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Religion in Contemporary Consumer Societies

- Association, économie solidaire et mouvements sociaux - Ethique, religion et symbolisme -

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Description :

Comment penser les caractéristiques du religieux aujourd'hui au-delà des constats de fragmentation et d'éclatement ? Recensant les grandes caractéristiques de la religiosité actuelle en Occident (le religieux vécu, en somme), il en ressort qu'il faut penser les mutations des dernières décennies en fonction de l'avènement de la société de consommation. En reprenant Charles Taylor, François Gauthier soutient que la société de consommation, en tant que rapport et processus social, a radicalisé le tournant subjectif moderne dans nos sociétés, transformant profondément le paysage religieux. L'auteur introduit également aux travaux de Raymond Lemieux et reprend la notion féconde « d'itinéraire de sens » pour dégager la cohérence des pratiques contemporaines.

Revue du Mauss permanente

Ce texte est la version écrite d'une conférence présentée au panel « Le religieux dans la société de consommation : pour un cadre d'analyse global et compréhensif » lors du Congrès de la Société Internationale de Sociologie des Religions (SISR) à Santiago de Compostelle, en juillet dernier.

Pour Raymond Lemieux [1]

1. An introduction

The idea behind this panel as far as I am concerned comes from a dissatisfaction with a certain sociological zeitgeist according to which the religious sphere is typically fragmented, decomposed and incoherent since no longer regulated by traditional Christian institutions. This is particularly the case in French sociology, where we read about religion being *en éclats*, or *en morceaux* (in pieces) for instance. In a number of works, the actual situation as far as religion goes is held to be often implicitly transient, a mere step towards a more stable period of some kind or another.

This dissatisfaction only grew while working with Jean-Philippe Perreault on the book *Jeunes et religion au Québec* [2], as we reviewed existing literature in the sociology of religion – French language mostly. We were struck by what appeared contradictory between this zeitgeist and the results of sociological studies. It seemed to us that studies from at least the 1970s on had been describing a situation that seemed to be stabilizing around certain characteristics rather than morphing. I'll come back a bit later on this. If the religious sphere is something close to coherent, the question that follows is therefore how to make sense of it sociologically? What is the systematicity of this new state of affairs? And how can we explain how we got here? What are the underlying logics at work?

In two important European edited works on youth and religion, Yves Lambert and Guy Michelat's *Crépuscule des religions en France ?* (published 1992) [3] and Roland Campiche's *Cultures jeunes et religion en Europe* (published 1997) [4], we find that three different hypothetical schemes compete in characterizing recent mutations of the religious field:

The first states that the Christian religion is in a way the natural religion of the Western world and that we are witnessing some sort of adaptation crisis after which it will emerge transformed yet strengthened, much as was the case with the Protestant Reformation.

The second hypothesis is that of secularization and all of its variants. In essence, that modernity accomplishes the end of religion as a socially structuring force, with religions in particular and religion in general becoming increasingly marginalized. The writings of Marcel Gauchet have given new life and new vestments to this interpretation in France. A third family of hypotheses states that the decline in congregational religion does not mean the end of religion but rather the emergence of new religious logics, with the most radical variants (such as Thomas Luckmann's) saying that we are in the midst of a religious (or spiritual) revolution.

Both the material collected in this book and that consulted in external sources suggests that the third hypothesis is closer to being correct, although we should be very cautious before going to the extent of claiming any kind of revolution. This is also the point of view of a remarkable book by Linda Woodhead and Paul Heelas [5] which I got to reading in the last few weeks. In many respects what I would like to suggest here is very close to what is proposed in this book, and I will come back to it.

