migration, 2001; Griswold, 2002, May 1). In other words, people tend to go where the money is, where labour is free and where they would have a chance to be wealthy. As Marc Swanepoel (1992) argues, increase in wealth occurs where the means of production are less controlled by the state. The Annual Report of the 2013 Economic Freedom of the World showed, once again, that countries governed by capitalism yield more wealth than those of command economies. For example, while the per capita income for capitalist countries is around 36,000 USD, this amount drops sharply to 4,382 USD for command economies such as Algeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Central African Republic, Angola, Chad, Zimbabwe, Republic of Congo, Myanmar, and Venezuela (Gwartney, Lawson, & Hall, 2013).

The infant mortality rate was over 40% in pre-industrial Europe. Due to extreme poverty, the population of Europe had not increased up until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, as Mustafa Erdoğan (2002) states, a significant increase in living standards of Europeans could be seen in the period between 1760 and 1850 because of

a - relatively - *laissez faire*<sup>29</sup> economy. While capitalism has led to a fall in death rate, it has increased purchasing power. Eating and drinking habits have changed dramatically; per capita consumption of meat, sugar, tea, beer and eggs, which had once been considered luxury food items, has increased drastically and they have now become ordinary consumer goods. What Erdoğan argues for the history of Europe regarding capitalism is perhaps not unique. Interestingly, Milton Friedman (1982), recipient of the 1976 Nobel Prize in economic sciences, points to something similar for the history of the USA in terms of capitalism:

The United States has continued to progress; its citizen have become better fed, better clothed, better housed, and better transported; class and social distinctions have narrowed; minority groups have become less disadvantaged; popular culture has advanced by leaps and bounds. All this has been the product of the initiative and drive of individuals co-operating through the free market (1982: 164).

With the rise of capitalism, living standards of societies have skyrocketed; and the gap between the poor and the rich has narrowed with regard to basic needs. For all these reasons, the need of society for absolute powers (religious or non-religious) is being (or will be) reduced in the course of time. As Mehmet Ali Kirman (2005b) observes, the tougher the living conditions in societies, the more they wish to live under absolute powers. Therefore, on the basis of history, it would be fair to say that the secularization process is likely to be found in capitalist societies like those of European countries, the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, *etc.*, since with the proliferation of capitalism humans are bound to enjoy a higher level of prosperity that renders them less vulnerable to the unpredictability of nature (Norris & Inglehart, 2008). On the other hand, this is not (yet) the case in undeveloped countries or in countries with rich natural resources where the production of wealth is not based on the

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29 The original expression of *laissez faire* is “laissez faire, [laissez aller], laissez passer”. In English, it means “Let them act, let them go”. It is considered a motto for those who glorify the economic freedom of individuals.

capitalist economic system. Religion, religion-affiliated institutions, and sacred figures/deities are more likely to be visible if not effective in those countries.

### **Downsizing of the State and Secularization**

Capitalism further prevents states from imposing any particular religious beliefs, doctrines or values on societies by limiting their power of penetration. Since the means of production are owned by the private sector and not the state, people are hired according to merit, and there is a direct proportion between their being continually hired and their merit within the production process. However, if the employer is the state instead of a private entrepreneur, employees will need to have the mind-set that is required for a job, or at least they have to pretend that they support the state or its institution. Since no one is responsible for the loss of state enterprises, people do not need to improve themselves; rather, they may tend to think, defend or act in accordance with government policies.

Since the most important thing for a capitalist is to make more profit, religious identity loses its significance when it comes to recruitment. Human beings from different faiths start to work in the same workplace and start to live in the same neighbourhoods. John Hood (1998, August 1) points out that capitalist enterprises play a very crucial role against religious discrimination, since it would be against the principles of productivity or efficiency for company executives to exclude potential employees or customers on the basis of religious affiliation. Since capitalism is based on competition among companies, and surviving in a free market depends on profit, companies cannot run the risk of hiring or not hiring someone on the basis of their faith or ethnic origin instead of their competence. As Richard M. Salsman clearly explains:

To compete in a free economy means to create and offer better values to customers than rival firms. Successful competitors focus on reality, inventions, innovations, materials and methods—not on ri-

vals per se. They're independent, unconventional, often rebellious toward accepted norms and opinions. They're first-handed. They don't copy—they originate. They don't travel well-worn paths—they blaze new commercial trails. They are forward-looking—not mired in the past or in the status quo or burdened by conventional habits. They're not passive order-takers or servants of demanding consumers. They invent products and processes that consumers never heard of nor could dream of (2000, January 2).

