

*The Social Turmoil of
the Twenty-First Century*

CRISES OF IDENTITY, ACCOUNTABILITY,
AND SECURITY

VISITING THE OLD CAMPUS OF Shanghai University in the heart of the city is like taking a trip back in time. The red-brick buildings are neatly arranged around a central campus lawn, with wide walkways lined by old trees. The buildings' turreted walls remind one of what the student ambience must have been like in the 1920s, when the university was founded as a rival to the missionary colleges that were sprouting up throughout China. The Baptist missionary organization had created a college with a similar name, the University of Shanghai (now merged with East China Normal University), which was meant to be a Christian witness to the Chinese people. It was part of the great missionary movement that swept out from America and Europe and encircled the world, with the dream of making a distinctly Western form of Protestant religiosity the global norm.

That did not happen, of course, though there were a few converts, and a fledgling Christian community blossomed. But the movement spurred educated Chinese into creating their own independent universities, and the old Yanchang campus of Shanghai University is a monument to an earlier generation's dream of modern education. Later it was socialist education that dominated the curriculum, as China became part of the global socialist milieu. Today, however, the campus is surrounded by symbols of yet another globalization, a new economic one. The sleepy red-brick campus is dwarfed by a circle of high-rise buildings and brightly lit shops. The stores announce their wares for an upscale, globalized clientele: scarves from Hermès, handbags from Louis Vuitton, and watches from Rolex.

These days very few students actually study at the old campus of Shanghai University. The small campus has been abandoned for a new location ten kilometers north, the bustling Baoshan campus, itself something of a small

city of high-rise buildings of modern architectural design. Over forty thousand students are enrolled, a fourth of them in graduate and professional schools. Shanghai University has become a part of contemporary China, and that means being open to new ideas and commercial possibilities from around the world. It is also increasingly attracting international students, including many from the United States and Europe.

In response, the university has created new graduate programs in English, international business, and international finance. It has also created a global studies graduate program and a center for the study of global affairs. Shanghai University was the first in the country to embrace global studies as a field; others have more recently been established in Beijing and Shantou.

What has come to Shanghai University is not only global studies but also globalization as a phenomenon, as it has to the rest of Shanghai. The municipality has, after a few decades of astounding growth, become one of the world's great global cities. If you stand at the bund—the levee at the edge of the Huangpu River that lines the downtown area of old Shanghai—and look behind you, you will see a wall of old British buildings that were once the most important in the city. Twenty years ago, that was the heart of Shanghai, and when you looked across the river, you saw a few buildings, but mostly rice paddies and empty fields. Today the Pudong region across the river has one of the world's most impressive skylines. At the center of the forest of skyscrapers is the 121-story Shanghai Tower, reaching, it seems, halfway to the moon; it is the tallest in China and the second tallest building in the world, after the Burj Khalifa in Dubai.

The building boom in Shanghai is entirely due to the globalization of production and trade that has made China one of the world's largest producers of consumer goods. The boom began when globalization began, in the last decade of the twentieth century. This was also, according to the *New York Times* columnist Tom Friedman, the true beginning of the twenty-first century.¹ The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 marked the end of the Cold War and the beginning of the global era. Even before that date, however, the world had begun to change in profound ways. The softening of the divide between the Communist and non-Communist worlds was only part of the transformation. A more significant dimension was the rise of new transnational forms of economic production, distribution, and financing, coupled with the instant communications of the internet and massive demographic shifts made possible through the easing of travel restrictions and the rise of inexpensive air travel.

On the one hand, the era of globalization provided new opportunities. Take cell phones, for instance. Twenty years ago in rural China, telephones were virtually nonexistent. Today even the remote pedicab driver has one in his hand. The world is at his fingertips. Computer technology has made low-cost, worldwide communication available to nearly everyone. Relatively inexpensive goods produced through global production networks are sold everywhere to a grateful consumer public—who try to ignore the harsh realities of workplaces such as the Foxconn factory in Shenzhen, China, and the troublesome labor conditions around the world. Accompanying this global consumerism, a whole new generation of global youth emerged who shared a common popular culture of music, videos, and fashion. Rural teenagers in China's Xinjiang Province insist on wearing Nike shoes. Globalization has, in a sense, pulled the world more closely together.

On the other hand, there are new problems. The ease of mobility and transportation, coupled with the erosion of the power of the nation-state, undercuts national identities. The same Nike-wearing teenager in Xinjiang might very well be participating in protests against what he and his friends regard as the Chinese central government's incursion into traditional Uighur Muslim culture. At the same time, the emergence of transnational economic and organizational networks that are outside the control of national governments create new challenges of accountability. The fear of many Chinese government officials about the Muslim protests in western China is that they might be connected with the strident jihadi ideology of Muslim extremism that has troubled other parts of the world in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. The spread of radical ideologies associated with terrorism and the potential for environmental and other disasters on a global scale have produced new concerns about public security.