What we do think however is the following: First, there are good reasons to believe that the last half of the twentieth century saw an important shift occurring as regards religion; Second, that the rupture that occurred in the post-Second World War decades is linked to the coming of age and power of the *baby boom* generation; Third, that the situation today can be explained and systematized. The baby boom generation inaugurated an era of

spiritualizing religion, of religion without religious institutions. And if by respect for their children's liberty and freedom of choice they did not hand down traditional Christian religion, they did transmit an ideal of self-realization which we find massively in our societies today. Therefore the baby boom generation is an exception and not a rule. We find much less differences between generations if we look at boomers and their forebears than if we look at boomers and their descendents. And thus we are facing a new configuration, one which Raymond Lemieux called a recomposition of religious belief and ritual practice, one in which the baby boom rupture is confirmed and reshaped.

Accordingly, what we found to be the case for youth today is also true for our societies in general. Yet we believed that because of the possibility that we were facing a religious landscape relatively different from that prior, and in order to avoid ideological interference with our object of study, we need better start from what youth today felt was religious and/or spiritual to them rather than starting from what we knew to be religion, i.e. easily assignable congregations. This is why you will find texts on youth subcultures and club cultures for instance, as well as on Chinese martial arts in the book.

We also decided to work on a three-tier conceptual level as regards religion. First we used the term *le religieux* (in English, perhaps we could say the religious or religion) to refer to the religious phenomenon on an anthropological, perhaps universal and trans-historic level, in opposition to *les religions* (in English : religions), just as in French it is somewhat customary to distinguish conceptually between *le politique* and *la politique*, or *l'économique* and *l'économie*, i.e. the respective anthropological spheres of politics and economics and their socially and historically situated institutionalizations. Thirdly and finally, we used the term *religiosité* (in English : religiosity) in reference to real-life religion, that lived by the individuals, in the great majority of cases at some distance from such or such religion's orthodoxy and prescriptions. We incidentally did not make a conceptual distinction between religion and spirituality, this last being merely a convenient label to designate contemporary individualistic forms of often extra-institutional religiosity.

Let us come back to the contemporary characteristics of religion in Western countries. For the sake of the book we found the following, which we by no means believe to be either irreducible or exclusive :

Religion today seeks to be *Instituant* rather than *Institutional*, according to anthropologist Roger Bastide's categories [6], meaning that it is more about *experience* than it is about creed, belief systems and dogma. The result is a continued gradual decline of congregational practice and an increase of the distance between people and the traditional Christian religious institutions in the West. Of course this portrayal should be nuanced and argued in order to take into account possible exceptions and challenges. In the case of English Canada, for instance, Reginald Bibby's latest findings show a slight increase in church attendance, what he not so objectively calls his *good news* [7].

A second characteristic tied to this devaluation of institutions at the hand of personal independence and autonomy is the *divorce* between religious representations and religious institutions, to quote Raymond Lemieux's expression from the early nineties. Such phenomenon was also pinpointed by Grace Davie with her idea of a disarticulation of believing and belonging [8]. In other words, religious practice or self-declared affiliation does not ensure that a person's belief system will be in conformity with this denomination's propositions. One example is the widespread (and increasingly so) belief in *reincarnation* among declared Christians. Thus belief in God today, even among Christians, is equivocal and sometimes at a significant distance from defined orthodoxy. We therefore need be careful before interpreting certain data, such as polls saying for instance that around 70% of Quebec youth aged between 16 and 35 declare being Christian and believing in God (Crop-Radio-Canada Poll, 2002).

Religion today in most countries is a minority affair. To be overtly and actively religious within a congregation is to be marginal with respect to the bulk of society. Such is also the case for non-congregational practices with religious dimensions, such as the aforementioned subcultures or what Linda Woodhead and Paul Heelas call the *holistic*

spiritual milieu. This marginality, far from being hard-lived, actually structures contemporary religious experience. Many young Christians, for instance, feel they are living not the end of Christianity but rather something that resembles its origins. Contemporary religiosity is often both a return to the source and a desire to be different and particular. Furthermore, this minority constitution can be oriented towards visibility in the public sphere or invisibility (as is the case with much small-group spiritualities, be they Christian, wicca, Santo Daime s ayahuasca drinkers, etc.).

