SYMPOSIUM

why religion has become more salient in europe: four working hypotheses about secularization and religiosity in contemporary politics

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Abstract
The nation and the Church are never far apart in Europe. The Westphalian state-system defined allegiance and loyalty to the state as correlates of religious conformity. The re-emergence of religious conflict in Europe is the paradoxical result of globalization and individualization. The new social meaning of faith compels courts, governments, and the general publics to re-examine the old stability pacts between the national Churches and states. The belated secularization of the state is the likely outcome.

Keywords Church–state relations; national identity; Islam; secularization

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Social scientists have long believed that religiosity wanes as prosperity cushions us against the unpredictability of nature, and education and scientific rationalism displace magical thinking.[1] Europeans proved the secularization thesis by defecting from the church, and religion lost its ability to inflame public temper in the modern welfare state.

Now, every day brings evidence of the new salience of religion in European politics. Rising voter support for people like Geert Wilders, the Dutch far-right politician, and Pia Kjærsgaard, the leader of the Danish People's Party, who has not yet lost an election, is one example. Mainstream parties not usually concerned about the defence of Christianity feel compelled to take up positions too. When Rowan Williams, the Anglican Archbishop, incautiously suggested that Muslims were justified in thinking that Islamic religious personal law could, under certain circumstances, be applied in British court, unanimous condemnation erupted from all three major parties. Pastors and priests, the Pope, and the

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Chief Rabbis of France and the UK, caution against the weakening of societal resolve caused by loss of faith. And increasingly, European citizens have responded by saying, yes, they do still believe in God.

If religion is back, it makes sense that anti-clericalism is too. Christopher Hitchens (2007) warns that the Inquisition has returned in the form of black-robed imams and in the name of fairness uses considerable energy in pointing out that there is no evidence that Christ died on the cross. Sam Harris (2004) declares that belief (all of them) leads us to kill one another. Even the socio-biologists have an opinion about the persistence of magical thinking in the age of rationalism. The secularization thesis speaks only to the rational part of us but we have inherent tendencies to dualism, which is why irrational thinking lives on in spite of scientific disproof. In *The God Delusion*, Richard Dawkins explains that religion has survived the Darwinian de-selection process for magical thinking because it is the fittest of dodgy ideas. It may not be in our genes but it nearly is. Religion is reproduced through a cultural replication process that duplicates tiny cultural units called 'memes', which are not necessarily analogues of genes, he says, but the more they are like genes 'the better they work' (Dawkins, 2006: 172–201).[2] He must have meant the better his theory is.

The resurgence of combative religion in European politics has put social scientists in a quandary. We cannot comfortably embrace the argument that the travelling imams brought religion back to Europe or that religion has lived on in our mental cell structures. One response is to argue that the secularization thesis was never intended as an 'iron law' or to explain cross-national variations, but rather is a trend theory and as such still holds (Inglehart and Norris, 2004). The US, with its many believers despite plenty of money and lots of science, is a challenge

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to the argument, but a deviant case can be tolerated without throwing the whole theory out. Yet, as public opinion surveys amply demonstrate, most of the world is religious, and another argument is that it is in fact Europeans who are the exception (Gallup International, 2005).

We are faced with two puzzles. The first is why secular Europe is becoming increasingly *less* secular. And the second is why Europeans *think* they are secular when European states have never stopped granting subsidies and preferences for national faith denominations. Europe's still numerous established Churches are the most obvious example of the unabated political importance of religion in Europe.

Good comparative theory should be capable of explaining divergent outcomes. This means that an explanation of the declining salience of religion in European states between 1950 and 1990 ideally should also account for why religion is becoming salient in European politics today. The secularization thesis fails to do this. The four working hypotheses elaborated in this article aim to provide an alternative account as to why religion is back in Europe.

Secularization is the result of distinct sociological, historical, and ideational processes. It is a compound variable, so to say, and has proceeded in disjointed movements of legal–constitutional reform

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and behavioural change. Sometimes - secularization in one arena brings analogous changes in another, as in the case of the sexual de-regulation after 1968. No clear causal relationship exists between changing attitudes and in laws. I shall here concentrate on the behavioural and institutional components to secularization.

Working hypothesis 1: European Church–state relations were amended repeatedly in the course of the twentieth century coincidental with the breakthrough of universal suffrage or moments of constitutional challenge. Reforms asserted political elites' primacy over clerical elites, and the societal institutions of the Church – schools, the clergy, and charities – became ancillaries to the expansion of state capacities. The Church's control over the daily life of citizens remained unchallenged and sometimes reinforced by the rationalization attendant on modernization.