In the global era, then, these have been the critical issues: identity, accountability, and security. Each of these touches on religion in some way, and for each of them, religious ideas and communities have provided solutions. In the remainder of this chapter we will look at the religious aspects of each of these global issues in turn.

SEARCHING FOR SOCIAL IDENTITIES

One of the participants in both our Delhi and Santa Barbara seminars is a prominent Indian scholar who studied at Berkeley before establishing his

career at Delhi University. He speaks fluent Chinese and for years has done research in a region in China that is part of a larger project on Chinese-Indian comparative development. So he travels frequently to China. But he also travels frequently to the United States, since both of his children came to America for higher education and have settled into comfortable careers in California and New Jersey. Their families are well established here, and their children are being raised as American kids.

So we asked him, “With what country do you identify—India, China, or the United States?” “I am Indian, of course,” he said, “and proudly so. But my heart is also in China and the United States.” And then he added, “I guess I am becoming a citizen of the world.”

His story has become a common one. The increasing mobility of people and the ease of global communications make it possible for everyone to live everywhere, while maintaining contacts with family and friends who may be living everywhere else. As a result, huge new multicultural populations are emerging around the world that have mixed identities—grounded in their new homelands but in touch with traditional regions that are often beyond the seas.

Take Southern California as an example. The greater Los Angeles area is home to over 600,000 residents of Filipino ancestry. This makes it the largest Filipino city outside of the Philippines, and the seventh largest Filipino city in the world. In addition, over 500,000 Persians live in the greater Los Angeles area, a number equal to the twelfth largest city in Iran. And over 3.5 million people in the greater Los Angeles area are of Mexican ancestry, which makes Los Angeles the second largest Mexican city in the world. Also living in Southern California are massive numbers of Chinese, Vietnamese, Indonesian, Thai, Asian Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, Sri Lankans, Africans, newly migrated Europeans, and members of various Middle East, Caribbean, and South American communities. Los Angeles is truly a global city, and it is a microcosm of the world’s diverse nationalities.

People who pull up stakes and move to Los Angeles and other parts of the world are often divided in their loyalties between their new homes and their familiar ground. But even people who do not move are affected by globalization’s assault on traditional national identities. The effect of globalization on Thai nationalism was observed by one of our seminar participants, Surichai Wun’gao, director of the Center for Peace and Conflict Studies and professor of sociology at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, Thailand, who remarked that even rural Thai people are challenged by globalization and

that people around the world are no longer “trapped by national identities,” because increasingly they participate in global economic production and distribution chains.²

But it is not just economic change that is undermining traditional national allegiances. The mass media of videos, television, and movies, along with social networks provided by the internet, also challenge the usual lines of national communication. The political scientist Karl Deutsch once observed that national cohesion is built upon the national integration of communications networks.³ In an age of global communication, therefore, these nationalist ties are broken and, in some cases, all but obliterated. As distinguished Indian political scientist J. P. S. Uberoi noted in our Delhi seminar, today one’s social identity is fluid, determined in part by changing global circumstances.⁴

National identities persist, of course. This is especially so during international sporting events, such as the Olympics or the World Cup, when nationalistic loyalties merge with the fanaticism of sports enthusiasm. But nationalism can also emerge at other times, in surprising moments. Russia, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, went through a new burst of nationalism, one in which the Russian Orthodox Church played a significant role. Indonesia, after the departure of the Dutch colonial rule, seemed destined for disintegration, since it was a somewhat artificially created unity of over seventeen thousand islands. At present, the sense of national unity in Indonesia seems to be enjoying a new popularity, fueled in part by religious leaders seeking to promote their positions through nationalist politics.

Yet it is also true that the global era is a time when the notion of the nation-state is under stress. This is an occasion for other social identities to come to the fore, often with political force. After the U.S.-led military invasion toppled the secular regime of Saddam Hussein in Iraq in 2003, the strident new politics of the country crystallized around religious and ethnic identities—Sunni Arabs, Shi’a Arabs, and Kurds—and the insurgency led by the movement called the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria in 2014 was determined to tear the nation apart. When one of the authors of this book interviewed Iraqi leaders in Baghdad in 2004, the affiliates of religious parties said that they believed in a united Iraq, but they wanted to make sure that their community was in what they regarded its proper leadership role within the new society. The leaders of each of the communities magnified their own group’s importance in Iraq’s new political configuration, leading to internal squabbles and worse—violent ethnic strife that came to a head in the 2014

conflict. In the aftermath of the secular nationalism of Saddam Hussein's Ba'ath Party, each group wanted a religious and ethnic nationalism that would reflect its own sense of communal identity.

The quest for social identity in an era of globalization has led to a paradox with regard to nationalism and the idea of national community. On the one hand, the idea of a single national identity is weakened in an era of globalization in which competing social identities are easily available through, for instance, communications media. China has been notorious in its attempts to control its citizens' access to media from outside. On the other hand, the challenges of globalization can foster a sense of national pride over what is distinctive about a national culture in the homogeneity of global society. This nationalism can flourish when it is fused with the dominant religious identity of the nation.