The individualistic aspect of religion today does not amount to a sum of autarchic and narcissistic individuals. This religiosity is highly relational. As Danièle Hervieu-Léger has noted [\[9\]](#), people need other people (real people or the media) to legitimize and attest their beliefs and practices, mutual validation if you will. And thus contemporary religiosity is geared both towards personal accomplishment and a demand for recognition. Hence the phenomena of large effervescent, ephemeral and gregarious experiences, from the Catholic World Youth Day to concerts and raves. Hence also the role of media as vectors for such recognition.

The decline of traditional belief contents does not translate into a symmetric rise in atheism. Rather, belief in destiny, some kind of cosmic order or energy or flux is rampant, although more studies are needed to circumscribe these contents. Here again, the works of Raymond Lemieux in the early nineties with his team from Université Laval are essential. What many have reported in the last decades is a trend called *possibilisme* or *probabilisme* in French, which is slightly more than just relativism and may be translated literally into possibilism or probabilism. This situation is worlds away from just a few centuries ago when Christians tore each other to pieces for matters of theological nuances. The content of belief is no longer so determining. Relativism, a certain indeterminacy in meaning, uncertainty and ephemerality are the norm today and are usually expressed by people saying things like I believe in something but I m not sure what , Why not ? , We don t really know, do we ? or I m still thinking .

The importance of emotions and affect over logic and rationality, a characteristic which goes hand in hand with the priority given to experience over creed. This can be interpreted as a massification of the Romantic critique of Reason.

As is particularly the case with youth, a backdrop for many of these trends is the universalist belief in the anthropological unity of mankind and the shared nature of its destiny. Related to this is the widespread belief that all religions are different expressions of a single essence, that every religion has some claim on the truth.

The inner-worldly nature and aim of salvation : individual happiness within this lifetime. The meaning of life is within this life and not in some other plane or after-life. Yves Lambert had noted how even congregational religions share in this new logic : Christian religion today serves fulfilment in this life or is no longer he wrote in 1992. Coincidentally, the human figure of Jesus has become the highest source of significance for many Christians, over the figure of God transcendent or the subtle spiritual essence of Christ.

2. Wayward schemes

These mutations challenge our comprehension of religion and our analytical tools. The following oppositions seem up to a certain degree problematic or obsolete : profane and sacred, serious and playful, private and public, material and spiritual. Religion seems to have moved from a logic of *orthodoxy* (conformity of contents of beliefs) to one of *orthopraxis* (conformity to a certain ethos stressing individuals to singularizing, expressing and realizing themselves and progressing in their lives while seeking inner-worldly happiness). Furthermore, *indeterminacy of meaning and truth* rather than institutional authority is the condition required for building community and federating today. Significance comes from life itself. Experiences construct and deconstruct beliefs, give substance to religious representations.

This does not mean that beliefs are unsystematic, incoherent and atomized. Danièle Hervieu-Léger in a 2001 article wrote how if most people compose their personal solution to the meaning of life, they do so using certain symbolic resources whose availability is subject to certain limits. The role of media here is paramount, from magazines and television to Internet and cinema and so on. She noted how more the individualization of beliefs and practices progressed, more they tended to homogenize. As I understand it, homogenizing here means that certain constellations of beliefs and practices crystallize large sociological ensembles, for example the congregational domain and the more holistic spiritual nebula. Homogenization also in the way that religion and spirituality are experienced as open-ended quests for meaning I will come back to this point.

To speak of homogenization means that some kind of regulation is at work within culture at large. If traditional religious institutions no longer perform such a regulation, where are we to find such a regulating function in our societies ? Such standardization is evidence of a new form of regulation, one much more diffuse and implicit and un-assignable than traditional institutions. Danièle Hervieu-Léger suggests we look at the globalized economic system and the market for an answer. Standardization, she writes, as in capitalist production, is the direct consequence of the liberalization of exchanges, in this case made possible by our societies' pluralist situations in consequence of the erosion of monopolistic regulations of Truth and Meaning.