The origins of the international system of sovereign states is conventionally dated to the Treaty of Westphalia (1648) but for domestic purposes a forerunner, the Treaty of Augsburg (1555), is the relevant backdrop for theorizing (March and Olsen, 1998).[3] It produced 'religious peace', *Religionsfriede,* in Europe by establishing that subjects by dictate assumed the faiths of rulers, the *cuius regio, eius religio* principle (Rokkan, 1968).[4] 'Peace' meant that officially religious minorities did not exist, and were sometimes treated leniently and sometimes not. Religious minorities that refused formally to accept their official fate fed the migration that populated the shores of America. The legal legacy lives on in current frameworks for Church–state relations and an inflexible map of stable religious affiliations that, with a few exceptions, survived the upheavals of the twentieth century.

Europeans have followed three different models for organizing Church–state relations: religious monopolies, religious corporatism in the form of state-sponsorship of recognized national religions, and state-subsidized pluralism. Among the countries that have both constitutionally established confessions *and* publicly subsidized faiths are Austria, Denmark, Norway, Finland, Greece, and Italy. The Church of England is an established church, but receives few direct subsidies. The postwar cleavage of Germany altered Germany's religious map and the revocation of Protestant domination. The 1949 Basic Law 'recognized' both Protestantism and Roman Catholicism.

France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Sweden, are constitutionally secular states but provide direct or indirect subsidies for institutions associated with *recognized* faiths, for example religious schools or social and health services. In Sweden, Belgium, and the Netherlands funding opportunities are *de jure* available to all religions but state neutrality remains an elusive and not a fully accepted goal. In Germany, the Protestant and Roman Catholic churches, as well as Judaism, but not Islam, the third largest faith, are entitled to federally collected church taxes and the right to run state-subsidized religious social services and hospitals. Spain's 1978 constitution, created after the overthrow of the Franco regime, declared the state to be secular, and ended the Roman Catholic Church's long-standing association with the state. Yet the government continued to fund the Catholic Church following an informal agreement reached in 1979 that is still in effect. The Netherlands and Sweden 'privatized' but fully funded clerical salaries and pensions in 1983 and 2000, respectively. Even in France, where the law of 1905 and the principle of *laïcite* has been invoked to prohibit Muslim girls from covering their heads in school, churches

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are municipal properties and are lent free of charge to parishes, cemeteries are owned by municipalities but run by parish councils, and 25 per cent of French students go to Catholic schools, which are publicly funded.

Historical-comparative differences go a long way towards explaining the differences in the European and American institutional foundations for state-sponsorship of religion. The European conception of secularism is that it is the citizens who are supposed not to show excessive religious fervour, whereas for Americans secularism is an attribute of the state and the citizens should be free to express religious sentiments.

Readers will recognize the definition as a popularized version of the injunction in the US Constitution's First Amendment, 'Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion'. In *A Theory of Justice* John Rawls promoted American constitutionalism to high theory: 'The state can favor no particular religion and no penalties or disabilities may be attached to any religious affiliation or lack thereof' (Rawls, 1971: 212). Faith or lack there of are not matters that governments can legitimately involve themselves with.

The first Amendment settled, at least in constitutional theory, the conflict between supporters of state Churches – the Puritans in the Massachusetts Bay Colony, the Congregational Church in Connecticut, and the Dutch Reform Church in what later became New York – and the opposing Baptists and Quakers, who had Thomas Jefferson and James Madison on their side. The first group hoped to protect religion against the state and the latter citizens against the state, and a difficult balancing act was imposed upon government.

Social and political realities nonetheless often converge to an extent not recognized by the principled discourses on constitutional theory. In the US, the neutrality principle has historically faltered when confronted with the harsher aspects of religious exercise, and on particular issues the distance narrows. Satanists or parents who refuse medical treatment for their children in God's name get little respect on either continent (for an account of US legal struggles over what constitutes 'religion', see Hamilton, 2005).

'The social democratic movements of the twentieth century did not substantially change Church–state relations'.

Working hypothesis 2: Secularism spread not as a result of a constitutional break with Europe's tradition of Church–state merger, but through a social revolution accompanied by a gradual shift in the boundaries between the sacred and the public. The triumph of secularism and liberalism over clerical control over people's daily lives is recent and was tenuously established through piecemeal reforms of the laws regulating sexuality and consumption.