An example of this revival of nationalism in religious form is found in several countries in South Asia. Pakistan, for instance, was intended to be a secular state. Muhammad Ali Jinnah, a founder of the nation, was a refined lawyer who had lived in London and became leader of the Muslim League, the political voice of the Muslim community in South Asia during the last years of British colonial rule. He was a quintessential cosmopolitan, who had no desire to create a state based solely on religious ideas. But Jinnah was also determined to protect the Muslim community against what he perceived to be a hidden pro-Hindu agenda in the politics of the nominally secular Congress Party in India. What he initially wanted was a kind of federal system in India that would allow Muslim-dominated regions to have more autonomy in a unified India. What he got when the British withdrew was a whole new nation based on a shared religious identity and political leaders who used religion as a way of shoring up their own nationalist credentials.

Perhaps no political leader in Pakistan did more to pander to conservative Muslim support than Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq, who led the country from 1977 to 1988, after instituting a coup against his mentor, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. Zia established shari'ah law, outlawed marginal and heretical religious movements, and subsidized the mujahideen against the Soviet-backed government in neighboring Afghanistan. One legacy of the Zia regime has been the covert Pakistani support for extremist Muslim political movements in Afghanistan. First the mujahideen and then the Taliban have been quietly supported by elements of the Pakistan military and intelligence services. The ideas of the Taliban are related to the Deoband Muslim reform movement in South Asia, which attempted to purify and standardize the teachings and

practices of Islam. These reforms were interpreted by groups such as the Taliban in a rigid and uncompromising way. The movement was not only an agent of religious standardization but also became the political wing of the Pashtun tribal community, large numbers of which were within Pakistan's own western borders. Mollifying the Taliban, then, was a way of currying favor with the critical Pashtun community.

At the same time that Pakistan was developing a more strident Muslim political posture, religious nationalism was also surfacing within India. In some ways, the emergence of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the 1990s was the reemergence of a religious strand of Indian nationalism that extended back to the early part of the twentieth century. One of the early voices for Indian independence came from Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, president of the Hindu Mahasabha and advocated a concept of Hindu culture that he called *Hindutva* as being the basis of Indian national identity. He once entered into a debate with Mohandas Gandhi over the efficacy of using violence in the struggle for India's freedom.⁵ Despite Savarkar's efforts, Hindu nationalism was not a major element in India's nationalist movement. After independence, several political parties took up the banner of support for Hindu causes, notably the Jan Sangh, but it was not until the 1990s that a new movement of religious consciousness led to spectacular political successes for the BJP.

The BJP was officially launched in 1980 out of the remnants of previous Hindu-oriented political parties.⁶ It did not gain strength, however, until after the 1992 attack on a Muslim mosque in the town of Ayodhya. Religious activists associated with two sectarian Hindu organizations, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, championed the destruction of the mosque in order to liberate the grounds on which an ancient Hindu temple was said to have been located, a temple that marked the holy site of the god Ram's birth. Though archeologists questioned the authenticity of the assertion, and many questioned whether a spiritual entity such as a god actually had a birthplace, the site became a matter of religious contention, fueled by political rhetoric. It was the secular Congress Party that allowed the mosque to continue to exist on that spot. Though the Indian government said that it was protecting the site in the name of secularism—which in India meant the equal protection of all religious communities—the BJP political response was that the Congress Party's position was "pseudo-secularism" that, in fact, masked the privileging of minority communities such as Muslims over the interests of Hindus. (Even after the creation of

Pakistan, Muslims formed 15 percent of the population of India, enough to constitute a significant electoral base of votes, and a reason for politicians to curry Muslims' favor.)

On December 6, 1992, a mob of over a hundred thousand angry Hindus convened in Ayodhya, attacked the mosque with improvised tools, and rendered it to dust. The BJP capitalized on this sentiment of Hindu nationalism and, employing Savarkar's concept of Hindutva as the bedrock of Hindu nationalist culture, launched a series of political campaigns. The elections brought the BJP into positions of power in the legislatures of several states, and from 1998 to 2004 they were the dominant party in a national coalition that ruled India, and the BJP leader, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, became India's prime minister. In the May 2014 elections, the BJP again vaulted into power, this time without the need of a coalition to form the government, and the charismatic and controversial Narendra Modi—who had been accused of inflaming the anti-Muslim riots when he was chief minister of Gujarat in 2002—became prime minister. Modi was a member of the Hindu nationalist movement the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, and if one considers his party, the BJP, to be the political arm of Hindu nationalism in India, it quite likely has had the largest following of any religious nationalist movement in world history and has been one of the most politically successful. In the 2014 elections, over 170 million Indians voted for the BJP and, although it received only 31 percent of the total vote in a fragmented political race, it was able to capture the majority of seats in parliament.