Linda Gorman (1993) rightly argues that religion (or political affiliation) can be one of the hiring criteria if state-owned enterprises instead of private sectors run the economy. According to her, while such a system can cause waste of resources and depletion, at the same time it aggravates the friction between religious groups nurtured by the state and other, discriminated ones. Since the loss of state-owned enterprises is compensated with taxes, it is not merit but loyalty to the government that is important in such economies. By contrast, capitalists, who want to maximize their profits, do not recruit staff in accordance with their religion or their loyalty to the boss's ideology or faith. Capitalists are more keen on finding the most productive staff without taking their religious affiliation into account. The religious identities of workers in an automobile factory are of no concern to the factory owners unless, of course, friction among workforce reduces profit. Therefore, compared to a statist economy, a capitalist society is highly likely to generate less religious discrimination. For example, at present, it is not Muslim Turks who are working in privately owned mines in the city of Zonguldak (North Anatolia), but Taoists, Buddhists or people with folk beliefs from China.

As Friedman (1982) rightly argues, the more a state interferes in the economy, the more it becomes autocratic and totalitarian in a political sense. States of command economies have more desires, tools and possibilities to disseminate their ideologies (religious or non-religious) and to make them more visible even by using force where necessary. Owning all schools, factories and other educational, political and economic institutions helps states to dictate doc-

trines, ideologies or faiths that they want to sanctify or perpetrate. Sometimes, this is seen via dictation of a religious identity by the state under the name of compulsory or elective-compulsory courses in state run-schools, or via deification of a leader. Thus, having owned the means of production, the state, through educational and communicative channels, can interfere and control the lives of those who are at the mercy of the state in terms of job opportunities, for example. In particular, throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century it has been observed that states with command economies dictated certain commonly unquestionable values, doctrines, and teachings, or they sanctified a particular ideology or person for the sake of creating a homogenous society. To those undemocratic countries, shared sanctified values were necessary to hold together the entire community and to keep any kind of heresies from infiltrating society. Sanctification was used and considered a guarantee of social harmony. As McElroy summarizes:

(...) society would collapse into open violence without the cohesion provided by common values. Thus, those in authority needed to centrally plan and rigorously enforce the values that should be taught to and should be practiced by the masses. After all, if people were allowed to choose their own religious values, if values became a commodity open to competition, then civil chaos and conflict would inevitably ensue (1998, June 1).

By contrast, capitalism relatively prevents the accumulation of economic power in the hands of a few, and protects individuals from economic or political oppression by the political powers that be (Von Hayek, 1944: 46-48). In capitalism, human beings are supposed to be treated as independent individuals who are responsible for their own thoughts, personalities, works and products (Rand, 1986). If a state loses its control of the means of production, meaning losing its status of “boss”, it also loses the power of dictating any belief to people, intervening in their lives, or deciding what is good for them. Earning a living without needing the state’s mercy liberates individuals from state oppression. As the state gets smaller and

becomes less needed, it loses its power of imposing on people what to believe in, what to wear, or what to eat/drink.

For example, art is one of the areas in which capitalism has liberated individuals from the hegemony of the state, and has made state-supported common values less visible, if not irrelevant. According to Tyler Cowen (2008), artists have managed to stop living off the state (or the Church, for that matter) with the opportunities they get from capitalism. The increase in the number of potential buyers other than state or religious institutions, and the decrease in the price of tools that are necessary to make art have given artists the chance to be engaged with artistic production as and when they wish. The wealth and financial security supplied by capitalism has allowed artists to reject the imposed values of the state. Therefore, it would not be an exaggeration to argue that bohemians, nihilists, and avant-gardists are products of capitalism itself. Likewise, when we look at the history of art and literature, it can be observed that artists, poets, authors, composers, and journalists have all to praise the state-supported doctrines, beliefs, and ideologies when the state controls the means of production or is powerful enough to impose certain values on society. In parallel, the 20<sup>th</sup> century has borne witness to some very deplorable tragedies, the deaths of a great number of intellectuals who criticized the state-supported or state-sanctified policies or institutions (Dal Lago, 1999; Berlin, 2000; Raw, 2011).