Funding for faith-based educational institutions, the education of Christian clergy at the Theological Faculties at public universities, and publicly funded Christian social and health services are examples of the state's penetration into the societal institutions of the national Churches and the concomitant role of the Church in the regulation of the lives of citizens. The social democratic movements of the twentieth century did not substantially change Church–state relations. They made peace instead with religion by using the state to control sectarianism. It is one of the minor stories of twentieth-century reform movements

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that religious minorities in Europe were often deeply disappointed in the socialists.

Areas of legislative regulation, which historically have been dominated by the national Churches, include but are not limited to sexuality (abortion and birth control, divorce, sodomy), free speech and artistic expression, the media, schooling and religious instruction, opening hours and the sale of certain commodities (alcohol and drugs).

In 1967, when the UK legalized abortion an uproar resulted and conservatives predicted the collapse of marriage and social order. The liberalization had a cascading effect on other countries. Feminists started 'underground railroads' getting women in need of abortions on ferries to England. In the following ten years, most European countries legalized abortion although not without sometimes debilitating political conflicts with conservatives, the clergy, and the national Churches. In Ireland, Italy, and Spain, the Roman Catholic Church prevented reform (legalization failed as recently as 2002 in Ireland). In the Federal Republic of Germany, the two Christian churches invoked the right to life clause in the German Constitution (Basic law Article 1, par 1) and jointly prevented direct legalization. Abortion is in reality available but only after mandatory counselling and a 73-h waiting period. It is noteworthy that the East German practice of abortion 'on demand' was discontinued in 1989.

In France, where the Vichy regime instituted the death penalty for those carrying out abortion, special courts outside the judicial system were set up after the war, charged with the task of making punishments appropriate to the circumstances of the crime. Abortion was not made legal until 1975. One exception to the general picture of the relatively recent elimination of the Church's control over women's sexuality is Sweden, where eugenicists made abortion available for

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'damaged fetuses' as early as 1938 and socio-economic hardship was added as a legitimate indicator for legal abortion in 1944. Today, the Swedish Church agonizes more than ever over abortion. 'Personhood starts at conception and the fetus must be valued as a human being', it has recently stated, 'but abortion is under some circumstances acceptable murder'. It is a curious concession to the resurgence of scruples to call abortion murder and then declare it an acceptable evil.

Divorce and birth control were other issues extracted from the grip of clerical control late and with great difficulty, and only with partial success. On 25 July 1968, Pope Paul VI disappointed Catholics across the US and Europe by declaring the pill a sin in his encyclical, *Humanae Vitae*. The decision was a surprise. It was widely expected that the Church would accept the pill as a lesser evil compared to abortion. Catholic countries gradually extracted policy with respect to divorce, abortion, and birth control from ecclesiastical authority. The one exception is Ireland, where divorce remained impossible until 1997 and abortion legislation left in limbo by a referendum in 2002, which rejected further criminalization of abortion but still did not allow it. A milestone was set in the 2008 parliamentary elections in Spain, when the Catholic Church's effort to unseat the Spanish socialist governments after it legalized same-sex partnership in 2007 was defeated by voters.

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longer than sexuality. Considering the recent controversies over free speech and the right to criticize religious believers – Muslims in particular – it is worth noting that prohibitions against blasphemy remain entrenched in the penal code in many European countries, although they are now rarely enforced. Austria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland, Poland, and the UK all prohibit blasphemy. Blasphemy laws are secular expressions of the prohibition in Mark 3:29 'But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin'. In the UK, only the Church of England is protected against blasphemy. In legal practice, courts have protected the feelings of religious believers – as a group – rather than belief itself.

Most countries have in recent years amended the laws to include Judaism, but the reality is that only Christians have been protected against blasphemy. Blasphemy protection was successfully invoked in Germany in 1994 against a musical comedy that crucified pigs to ridicule the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. Attempts by Muslims to use neutral-sounding blasphemy laws against Rushdie's 'Satanic verses' and the Danish cartoons have been unsuccessful. David Blunkett, when he was Home Minister, proposed that the time had come to replace the blasphemy law with a more ecumenical concept of religious hatred but attempts simultaneously to satisfy Muslims' anger over Islamophobia and prohibit jihadi calls for violent Jihad became stranded in the House of Lords on the shoals of free speech arguments (a watered down version of the bill was promulgated in 2007 as the Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006). The Council of Europe has recently called for a non-sectarian approach and the decriminalization of all forms of blasphemy and that criminal law should be used only to punish incitement of violence.[5] The secularization of speech prohibitions may still be the happy outcome of our current confusion about impermissible speech.