According to one of the participants in our Delhi seminar, I. A. Rehman, who was a founding member of the Pakistan-India Human Rights Commission, the religionization of politics in India and Pakistan has had international repercussions and has poisoned the relations between the two countries. According to Rehman, "Pakistanis do not look on the Indians as Indian citizens of a neighboring country, they look upon the Indians as Hindus, [with] whom they have had long fights." Then he added, with a touch of sadness in his voice, "The whole concept of togetherness, and the syncretic tradition, which used to be the hallmark of the subcontinent in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries, was destroyed by the communalization of politics."⁷

Hence religion can become a problematic aspect of national identity. It can challenge secular nationalism by providing an alternate locus of identity, sometimes reviving nationalism in a troublesome religio-nationalist framework. The BJP form of religious nationalism is a mild version of even more

strident religio-political movements found elsewhere in the world, such as the reign of the mullahs in post-revolutionary Iran. When political ideologies are linked with religious beliefs, boundaries are sharpened and realigned around what people believe, rather than joint participation in improving life for a common community. When religion combines with nationality, it strengthens ties between some while marginalizing others through legislation and public opinion.

Religious nationalism can marginalize groups that do not share the faith of the dominant community. In Pakistan this is particularly a problem for the small Christian minority, many of whom come from families who were lower-caste converts early in the twentieth century. Now they are seen as remnants of that colonial period, and worse—sometimes portrayed as agents of American and European imperialism. Those exclusionary measures are also connected to larger programs of international concern. Rehman noted that Pakistan’s “strong anti-West feeling” leads many people in the country to see Christian minorities as “Western agents.”⁸ Simply by being Christian they are assumed to be cooperating with an enemy and thus are regarded as enemies themselves.

In Egypt, the Coptic Christian minority has suffered outbreaks of violence since the 1970s. Then president Anwar el-Sadat made overtures to Islamic leaders to bolster support for his administration, and nationalist fervor became wrapped in an Islamic piety that excluded Christians from the national conversation. Their identity as Copts overshadowed their identity as Egyptians. Under Hosni Mubarak, the Egyptian state embarked on a program of directly marginalizing Copts in response to a perceived danger from Christian authorities, and the Coptic communities unsurprisingly played a role in the removal of Mubarak and then of Mohammed Morsi from power in 2013. Since then, attacks on Coptic Christian homes and churches have continued, serving to further alienate the community from the state. A country that defines itself in religious terms sometimes prevents the full participation of citizens that profess a minority faith, leaving them unsure of the extent to which they can or should claim a national identity.

In the Egyptian case, however, Amr Abdulrahman, a doctoral researcher at Essex University, sees reason for hope. Since the 2011 Arab Spring uprising, there have been new opportunities for Coptic youth to participate in politics. Their independent political aspirations, however, have created tensions between young lay Christians and the Coptic Church authorities in Egypt. The elders think that the Coptic community is stronger if it unites behind its

own leadership and speaks with one voice, but young Copts often articulate their own concerns. According to Abdulrahman, “even the political movements that tend to define themselves as Copts . . . are not following the church.”⁹ Though the situation in Egypt is volatile and frequently changing, the renewed focus on national identity that resulted from the Arab Spring may offer a new space for citizens of all religions to have a voice in the public square. In the global era, identity—in its personal, social, political, ethnic, and religious dimensions—is a critical issue.

WONDERING WHO IS IN CHARGE

The second global issue is the problem of authority—knowing who is in charge. In the nation-state model of the twentieth century, U.S. president Harry S. Truman famously claimed his national authority: “the buck stops here.” But in a global era, it’s less clear where the buck stops. After World War II, it appeared as if the globe had become neatly carved into nation-state territories, each with its distinct area of control. Governments of each nation supposedly controlled that nation’s economy and regulated commerce and communications within its sphere. We use the word, *supposedly*, since there were already networks of economic dependency, and that influence meant that many undeveloped nations were not as independent as they might have liked to be. Still, the general impression was that each state ran its own affairs.

In the global era, it is hard to say where the affairs of one nation end and the sphere of another begins. Manufacturing is a good example. Take the iconic figure of a Barbie doll: the plastic doll was designed in the United States and originally made in Hong Kong—later manufactured in China and elsewhere. Parts of the fabric for the costumes, the hair, and other items come from Malaysia, the Philippines, and myriad places around the world. The doll is sold in 150 countries and designed to fit fifty different ethnicities and nationalities. It is no longer clear whom Barbie represents or which country is solely responsible for its manufacture. Who is in charge of the Barbie doll?

