
Vitenskapelige
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Secularisation in Norway, the Nordic Countries and Europe Statistics and Recent Developments

Annette Leis-Peters
VID Specialized University
annette.leis-peters@vid.no

How can we describe the changes in religious landscape?

- Secularisation
- Post-Secularisation
- Religious Change
- The Return of Religion in the Public Sphere
- New Visibility of Religion

What does secularisation mean?

Keiichi Yanagawa 1987, Introductory thesis. Beyond the secularization thesis, in: *The Journal of Oriental Studies*, 26 (1), 1-4.

Secularisation can be explained by functional differentiation:

This means

- a) reduction of religion as a social phenomena (religion is fading out);
- b) religion gets a clearly defined space in society;
- c) traditional forms of religion have less importance, but religion develops new forms.

Religious values in a global perspective

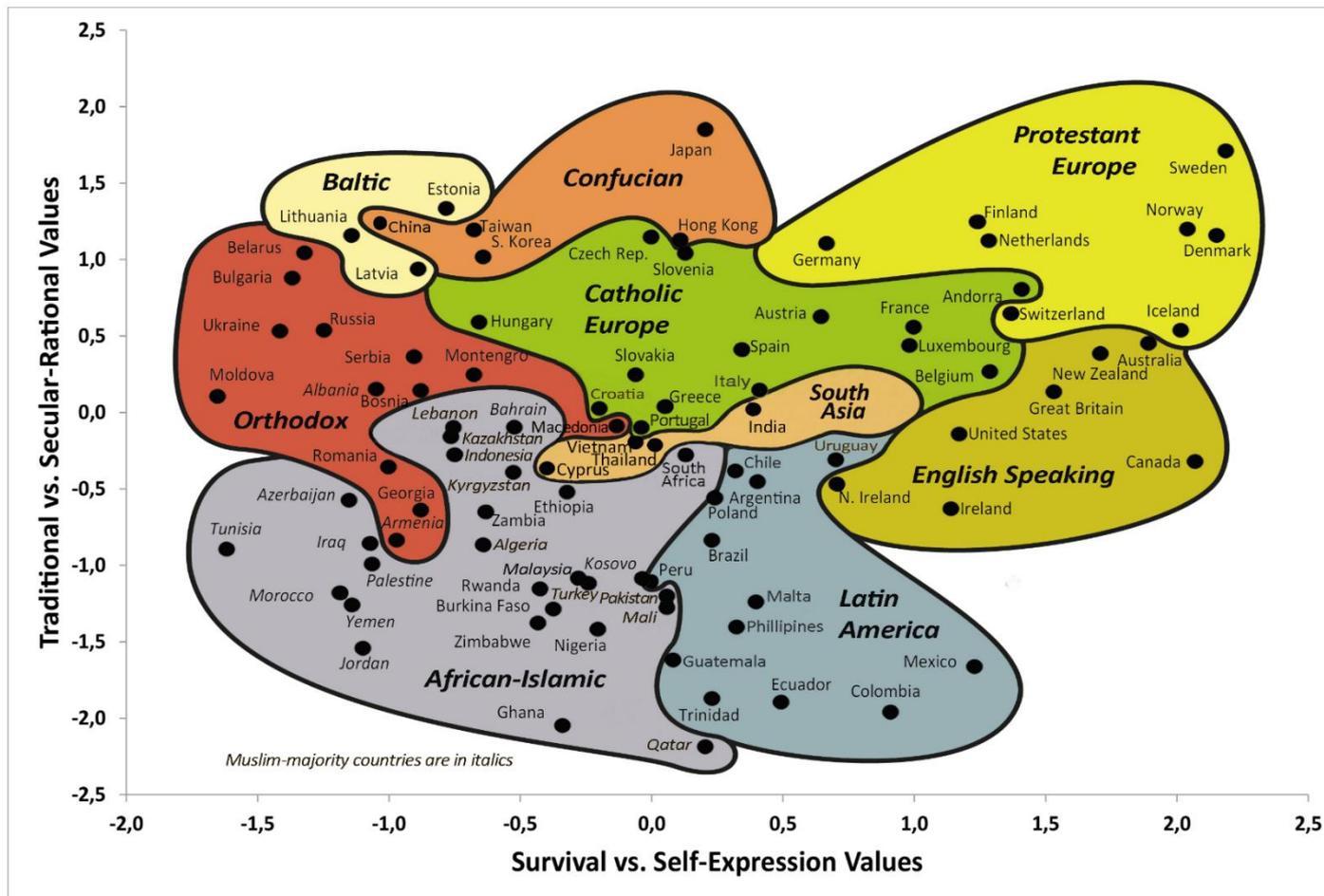
Pippa Norris & Ronald Inglehart (2004), *Sacred and Secular. Religion and Politics Worldwide*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Analysis of the data provided by the World Value Survey
- Advanced industrial societies move to more secular orientations (lower rates of attendance).
- Not modernisation, but the degree of existential security in a society affects secularisation respectively the presence of traditional religious views (case USA).
- Globally, there are more people with traditional religious views than ever (correlation between the degree of existential security and the fertility rates).
- Traditional religious views re-emerge in secular Western societies due to migration.
- Individuals develop their values during the formative years (the around the age of 20). They will keep these values most likely during their whole life.