Hervieu-Léger is not the only one suggesting religion be rethought today in its rapport with economics, the market and consumption or even that religion simply be rethought in economic terms. But to which extent is this path one in which the sociology of religion should venture ? Are there any avenues better than others ?

I don't have much time obviously to go into details but I would like to say a quick word on some theoretical options.

3. Market and economic concepts in the study of religion

Iannaccone is one of the tenors of the application of Rational Action and Market theories to religion. Religious congregations and associations are conceived as religious enterprises competing in a market of salvation goods for consumer fidelity. The profit that is sought by these purveyors of religious offer is financial as well as it is influence, visibility and power. Ideally, such enterprises are looking to extend their market share into a monopoly.

This sort of problematization of religion in market terms is the transposition to the study of religion of the economist's *putsch* led by Gary Becker in the 1970s when the simplistic models of economic theory and corresponding conception of man, *homo oeconomicus*, became increasingly used in social sciences. *Homo oeconomicus* is a fundamentally rational human being, unrooted from tradition and socio-historical determinations, autonomous, essentially egotistic or at least impervious to others for analytical needs, seeking to maximize his own utility, i.e. his own individual happiness and well-being usually conceived in quantitative economic terms, i.e. money and material comfort. HO is involved in society (as in everything : associations, churches, love, friendship) in as much as it serves his own interests. Society is then nothing more than a collection of individuals, according to Margaret Thatcher's phrase of neo-liberal inspiration.

This model is unsatisfactory for many reasons, as it leaves emotions, impulses, unconscious determinations (such as those linked to family and social status) and symbolic effectiveness aside. This model also reduces human behaviour and institutional logics to the pursuit of interest (be it in economic or political terms) and capital (be it symbolic). Humanitarianism, empathy and other forms of disinterest which we find abundantly in religions are reduced to being particular (and peculiar) forms of self-interest, and are inserted into a utilitarian arithmetic of profits and losses. Social reality, made up of individual motivations and desires, seems to me more complex. This model considers individuals from the sole point of view of demand and religious institutions from the point of view of offer. Religion is furthermore only apprehended from the institutional side : there is no religiosity outside of constituted religious institutions and assignable associations. Since religion is increasingly spiritualized and shy of institutional attachment, this is

problematic.

The list of shortcomings goes on and on. The most troublesome to me though is that this model implicitly agrees to the economists' claim on the supposed naturality of the market. The economic law of supply and demand is telescoped into a universal and transhistoric law of Nature. Yet, this is not only far from being attested but simply radically rebutted by whole landmasses of ethnological, anthropological, sociological and even economical material. Let us simply refer here to Mauss' *Essay on Gift* and Karl Polanyi's *Great Transformation* [10] : the market is a modern institution unseparable from the coextensive rise of the Nation-State, and *homo oeconomicus*, as Mauss wrote, is not behind us, as a universal truth on human nature, but before us, as a modern conception with self-realizing qualities. The market is supposed to be value-free and self-instituted, arguments against which it is once again possible to drum up serious opposition. If there is such a thing as a market regulation of religion, it is certainly not free of normativity. Rather, such a regulation is historically instituted and promotes certain values such as performance, progress, individualism and expressivism.

I have pinpointed the Iannaccone model, but these critiques hold also for other economic analogies with respect to religion, such as the increasingly popular reference to Bourdieu and Weber's works through the use of 'salvation goods' terminology. Although some of these works are undoubtedly interesting, this approach in general does not avoid reducing religion to utilitarianism or economics. The implicit claim is that religion can be universally be conceived in terms of offer and demand of salvation goods, mistaking what is a decent sociological *description* of contemporary phenomena for an explanation and an anthropologically valid analytic for religion in general. Ethnographers and anthropologists seldom get inspired by these models on their turf.