The economics of particular countries have become interwoven with others through trade and the supply chains of global manufacturing, and that interdependency extends into other spheres, like food exports, communications, environmental concerns, and national securities. No nation is an economic island. The collapse of the Malaysian economy in 1997–1998 had a

ripple effect throughout Southeast Asia, and around the world, economies from Russia to Iceland were affected. The affairs of one country have consequences that reach far beyond their borders, and naturally, people in those affected foreign countries want a voice in the decisions. The rise of international and transnational coordinating entities such as the World Trade Organization are attempts to provide at least the semblance of order in the new global economy. The post-World War II nation-state system has struggled to adjust to this new state of affairs, which, in turn, has left many citizens unsure as to who is in charge. To many, the global economy looks as out of control as the old Wild West.

For most of history, you could discover who was in charge simply by seeing who was using force to maintain control. During the great colonial era, European powers held sway in many parts of Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East. Their military might predominated. Since the middle of the twentieth century—the international period of world history—each nation was presumed to control its own affairs and had its own military force. France was in charge of France; Japan was in charge of Japan. Standing armies maintained control, and in some cases—especially in former colonial countries that had a weak internal political infrastructure, such as Egypt and Iraq—the rule was imposed harshly by military dictators.

In the global era of the twenty-first century, this international system of separate nation-states is under stress, not only because of the forces of globalization that have made economics, cultures, and communication systems intertwined, but also because of rising disaffection within those countries over the secular nationalist regimes that control them. Military regimes have been divided within themselves, and force has more often been used against rival political groups than it has against alien forces from the outside. The 1978 Islamic revolution in Iran is an example of such internal revolts—one where secular nationalism was the target. The success of the Ayatollah Khomeini's Islamic Revolution hit the secular world by surprise, and the reign of the Iranian mullahs was widely predicted to fail in a matter of months. But it endured—and turned out to be the harbinger of many other religio-political movements to come.

By the second decade of the twenty-first century, many people around the world, especially in Africa and the Middle East, had risen against the totalitarian governments that wielded unchecked violence against their populaces. The Arab Spring turned out to be a Global Spring. Anti-authoritarian movements around the world were motivated by a variety of factors to seek a voice

in public affairs, and several of these movements involved contests over political control that resulted in bloody civil wars. Increasingly, the standing armies of nation-states have been used not to defend a country against outside aggressors but to quell insurrections within their own borders and shore up shaky regimes.

In places like Syria, the bloodshed continued for years, while in other places, like Libya, the result was the toppling of a dictatorship and the election of a General National Congress to govern the newly liberated nation. Troubles continued in Libya, however, in the form of armed groups prohibiting any officials who served under the old administration from holding a position in the new. A similar narrow-mindedness steered the Shi'a government of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki in Iraq in disastrous directions and led to his downfall in 2014. The question of leadership—and who can legitimately hold an office—is being negotiated in law courts and in the courts of public opinion in many of these postrevolutionary countries. In these negotiations, religious associations can give support to or detract from the legitimacy of governments, and leaders can be embraced by the new administrations or set up their own poles of authority.

The push for democracy itself can be reinforced or thwarted by religious institutions. In some cases, opposing sides find themselves benefiting from the advances of their opponent. Such a dynamic is evident in Indonesia, according to Mark Woodward, a participant in the South and Southeast Asia seminar, who is a leading authority on Indonesian religion and politics and who holds teaching posts at Arizona State University as well as at Gadjah Mada University and Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University, both in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Woodward explained that both liberal and conservative visions of Islam have gained a voice through the challenge to Indonesia's traditional political and social leadership. Woodward observed that the rise of new Islamic politics in Indonesia was directly related to the political challenges, and “it was the political transition that really opened everything in Indonesia.” As a result, according to Woodward, “very conservative types of Islam came to occupy a place in public life where that had not been possible for the previous thirty years.”¹⁰ The democratic surge allowed opposing interpretations of Islam to spread, and the state was no longer seen to have the power to legitimate political or religious ideologies.

In Kenya, some of the same political dynamics occurred as in Indonesia, but the role of religious groups was different. In the African nation, as authoritarian leadership began to weaken in the late twentieth century, both

Islamic and Christian organizations supported efforts toward greater democracy, mobilizing their respective constituencies around the promise of a future not decided by the traditional leadership. Whereas in Indonesia, the flourishing democracy led to the diversity of religious voices in politics, in Kenya, both Islamic and Christian religious institutions took a step back from engaging in politics, according to a seminar participant, Robert Dowd, founding director of Notre Dame's Ford Family Program, which is actively involved in East Africa. Dowd reported on a discussion with a Kenyan Catholic bishop, who told him that once political parties were firmly established, the church could leave the public arena. According to the Kenyan bishop, "We don't need to be as involved as we once were," since it was now "the role of political parties to mobilize people."¹¹ The religious authorities were willing to step in to support wide political change but had less interest in supplanting the political government themselves. Their efforts were aimed at correcting the system, not becoming the system. But elsewhere in Africa, Christian activists have ignored the advice of the official church and mounted their own religious political struggles.