Who is different?

Cultural Map Inglehart-Welzel, Wave 6, 2010-2014

See <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSContents.jsp?CMSID=Findings>



Measuring Membership



Three types of membership statistics are presented here:

- Membership in registered faith and worldview communities
- Membership in registered Christian minority churches
- Membership in registered and unregistered faith communities outside Christianity

The opportunities to find statistics on these issues vary in the different countries (due to differences in registration).

Membership in the Nordic Majority Churches

Furseth, Inger (2018) Religious complexity in the public sphere. Comparing the Nordic countries, Palgrave Macmillan

| | 1988 | 1998 | 2008 | 2014 |
|-------------------|------|------|------|------|
| Church of Sweden | 90 % | 84 % | 73 % | 66 % |
| Church of Finland | 88 % | 85 % | 81 % | 74 % |
| Church of Norway | 88 % | 87 % | 82 % | 75 % |
| Church of Denmark | 90 % | 86 % | 82 % | 78 % |

Not affiliated in the Nordic countries

Furseth 2018

| | 1988 | 1998 | 2008 | 2014 |
|---------|---------------|------|------|------|
| Sweden | Not available | | | |
| Finland | 10 % | 12 % | 17 % | 24 % |
| Norway | 3 % | - | 10 % | 13 % |
| Denmark | 9 % | 13 % | 16 % | 19 % |

Disaffiliations from the Lutheran Majority Churches 1988-2014



Furseth 2018

| | Actual loss | | | |
|-------------------|-------------|--|--|--|
| Church of Sweden | 860.000 | | | |
| Church of Denmark | 50.000 | | | |
| Church of Norway | 120.000 | | | |
| Church of Finland | 545.000 | | | |

Membership in Muslim Communities



Furseth 2018

| | 1998 | 1998 | 2008 | 2014 |
|---------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Sweden | 0,7 % | 1,0 % | 1,2 % | 1,1 % |
| Finland | 0,0 % | 0,0 % | 0,1 % | 0,2 % |
| Norway | 0,3 % | 1,1 % | 1,8 % | 2,6 % |
| Denmark | - | - | 0,4 % | 0,7 % |

Membership in Christian Minority Churches

Furseth 2018

| | 1988 | 1998 | 2008 | 2014 |
|---------|------|------|------|------|
| Sweden | 7,8 | 8,3 | 6,4 | 6,0 |
| Finland | 2,0 | 2,1 | 2,2 | 2,3 |
| Norway | 3,0 | 3,7 | 4,8 | 6,6 |
| Denmark | 1,4 | 1,5 | 1,7 | 1,9 |

Share of Baptisms of all New Born Children in the Nordic Majority Churches

Furseth 2018

| Church of Sweden | 71,7 % | 75 % | 59 % | 48 % |
|-------------------|--------|--------|--------|---------|
| Church of Finland | 89,9 % | 88,6 % | 82,4 % | 72, 4 % |
| Church of Norway | 79,4 % | 83 % | 70 % | 62 % |
| Church of Denmark | 81,1 % | 78,8 % | 72,1 | 66 % |

Percentage of Confirmations among All Youth aged 15

Furseth 2018

| | 1988 | 1998 | 2008 | 2014 |
|-------------------|----------|--------|--------|---------|
| Church of Sweden | 66,2 % | 46,8 % | 34,2 % | 30,1 % |
| Church of Finland | 93, 1% | 90 % | 87,6 % | 84, 2 % |
| Church of Norway | 82,3 % | 73,3 % | 66,2 % | 63,6 % |
| Church of Denmark | Unavail. | 80 % | 71 % | 71 % |