## **Conclusion**

Capitalism is a fundamental pillar of the modernization process. In particular, economic development (one of the most important effects of capitalism) has played a vital role in the transition from a traditional society to a more modern one, most clearly illustrated in the history of Europe. Capitalism is a very powerful dynamic that can turn societies, characterized by collective consciousness, hierarchy, simple division of labour, homogeneous-small-isolated communities, and powerful customs and traditions, into societies

characterized by specialization, individualization, rationalization, advanced transportation, split-second communication, and mass production. With the proliferation of the capitalist relations of production, feudal systems and values slowly disappear. This process inevitably leads to a decline in the power and prestige of belief systems and traditional value judgments of pre-capitalist societies; in other words, all those feudal features lose their ability to influence society. Norman Barry (2002) explains that a traditional, conservative society, and all those institutions which thrive on keeping it alive, is in direct conflict with the spirit of openness and continuous mobility of the capitalist system.

However, it should be emphasized that the reason why capitalism seems to go hand-in-hand with secularization is not because there is a zero-sum relationship between capitalism and religion. Indeed, the withdrawal of religion from the social to the individual level in capitalist societies is not because people start to question their own beliefs and then decide to collectively move away from their faith. Far from it. In fact, people of whatever religious persuasion in capitalist societies might still spend all their money on building new temples, share their profit as alms, or in some other way be dictated in their behaviour by their own religious belief. But, when it comes to making money in a capitalist free market economy, they have no choice but to enter into a system in which secular rules dominate. They have to “act secularly” as it were in order to survive in that kind of economic system. The rules of capitalism do not allow for any spiritual teachings to take hold in the market. Indeed, by keeping its “this-worldly” focus alive, capitalism directs human attention, desires, wishes, and plans from a so-called “other world” towards “this world”. In capitalism, employer and employee are supposed to be neutral with respect to religion, and their religious attitudes are not expected to influence their economic activity.

As old religious habits begin to change, the frequency in which humans continue to involve themselves with religion becomes less

and less while education, shopping, music, travel, clothing and other areas of life become more secular. Still, this life transition should not be interpreted as irreligiosity. Being unable to keep up with the old religion-dominated, traditional patterns in the new life conditions that emerged in capitalism's aftermath does not necessarily mean moving away from religion in a conscious way. It is obvious that the reason why people have started to take out loans with interest to buy a house or a car, or for other practical reasons, is not because they have questioned their religious doctrines or some verses from their holy books, but for clearly practical reasons.

And thus, to sum up what has been discussed thus far, it can be argued that capitalism, whereby the means of production are tied to private property, indirectly restrains the social power of religion. Since most of the population becomes part of an economically active population in capitalism, religious influence will be overcome and it will lose its place in factories. The wealth and welfare that stem from capitalism will reduce dependence on absolute authorities, religious or other. As government loses its power to run or even influence the economy, its political dominance likewise will dwindle, so that its capacity to impose any value on society will become smaller. When all these are examined together, the underlying theme is that the capitalist economic system seems to have the capacity to restrain the power and prestige of religion, religion-like mechanisms, folk beliefs and superstitious beliefs at the social level.

### **THE ROLE OF URBANIZATION IN THE SECULARIZATION PROCESS**

Although there is no subtitle "urbanization" in Bruce's secularization paradigm, almost all subtopics such as Social Differentiation, Structural Differentiation, Social and Cultural Diversity, Egalitarianism, Compartmentalization, and Privatization incorporate what I am about to discuss in this section.<sup>30</sup> My claim is that even though

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30 These subtitles were discussed in Chapter II.