In the political instability that rose at the end of the twentieth century, with the dawn of the global era, secular leaders have recruited religious ideologies and leaders to their side, hoping that the legitimacy of religion would shore up their flagging power. In Egypt, for example, secular leaders have tried, and sometimes failed, in trying to gain religious support. Both Gamal Abdel Nasser and Anwar el-Sadat sought to gain favor with the influential Muslim Brotherhood in the twentieth century, a group that is still in a turbulent relationship with the Egyptian state, and then turned against it. Assassinations ensued on both sides, and a competition for power emerged that could be seen to be persisting even in the 2012 election of Mohammed Morsi and his subsequent removal from power. Egypt provides lurid proof that trying to please everyone can result in being seen as a traitor to both sides.

As the cracks began to show in the ability of the nation-state to provide solutions for the issues of the global era, new voices began to emerge from those spaces. By and large, those voices were based on a common value of individual human dignity. They carried a passion for democracy, though sometimes the tone of their critiques verged on anarchy. Computer hacking undertaken by the secretive movement Anonymous has been carried out with a pretension of citizen power. The revelation of secret U.S. government documents in 2013 by a government employee, Edward Snowden, was cheered

by many around the world not only because he embarrassed Washington leaders but also because he showed the power of individuals to counter the most powerful agencies in the world. The same new communications technologies that enabled regimes to control information could be used to expose surveillance activities and share them around the world. The newly acquired ability for individuals and groups to effect change has been welcomed by most people, though it is often accompanied by a general distrust of institutional authorities.

Anarchy has been at the edge of many social movements in history, of course, and is not unique to the current situation. Most of the movements that captured the world's imagination in the beginning of the twenty-first century contained a more or less vocal contingent that sought the utter destruction of traditional power structures. Some of these groups formed around a kind of identity that might seem to have nothing to do with politics, such as soccer or music enthusiasm. During the revolutionary protests in Egypt following Arab Spring, bands of soccer fans played a critical role, helping to create an antiauthoritarian momentum without advocating a specific form of alternative government. While supporting a soccer team may seem like an unlikely basis for mobilization, it's also true that in some cultures, sports fanaticism is akin to religious zeal, and soccer teams can command as much loyalty as a state. Moreover, many soccer clubs are based at a particular locale, and groups supporting the same team have shared experiences that unite them, and they possess a common antipathy to the police and other authorities who try to control them. Like the Egyptian soccer fans, mass movements around the world often have had an antiauthoritarian character.

The Occupy Wall Street movement in the United States in 2011 to 2012 was, by nature, antiauthoritarian, since it challenged the corporate power structure of American society. Although most of the protestors who encamped in Zuccotti Park in New York's lower Manhattan financial district were peacefully protesting corporate privilege in the United States and the control of the "1 percent" over American politics, there was an anarchic strand to the protests as well. As the movement spread to most major American cities and abroad, the message of protest against government corruption and corporate control was tinged with a distrust of all established authoritarian institutions.

In Ukraine, in November 2013, protestors occupied Independence Square—popularly known simply as the *Maidan* (square)—in the heart of the capital city of Kiev. The protests precipitated a wider movement against

the regime of the Russian-supported president, Viktor Yanukovych, which led to his ouster some months later, and they ignited a conflict between the new leaders of Ukraine and Russia's Vladimir Putin. Though most of the protestors were simply concerned about keeping Ukraine within the orbit of the European Union rather than joining Russia's hegemonic network of kindred states, the black-flag bearing ultranationalists in the protest square were, as Russian commentators were quick to point out, representatives of both anarchic and fascist aspects of Europe's recent past.

This antiauthoritarian current within contemporary global politics has spawned new groups of cowboy activists, but it has also transformed more established political organizations, including those associated with religion. In Iran, the election of Hassan Rouhani as president in 2013 was credited to a populist democratic movement that had earlier been a part of the Green Revolution to oust former President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. In 2011, in the Tibetan government in exile, the Dalai Lama relinquished his political position at the head of the Tibetan community in favor of a democratically elected administration. He was said to have been inspired by democratic movements like those during Arab Spring, but it might also have been seen as an attempt to appease the Chinese government, which regarded him as a separatist political agitator. The Dalai Lama's decision divided the spiritual leadership from the political for the first time in over two hundred years in Tibet.

This antiauthoritarian and populist theme has become part of the culture of globalization and affects all institutions, including religious ones. In Protestant Christianity, new sects associated with evangelical populist movements have flourished while established liberal denominations such as Presbyterians and Methodists have dwindled in numbers. The Roman Catholic Church has also had trouble sustaining its numbers, and the popularity of Pope Francis, installed in 2013, has largely been due to the perception that he challenges the stuffy authoritarianism associated with his predecessor, Pope Benedict XVI, and much of the Catholic hierarchy in general. The American political scientist Susanne Rudolph has noted that popular religions, those she described as "from below," have been consistently surpassing those "from above."¹² The latter, exemplified by institutions like the Catholic Church, have fallen out of favor with many. Popular religions, with the ability for adherents to have a more direct role in their own salvation, have eclipsed those that dictate their paths to spiritual success for them.