The same is true for marketing terms which see religious organizations competing for consumer niches. The same is true again for *à la carte* religion, in which religious consumers are imagined freely choosing what fills their spiritual need of the moment. While being immediately evocative, this conception is misleading. As Linda Woodhead and Paul Heelas have shown, people today do not mix and match anything with everything. For instance, the congregational domain and holistic spirituality are two symbolic universes which are quite radically heterogeneous. Furthermore, the variety of religious goods on the shelf are far from being infinite. Contemporary religiosity is far more coherent and systematic than most research is seemingly ready to admit. To stretch the metaphor : who decides what products are on the shelf ? Who makes them and why ? Is the motivation for launching new religious products such as new yoga centers really thinkable in economic terms ? Why are certain products selling well and not others ? Who decides how wide and high the shelves are ? Are religious consumers really choosing rationally or impulsively or yet again according to their individual preferences ? Truly, *à la carte* religion is more blinding than helpful in seizing contemporary phenomena and ultimately serves to legitimize the economic ideology which has today become self-evident right through social sciences.

4. Another way of thinking religion and the market

There might be a better way of thinking about religion today with respect to the growing influence of the market and the globally increasing influence of economics on societies and culture. Perhaps we should let ourselves be inspired by sociology's founding fathers in these matters. If Weber and Durkheim came onto the problem of religion in quite opposite manners, both did so while trying to seize the specificity of Modernity and Western societies. Thus their sociology of religion was at the crux of their respective efforts for a general sociology. And so why not inspire ourselves of this methodology today and re-inscribe the study of religion within a general sociology of contemporary societies.

This is what Raymond Lemieux has been suggesting since the early nineties and what Hervieu-Léger has also suggested in the aforementioned article. This is also the perspective put forth by Linda Woodhead and Paul Heelas, as well as by myself and by Jean-Philippe. Apart from Lemieux who goes at it from a slightly different angle, a common reference stands out : the works of Charles Taylor on the subjective turn of Modernity and the rise of the

culture of authenticity and expressivity. Thus the spiritual and highly emotional religiosity that is the norm today is not the product of some kind of postmodernity. It results from a long process through which moderns have learned to believe that their presence in this world is not the fact of some natural law or divine will. Rather, they have come to believe in their interiority and that the object of life is the pursuit of happiness and well-being. As the divine moved to increasing degrees of transcendence with respect to this mortal plane in Protestant theology, the inner depths of human subjects appeared in all of their appealing yet discomfiting strangeness.

As Charles Taylor writes, the post-War period, with the coming of age of the baby boom generation and the advent of consumer capitalism, constitutes the shifting moment when this deep modern process of subjectivization came to embrace all of culture [11], what others such as François Ricard have coined the advent of cultural Modernity [12]. This is why we can qualify our Western societies consumer societies. This, may I emphasize, I mean as a strong statement, meaning that in durkheimian terms that contemporary societies social morphology and physiology are shaped by consumption capitalism (i.e. post-industrial) in its very functional structures and substance. Consumption is therefore more than simply purchase and waste, void of meaning and symbolic dimensions. It is far more than the post-War version of Weber's iron cage or Baudrillard's reign of simulacrum. Consumption, as far as it is a human activity, is to various degrees symbolic. Consumer society is consequently recast as a synthetic notion referring to a specific type of rapport with others, the world, nature, community, politics, one's self and ultimately meaning.