European secularization is not based upon principles about the separation of Church and state but a meandering and ambiguous compromise between narrowing the room for 'sacred values' on the one hand and public ethics and public policies that assign a privileged position to Christianity on the other.

Working Hypothesis 3: Religious pluralism drives state neutrality. Demand-side variables – ranging from pluralization caused by migration and a new stress on 'choice' with respect to ethno-religious identity – are important causal variables.

Religious pluralism is one of the unintended and unanticipated societal consequences of immigration with which European states have yet to come to terms. Wars, conquests, and revolutions barely modified the sixteenth-century map of stable religious affiliations, and when changes occurred they followed the set pattern of overlapping religious and national identities. Homogeneity was promoted by emigration and conversion, and at its worst, the Holocaust.

After five decades of immigration, about 10 per cent of Europe's subjects no longer belong to the official faiths of states. And even those who do belong to the official faiths now claim the liberty to not be defined by the religion they acquired by birth or residence but to convert and to freely choose how and where they express their faith. Europeans now have to re-examine the twentieth-century 'stability pacts' between state and church. New national conversations about religion and public policy cannot be avoided. The ongoing *Deutsche Islam Konferenz,* which aims to create a foundation for the official recognition of Islam

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as a German faith and a measure of legal parity between Islam, Judaism, and the two Christian nationally recognized denominations, is an example.

The legacy of state-sponsorship of national denominations puts Europe in the awkward position of having to choose between amending current laws by extending them to allow for equal treatment of major religious groups – including Islam – or revoking centuries of legal practice. The Edict of Nantes (1598) set the pattern for dealing with 'other' religions, when Henry IV 'recognized' Protestants in France, officially a Catholic country, and partially exempted them from the legal disabilities incumbent upon heretics. Modern constitutions could not comfortably speak about heretics and the term was changed to 'dissenting religions', but the starting point for the conversation about liberalization remained the same. The European approach to religious minorities is invariably framed as a matter of 'toleration' or 'recognition'. Emigration remained the primary solution for dissenters far into the twentieth century.

Protestants have been particularly inclined to mix secular and religious norms, and have continued to do so because public status imposes certain duties on the Church. The curious result is that the secular countries of Northern Europe are latecomers to the idea that modern liberalism requires the state to be agnostic about matters of faith. Denmark, like a number of other European countries, continues to have a state church. Article 4 of the constitution stipulates that '[t]he Evangelical Lutheran Church shall be the Established Church of Denmark, and as such shall be supported by the state'. The Church is responsible for registering all births and deaths, as well as for exclusive administration of cemeteries, and births and deaths must be reported within 48 h to the municipal church office – the office of the local pastor in the national church – irrespective of the newborn's or the deceased's religious affiliation.

'Protestants have been particularly inclined to mix secular and religious norms'

Denmark is by no means unusual in this regard. Norway's first constitution from 1814 banned Jews and 'Jesuits', a prohibition that was relinquished only in 1851 when Jews were granted limited rights on a par with other dissenters. Another curious relict of the system, and discontinued only in 2000, was the Swedish practice of automatically registering all newborns – irrespective of the religion of their parents – on the rolls of the Swedish Church.

The propensity for public supply of religious services puts governments in the middle of the enactment of the new religious wars over the right to live your chosen faith. According to Danish law, everyone has the right to a funeral and burial in the local church and cemetery, and cemeteries maintain non-sacred burial plots for 'dissenters'. The problem is that, with few exceptions, the Lutheran Church has near-total control over the burial process. The Jewish community was given special permission by the King to buy land for burial grounds first in 1675 and then again in 1794. To date, these are the only places where Jews may receive ritual burial. The first Muslim cemetery was opened in 2007. The rules constrain also New Age spiritualists who want to scatter their ashes and wiccans who want to be set out on a boat for their last journey.