Share of Funerals of all Deceased



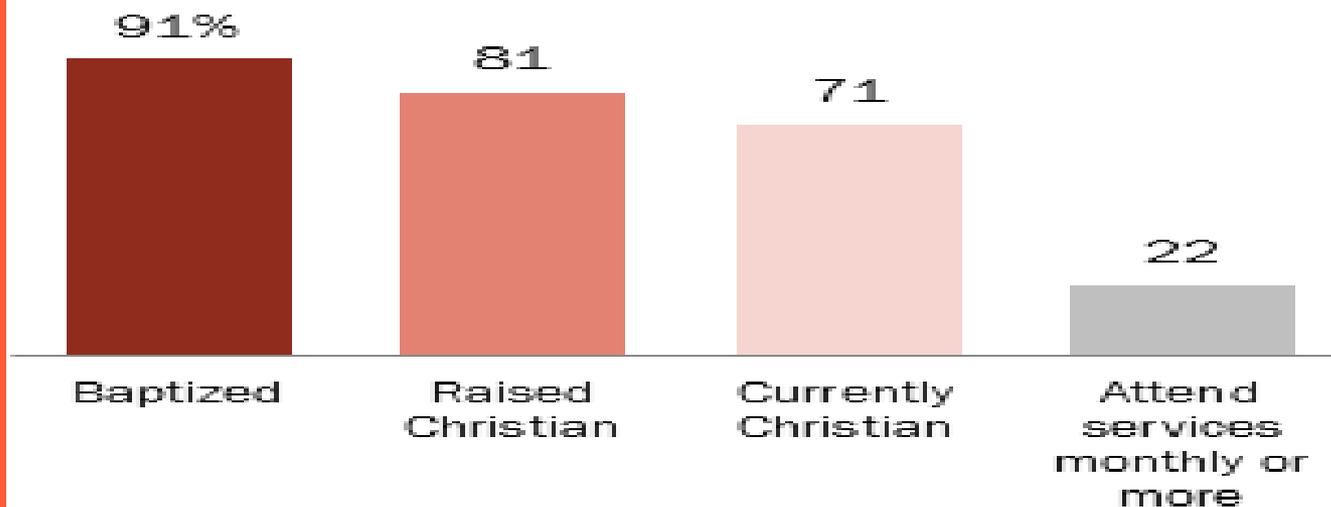
Furseth 2018

| Church of Sweden | 93,3 % | 88,5 % | 82,7 % | 78 % |
|-------------------|--------|----------|--------|--------|
| Church of Finland | 99,4 % | unavail. | 96,4 % | 93,3 % |
| Church of Norway | 94,8 % | 94,9 % | 93,1 % | 90,2 % |
| Church of Denmark | 92 % | unavail. | 89,3 % | 82,5 % |

Self-Identification and Attendance in Western Europe

Most Western Europeans continue to identify as Christians, though few regularly attend church

Across 15 countries, median % ...



Source: Survey conducted April-August 2017 in 15 countries. See [Methodology](#) for details.