This perspective goes a lot deeper than descriptions of religion today in market terms. The advent of consumer society has allowed for the idea of choice to become a manifestation of individuality, i.e. a process of subjectivization. The idea of choice is not the specific action of a hypothetical more or less rational and utilitarian *homo oeconomicus*. It potentially involves profound signification by actualizing social determinations and imperatives in individual and singular quests for meaning, happiness, liberty and recognition. This is precisely what Charles Taylor has called the culture of expression (of *mise en scène* of the self) and authenticity (that this self be unique and realizing its potential). For Taylor, the phenomena making post-War consumerism are un-dissociable of its underlying quest for the Self and its realization. This amounts to a massification of the expressive Romantic conception of life which holds that each individual has his own personal way of realizing his own humanity and that it is important that everyone should discover his own path rather than conform to pre-existing models imposed from the exterior by society and its institutions. This is what Linda Woodhead and Paul Heelas have called the turn away from objective roles, duties, obligations, towards life lived by reference to one's own subjective experience, the turn from life-as towards subjective life. In other words, this model of self-realization, which presents itself as an anti-model, is the new model, with normative and socially integrative functions.

5. Raymond Lemieux's *itinéraires de sens*

Here we can come back to Raymond Lemieux's pioneer work based on his study of contemporary beliefs. Lemieux noted that the subjective turn required personal narratives constructing meaning from experience. Only the present, i.e. the moment of experience, has any true consistence. The past amounts to the value given to prior experience and to the progress accomplished, the road travelled. The future is the horizon, source of unknown and anguish but also promise of open possibilities. The future is the promise of further realization and the guarantee that present beliefs will be challenged. Life itself then seems to prove that one *has* to move on, change, transform and progress. Experience itself, then, becomes that through which a subject is revealed to himself. And thus this culture continually seeks new experiences, from scrutinizing the ordinary (as in reality television) to the increasingly *extreme*.

This, we may stress, is a radically different way of producing meaning than was the case before. Thus many people choosing alternative therapeutics say that they did so out of dissatisfaction with modern medicine which did not recognize their illness or symptom. In other words, that they weren't recognized in their singularity, that they re authority over themselves had been unrecognized. On the other hand, we often hear that The holistic therapist listened to what I had to say, took me seriously. The authority has shifted from the professional to the person. Instead of giving full credence to the doctor who said you had nothing, one's own feeling is more authoritative, and people will seek to find a professional who will not direct but guide while starting with what is felt and believed by the

person.

Lemieux has noted how utility was by far the criteria most often used to justify given beliefs. Utility not in the sense of instrumentalisation but rather as measure of effectiveness within one's life, i.e. one's well-being, one's life projects, one's success, etc. Utility is thus symbolic effectiveness within consumer culture, to borrow terminology from Lévi-Strauss. A belief is good not because it is the truth but because it makes sense, because it works. As one holistic practitioner told me, quoting an Hawaiian aboriginal saying: efficiency is the measure of truth.

The coherence of belief systems is therefore not to be found in the internal logic of its elements or the purity and authenticity of its sources, but rather in their function within personal narratives. Lemieux has suggested that contemporary religiosity is characterized by what he called *itinéraires de sens*, which might be translated literally and provisionally as meaning itineraries. Unlike planned out trajectories or random constructions, meaning itineraries are structured appropriations which answer the need to fabricate one's life story, i.e. one's identity. Meaning itineraries have the following characteristics:

They don't have any defined destination. Each moment in life commands a new interpretation of the road travelled to date, with the accompanying knowledge that further interpretations will be necessary, even welcomed (to the extent that they attest to progress made).

The life itinerary is conceived as evolving towards a better conscience, a deeper understanding of oneself and a superior morality. It is the individualization of the Modern myth of Progress. Such effectiveness in realizing progress is the criteria which presides over new interpretations, rather than fidelity to tradition or orthodoxy.

New interpretations are generally linked to experiences of rupture, be they positive, such as intense, transformative experiences, or negative, such as loss or failure. These narratives are symbolic works which function to totalize individual lives and make continuity out of discontinuity, disparateness and contradiction.

Individual itineraries of meaning are not the fact of isolated monads, they are the means through which identity is defined and lived. They are means of inscribing subjectivities within the more general narrative of culture. They are both appropriations of culture and construction of social reality.