Sociology drives Europe's rediscovery of religion by giving birth to supply-side demands for equal treatment and policy-changes to extend current frameworks

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to make public policy more inclusive of minorities. The presence of immigrant religious minorities, who cannot be accommodated under the present Church–state arrangements, are the most visible source of politicization but deep changes are taking place also in how the Christian majority approaches religious consumption. Religion is no longer something you inherit from your parents in the same way that you obtain your citizenship, but a matter of personal choice.

Immigration, inter-marriage, conversions, and self-realization ideologies – including new conceptions of 'spirituality' – have created a competitive market for purveyors of religious products. Pope Benedict's change of policy on the use of the Latin mass is an effort to stem defections among the faithful and to accommodate dissident parishes in Germany, driven in large numbers by Polish immigrants, who protest against the 'German Way' of conducting mass.

The freedom to choose one's identity involves also the freedom to choose one's faith. The new social meaning of faith compels courts, governments, and the general publics to re-examinations of the twentieth-century 'stability pacts' between state and church. As a result, the heightened salience of faith is associated with increased legal secularization. The corollary is that electoral conflicts over Church–state policies are in part driven by policy conflicts between secularists and religious groups. The issues do not pit religious Muslims against Christian secularists, as many current 'clash of civilization' theories have it, but reflect a much more complicated matrix of Christians and Muslims on the one hand, who want the help of governments against extremist sectarianism but fear the double-edged sword of state control, and secularists on the other, who want states to set strict limits on religious expression in public.

The news releases from a meeting of the *Deutsche Islam Konferenz* in March 2008 revealed that the Minister of the Interior, Wolfgang Schäuble, a Christian Democrat, had endorsed the idea that all German students should receive instruction in Islam by trained teachers teaching in German. The proposal is motivated by a desire – widely shared by government officials and Muslim representatives – that professionals should teach Islam in schools rather than allow local, and mostly Turkish-speaking, clerics from mosques to carry out the instruction, as is presently the way in some states. The children of Catholics and Protestants and Jews get religious instruction in schools by local priests, pastors, and rabbis, and thus principles of parity require that Muslim students have access to be taught by imams too. Criticism of the content of such instruction has motivated a push for 'neutral' religious instruction. It is of course a good idea that Christian students also learn about Islam, and that Muslims are taught in German, but the proposal has invoked criticism because it represents a new step towards the secularization of religious instruction and implicitly recognizes Islam as a German religion. The alternative solution to the neutrality problem is that parents are responsible for providing religious instruction and that such instruction takes place outside school hours. Fears are that most parents would neglect the responsibility and only the most religious would manage, which would further inflame sectarian fundamentalism.

Working hypothesis 4: Religion is a source of not only personal faith but also of collective identity. Religious majorities tend to regard their faith as a public 'ethic' while religious minorities see theirs as an ethnicity.

Q2

Theological meta-narratives have a strong influence on the articulation of

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public norms, and it is a proto-Protestant trait to think that faith should not be 'seen'. The current reaction against Islam regurgitates many of the classical anti-Catholic tropes about believers' dual loyalties and often conflates secularism and anti-clericalism. As a consequence, Muslims and Evangelicals – and, yes, also Jews – are sometimes expected to choose between their faith, identity, and the nation.[6]

A tendency exists on the part of majorities to think that they are the norm and dissenting religions the aberration. Legal discourse has sustained the presumption that it is for the majority to 'tolerate' and the minority to 'adjust'. Rituals and identity remain tightly wrapped up with religion, as does social stratification schemes based upon ethno-religious classifications of minorities and 'others'. We see this mechanism at play today in Europe in the ethnification of Islam (Klausen, 2005). Muslims can declare themselves independent of Islam no easier than Jews can deny they are Jewish. The minority–majority dilemma is reflected in the contradictory survey results that show Muslims to be religiously observant in moderate numbers, yet at the same time find that nearly all people who are by birth-right Muslims will assent to being, in fact, Muslim.

Theology matters for the inclination to express belief through observance of ritual, and so does the institutional format for sustaining religious institutions. At first glance, the evidence seems solid that Americans are religious and Europeans are not. Americans go to Church and profess to believe in God at a much higher rate than do Europeans. Americans also talk about God and even justify political decisions with reference to religious values in ways that are unpalatable to Europeans. Church attendance is a common measure of religiosity but it is a flawed measure. Attending church is not equally important to faiths. The Lutheranism I grew up with regarded sermons and prayers almost as close cousins to idol worship. With the exception of special occasions linked to the rituals of life – baptism, confirmations, weddings, and funerals – regular church attendance invited scorn. Anglicans and Roman Catholics, of course, take a different view of the importance of ritual. Muslims and Jews consider ritual not an emblem of belief but the path to belief.