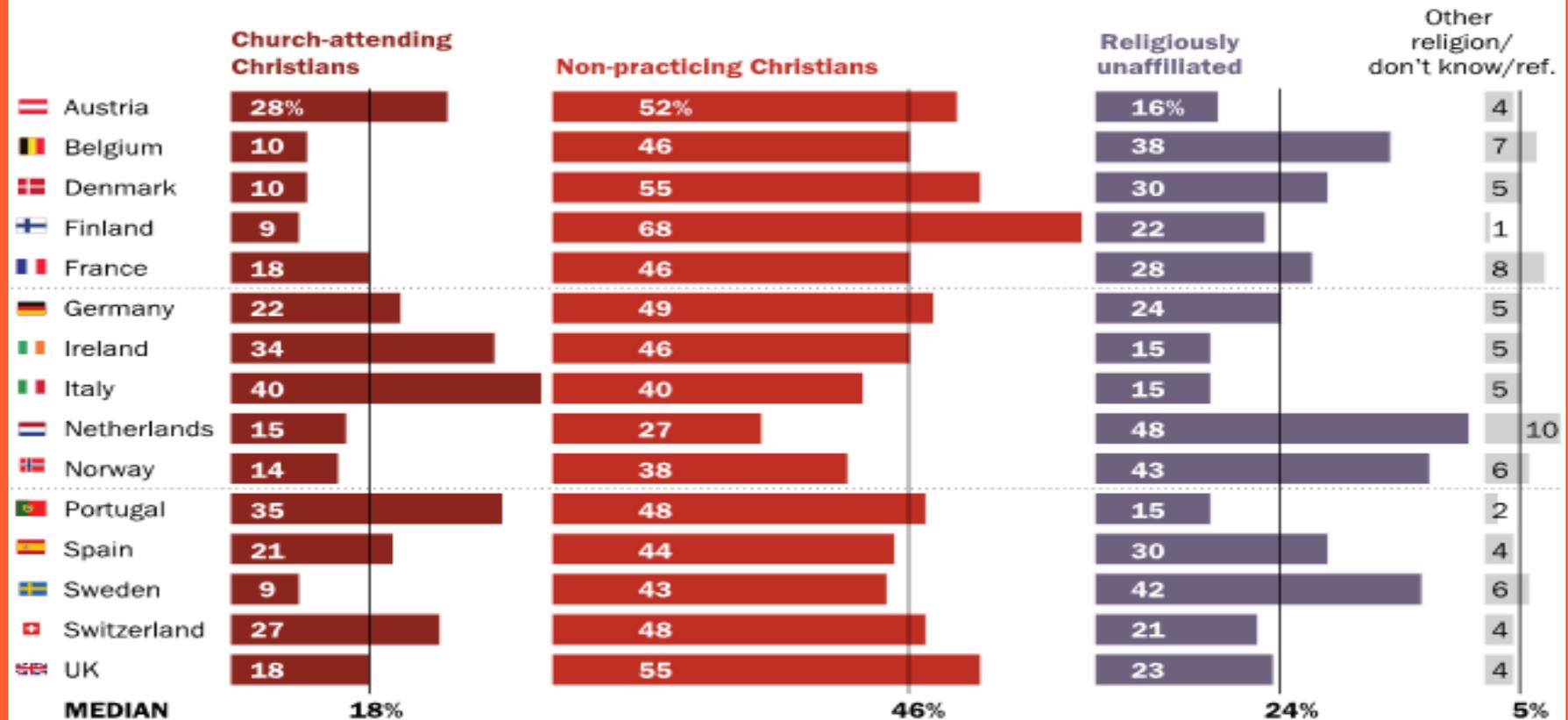
"Being Christian in Western Europe"

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Religious Attitudes in Western Europe

In most Western European countries, non-practicing Christians are largest group

% who are ...



Note: Church-attending Christians are defined as those who say they attend church at least monthly. Non-practicing Christians are defined as those who attend less often. Other religion/don't know/ref. are mostly Muslim respondents. General population surveys in Western Europe may not fully capture the size of minority populations, such as Muslims. Therefore, these figures may differ from previously published demographic estimates. Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Source: Survey conducted April-August 2017 in 15 countries. See Methodology for details.

"Being Christian in Western Europe"

The Ambiguity of the (Former) Nordic state churches

Furseth 2018

Per Pettersson (2011), State and religion in Sweden. Ambiguity between disestablishment and religious control, in: *Nordic Journal of Religion and Society*, 24 (2), 119-135.

- Nordic state churches have gained independency from the state during the last 20 years.
- Minority religions have been strengthened through public support.
- Changed relationships between state and former state church have made the economic and the membership basis more vulnerable.

BUT

- Nordic states continue to rely on the majority churches in times of crises and for celebration.
- Majority churches have a task that they are doing on behalf of the state (like running the grave yards in Sweden).

→ Nordic majority churches are semi-autonomous.

What does structural differentiation in the Nordic welfare state mean?

Annette Leis-Peters (2014), Hidden by civil society and religion? Diaconal institutions as welfare providers in the growing Swedish welfare state, in: Pirjo Markkola & Ingela Naumann (ed.), *Religion and the welfare state. Special Issue of the Journal of church and state*, 56 (2014), 105-127.



Consequences of the structural differentiation in welfare in the Nordic countries

Per Selle (2016), Frivillighetens marginalisering, in: Tidsskrift for velferdsforskning 19 (1).

Civil society organisations have become weak, both institutionally and ideologically



Ann af Burén (2015), *Living Simultaneity: On Religion among Semi-Secular Swedes*, Södertörns University; <https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:800530/FULLTEXT01.pdf>



See:

PhD project on the secularised majority in Sweden who

- are not related to any faith tradition;
- are not necessarily hostile to faith traditions either;
- borrow elements from different faith and other traditions;
- expect the public sphere to be secular (implicitly).



Nordic Complexity?

Results of the Norel Research Project 1988-2008 (Director Inger Furseth, see Furseth 2018)

After having looked into the development in the fields of:

- Changes in membership/religious landscape
- Religion and state
- Religion and politics
- Religion and media
- Religion and civil society

Furseth tries to answer the question what theory is most suitable to explain the developments in the religious landscape during the last decades:
Is it secularisation theory, de-privatization theory or complexity theory?

And she concludes: Only the concept of complexity can explain the development of religion in the Nordic countries since the 1980s.