Let me recall that Lemieux thought of this notion of itinerary of meaning as being a general characteristic of religiosity in our culture and not only a scheme applying to New Age adepts and those involved in holistic or neo-tribal phenomena, for an interesting point of methodology in the early 1990s enquiry was that it aimed every age group and the man on the street as much as those involved in congregational or other religiously toned activities. This way of problematizing religion is helpful since it enables us to seize how the subjective turn does not produce atomized individuals but rather individuals summoned to construct a place within society through a process of differentiation which requires constant rapports to otherness, be it through intimate relations, affinity groups or the mediasphere (in which we need to include highly invested phenomena such as Facebook and YouTube). Identity is always a product of recognition, and the more our societies value change as it is structured by the imperatives of the market, the more the need for recognition becomes incessant and reiterated, sometimes to the point of hysteria (I am not attaching any value judgement to this term), especially in moments of identity transformation such as the passage to adulthood. It is only through exchange that individual beliefs and significations are stabilized. Mutual recognition produces a minima of certainty, hence the importance of phenomena such as effervescent gatherings, virtual communities and hyper-mediatization which are all vectors for social recognition. The more the individualization, the more the need is felt for community niches and group experiences.

Hervieu-Léger has noted that a central motif of contemporary religiosity is how religious belief is an operator of individual accomplishment. Religious belief, as we just saw, is secondary to experience and practice, and are structured in personal narratives which we can call meaning itineraries. This approach allows us to see that the aforementioned characteristics of contemporary religiosity form an interdependent system.

This is a significantly different way of casting the rapports linking religion and the market than the approaches

mentioned above. The process of mutual validation of identities and beliefs allows for better understanding of how pluralism and individualism have tended towards homogenization while avoiding utilitarian and economical reductionism. This, incidentally, is what I believe Charles Taylor was getting at in his recent book on *The Varieties of Religious Experiences Today* when he turns to fashion to illustrate how the social sphere has become a place for mutual exposure in this culture of authenticity and expressivity.

Conclusion

To try and conclude my presentation, this is obviously not the only way to think religion in consumer society. It is obvious that the situation described is valid only for what we call abusively Western countries. And even then we would certainly have to nuance this portrait were we to look at rural Portugal, Greece or even in some respects Italy. I have no idea how this translates to Japan. As for Africa and most of Asia, the subjective turn hypothesis is certainly unapplicable at least as an accomplished phenomenon.

When proposing this panel on religion and consumer society, I was expecting paper proposals on the Western socio-geographical area. I was surprised to find that it found echoes with researchers working on non-Western cultural areas such as Arab countries, Haïti, South America and even Africa. Unfortunately, not all of these papers will be presented here, but it hints at another dimension that can be addressed in this panel : the impact of the market in cultural areas where we might not expect it Haïti for example. The question therefore is : is globalization or the spread of consumption and/or market logics over the planet having a similar impact on religion (meaning religious institutions but also religion as a social phenomenon) ? Is there some kind of globalization of certain logics which amounted to the subjective turn in Western countries ? What, then, really is the market, and what can we shout back at the economists about it ?

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[1] Le sociologue des religions québécois Raymond Lemieux a été l'un des tout premiers à rapporter les mutations du religieux à celles survenues plus globalement dans la culture des suites de l'avènement de la société de consommation et de la croissance de l'influence du marché dans nos sociétés. Cette présentation lui est dédiée et constitue une introduction de certaines de ses perspectives dans l'étude du religieux contemporain à un public anglophone. Une bibliographie partielle de ses travaux figure à la fin de ce texte.

[2] F. Gauthier et J.-Ph. Perreault (éd.), 2008, *Jeunes et religion au Québec*, Québec, Presses de l'Université Laval.

[3] The reception of this work is noteworthy, as the question mark has often been neglected, thus attesting to the secularization theory implied in the title, as was still the case in some presentations at the ISSR 2009 Conference. Lambert, Yves et Guy Michelat (éd.), 1992, *Crépuscule des religions chez les jeunes en France ? Jeunes et religions en France*, Paris, L'Harmattan.

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