Part of the reason for the decline in the popularity of the established Christian church is its traditional liaison with the political status quo. In

Latin America, for instance, the Catholic Church was aligned with colonial powers, and even after independence, church leaders were hand in glove with the new political leadership. The discussions in our seminar confirmed, however, that the church leaders no longer have the kind of influence that they had in the past. In Argentina, for instance, most citizens remember that the church was an ally and accomplice of the brutal military dictator Augusto Pinochet. In a post-Pinochet society, the church did not have the same influence to bend government policies in its direction. Despite the efforts of the former archbishop of Buenos Aires, Jorge Mario Bergoglio—the name Pope Francis enjoyed before being elevated to cardinal of Rome—Argentina ignored the church’s pleas to reject government support for birth control and equal rights for gay people, including the official recognition of same-sex marriage. Though church officials opposed these liberal actions, the majority of Argentinians—regardless of their Catholic faith—accepted them.¹³ Like religious people everywhere in the global age, Argentinian Catholics tended to be critical of authorities and to pick and choose what to accept as right.

In a global age in which it is not clear who is in charge and to whom one should be accountable, religious leadership evokes contradictory responses. On the one hand, it can be identified with the status quo and a support of the old style of secular nationalism. On the other hand, it can be seen as antiauthoritarian and revolutionary, a challenging new authority that is worthy of respect. In the Middle East, televised Muslim preachers have proclaimed a personal Islam that undercuts the authority of traditional imams, and Muslim political movements have often ignored the clerical establishment (except in Iran, where the clerical establishment has led the revolution). In the United States, one of the hallmarks of the religiosity of the extreme political right is its evangelistic anticlericalism. The authority of new religious voices seem to be compelling precisely because they challenge the old order and proclaim a new kind of personal truth.

The rebellious challenges to traditional social order in the global era have created the occasion for strident new religious voices as well. When Egypt’s dictatorial president, Hosni Mubarak, was toppled during Arab Spring, a host of religiously related political groups emerged to claim the reins of power, including the long-banned Muslim Brotherhood and the rigid, Saudi-influenced Muslim Salafists, who previously had avoided government and instead stressed the people’s responsibilities to God. According to a participant in our Cairo seminar, Saad Eddin Ibrahim, founder of the Ibn Khaldun Center for Development Studies in Cairo, when the Mubarak regime was

toppled in 2011, the time was right for this devout cadre to seek power through the state.¹⁴

As for the democratic surge symbolized by Arab Spring, it knocked down the institutions that had dominated the public square for decades, leaving room for a multitude of new voices to be heard. Many of those voices belonged to heralds of the new cosmopolitan order, people celebrating a newfound borderless terrain and welcoming the new age. Others shouted for retreat into old identities and insulation from the global processes that unsettled them. In both cases, leadership identified with religion provided a locus of accountability, a trusted authority, and a harbor of certainty in a time of storms.

WANTING TO BE SECURE

This brings us to the third concern in an era of globalization, the longing for security. At the end of World War II, when the United Nations was created, the world was partitioned into neat little definable nation-states. Each nation provided a measure of domestic security to its people, and the whole international order was thought to create a tapestry of national security for which the administrative infrastructure of the United Nations provided an arena of rationality. Differences between countries could be settled in a parliamentary fashion.

It never really worked that way, of course. The United Nations proved to be a weak transgovernmental structure, a debating club for national representatives rather than a negotiating arena. More important, there were new forces in the latter half of the twentieth century that challenged the notion of individual national sovereignty. Those forces were related to the ideology of communism, the idea that state socialism could provide the basis for a transnational global order.

The specter of global communism terrified leaders of democratic capitalist nations, and as an iron curtain descended on Europe, a Cold War chilled the world. It divided Europe and Asia, sometimes literally tearing apart nations, as a wall separated West Germany from East Germany and a demilitarized zone divided North Korea from its neighbor in the south. More important were the global divisions between peoples and the imagined fears of conquest from either side. At our Moscow seminar, we were surprised to see that old Russians remembered a time during the Cold War when they were as afraid

of Americans as we were of them. They imagined, as did we, that conquering hordes from the other side would roll over the borders, enslave their populations, and threaten their very lives.

In 1989 the Berlin wall came down, and the Cold War came to an end. Pundits such as Francis Fukuyama proclaimed “the end of history” and the termination of global ideological conflict.¹⁵ It seemed, for a time, that secular nationalism had won. And yet the last decade of the twentieth century and the first decades of the twenty-first inherited mass disillusionment with the system of sovereign, secular nation-states. National unities were challenged by divisions based on religious and tribal identities, and new ideologies of nationalism emerged based on the sectarian interests of religion. Secular nationalism was found to be empty of the kind of guiding morality that religion had long provided for states, and new processes of globalization eroded the sovereignty of the nation-state itself.

In the global era, new threats to security emerged. Religious ideologies and organizations were seen as both the cause of insecurity and the antidote for it. Religion was both frightening and calming, though not necessarily at the same time.

Religion became frightening when it became linked with political violence, and in some extreme instances, with acts of terrorism. According to statistics kept by the U.S. State Department, religion has been associated with more instances of public violence in the last thirty years than at any time in the last two hundred years. More acts of political violence are associated with religious ideologies than secular ones, such as socialism or anarchic ideas. Before 1990 the major threat to world security was thought, in the West, to be the ideology of communism. In the decades since then—especially since the 9/11 attacks on the Pentagon and the World Trade Center in 2001—the major threat to world security has been perceived as religious extremism.

Elsewhere in this book we talk about how the rise of religious extremism is related to globalization—how the weakening of the nation-state in the global era has allowed the provincial forces of ethnicity and religious community to assert themselves as the basis of social order.¹⁶ But there are other ways in which globalization has led more directly to a sense of social insecurity.

Globalization has disrupted the social fabric that helps individuals define themselves and assess their social roles. Let us assume that most people want to fit in with everyone else, follow the accepted norms, and do the right thing. In more stable societies, before the advent of the global era, all of the cultural

cues of society reinforced one another. The teachings of a Muslim imam, for example, were consistent with images on a traditional Muslim society's television channels and with statements from its public authorities.

But in a global era, we are all bombarded with competing images of how to behave and succeed, even with competing images of what is the social good. In the Middle East, one of the most popular television programs is the old American situation comedy *Friends*, which projects the casual lifestyle of a group of unmarried young urban Americans. Global communications media portray one standard of acceptable social order, traditional religious teachers advocate a quite different one, and secular authorities might demand yet another set of social and public expectations. The shifts of the twenty-first century have upended traditional structures of authority, relocating centers of power and allowing a flood of perspectives on what “the good” is. Changes like this can be frightening, separating people from ways of life with which they were at least familiar, even if they did not directly benefit from them. These shifts have unanchored lives, challenging the structures that guided peoples' actions up to the present.

People exist in communities with particular rules—rules for behavior, rules of how to act in certain social positions, rules about what one can expect from appropriate behavior. These are generally implicit, taken for granted, without being plainly enumerated. We simply learn how to exist within the networks of our society by trial and error, following the models of others and having a general understanding of what Pierre Bourdieu called the *field* of our society.¹⁷ The field is made of people and hierarchies, power and order, and we learn how to operate in the field by living in it. In our familiar world, we know instinctively who deserves respect, who wields authority in what areas, and how one can best navigate within the institutions of power. But in a time of rapid social change and competing images of public behavior, these networks are erased or shifted to a degree that they become unrecognizable.

Such a confusing state of affairs exists in many areas around the globe, with each context bringing its own particular constellation of power relations to the table. The new ideas of identity and conceptions of an expansive world that have found voice with the new global shift all shout for recognition, and the common citizen can be left in a quandary about which way to go. Ways of life that were taken for granted are smashed down, leaving people wondering what to do, whom to trust, and who they themselves are. The social and cultural changes in the twenty-first century occur at near light speed compared to similar changes in earlier world history.

In the global era, people have barely enough time to adjust to the new state of affairs before it changes again. This frantic pace has unsettled people to such an extent that they yearn for agents of constancy to provide an oasis in the shifting sands of today. Religious ideas, authorities, and communities appear as harbors in a storm. They are recognized, trusted institutions that have their bases of legitimacy in the divine order of the universe.

Still, stability can come at a cost. Religious leaders now struggle to come to terms with the very social landscape that the secular state was meant to address, namely the vast variation of identities housed within the borders of a nation. In places where nationalism looks toward religion for its identity, a sense of certainty may be provided by promoting one particular religious identity or interpretation above all others. As a result, those of another faith could be threatened with losing their standing within the national community or, worse, seeing legislation aimed at their groups specifically. As will be discussed more in the next chapter, when traditional religion wields state power, it often threatens those citizens who are not religious colleagues of the ruling group.

Religion is not only one thing. It is a repository of symbols, a system of belief, a conveyer of cultural rites, a structure of morality, an institution of power, and many other things as well. The perceived antiquity of its traditions appears to be constant over time, which gives people a sense of calm and reliable steadiness in a time of confusion and disruption. Today's global era is experiencing those dark moments, and in the tumult religion shines like a beacon of hope and reliability. However, just as religion is not one thing, it is not consistent over time. Just as any other institution changes, the social aspects of religion move in conjunction with flows of ideas and shifts in knowledge. Today's religious traditions are no exception and have been affected by the upheavals of globalization just as all other aspects of public life have been touched by global changes. Just how religion has been affected in the global era is the subject to which we now turn.



Sadhu on Vrindavan Street. Photograph by Mark Juergensmeyer.