'Europeans continue to rely on the Church to mark the passages of life'.

One of the few uncontested facts is that Europeans are less inclined to believe in God than are Americans. But things quickly get muddled. Some Europeans are quite religious and others say they do not believe in God but still consume religious services at very high rates. Eighty-eight per cent of Italians and 83 per cent of Austrians say they believe in God compared to 94 per cent of Americans. Are Catholics more 'religious' than Protestants? Yes, and no. Clearly there are important behavioural differences between Catholics and Protestants, and stark differences in Church attendance are one example. But when we scratch the surface of the numbers, things become less clear.

If we look at the role of rituals rather than professed belief as an indicator of the role of religion in people's lives, the picture of European secularism becomes murkier. Europeans continue to rely on the church to mark the passages of life. In secular Scandinavia, what we may call 'utilization rates' of religious services show that the overwhelming majority of the population continues to depend upon religion to structure life. Many people who profess not to believe in God are nevertheless officially registered

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Q4 **Table 1: Percentage of people who say they believe in God**

	Change +/− (%)	*1990*	*1995*	*2001*
Sweden	8–10	38	48	46
NL[a]	−3	61		58
Norway	7	58	65	
Denmark	3	59		62
GB[a]	−9	72		61
W. Ger[a]	6–8	63	71	69
Canada[a]	3	85		88
Austria	5	78		83
Italy	6	82		88

From http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/. Results from the fourth wave from 2005 not posted.

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members of the church. While less than half of Swedes say they believe in God and few ever attend religious services, 83 per cent nonetheless belong to the church. Danes exhibit a similar pattern, except a majority say they believe in God. About three quarters of the newborns in both countries are christened, and the national churches bury 90 per cent of the population. Church weddings and confirmations are somewhat less popular, but about half of the population gets married in the church.

Moreover, belief in God has increased over the past decade and a half. Presently, belief is waning in the countries that remained 'religious' during the 1970s and 1980s – Britain and the Netherlands – and increasing in the more secular countries. That is, Swedes are becoming more attuned to belief while the Dutch and the British – like the Americans – are becoming less so. Generational change may well prove to be an underlying variable, with the baby-boom generation pushing a revolt against the conventional religiosity of the postwar parental generation, and the children of the baby-boom generation bringing religion 'back in' by choosing spirituality (Table 1). Q3

Muslims comprise between 2 and 8 per cent of the populations of the West European countries, and fundamentalist Muslims only a small minority of a minority. They play a minor part in the resurgence of faith in Europe, but anxiety over their presence may nonetheless play a role in the increase in the number of people who profess belief in God or consider Christianity an essential European value. The re-emergence of religious conflict in Europe is the paradoxical result of the new religious pluralism introduced by immigration.

CONCLUSION

The European debates over the return of religiosity have focused upon Islam and the so-called 'Charismatic' Evangelical churches. But why limit generalization about the prevalence of magical thinking in modern societies to religious believers? I find this entirely the wrong place to start. The fact that the British National Health System now provides what is called 'complementary and alternative medicine', which is defined as 'any medical system based on a theory of disease or method of treatment other than the orthodox science of medicine as taught in medical schools' – that is, treatments for which there is no scientific evidence – suggests that science is on no firmer

ground in the UK than it is in the American religious heartland.[7]

There are other understandings of secularism than the psycho-social assumptions advanced by the secularization thesis about belief as magical thinking compelled by a human need to account for the inexplicable. I have here presented an institutionalist and comparative framework for analysing the disjointed processes of legal secularization and revival of conflict over religious exercise in Europe. An unexplored argument is that secularism itself is a Christian idea, and properly defined applies to the Church's recognition of the autonomy of state and economy, or of matters of science. Secularism in this definition then is properly understood as a theological recognition of different realms for the sacred and the public. The Catholic Church, for example, recognized evolution as scientific doctrine while maintaining the Truth of biblical creation. Likewise, it has accepted that in democracies everything can be debated and the faithful cannot deny the irreligious equal rights – although God can do so in the afterlife. Seen from this perspective, the present controversies over the integration of Muslims are short-term manifestations of an ideational adjustment of Islam and an institutional adjustment of European Christianity.

Notes

1 The author acknowledges the Carnegie Scholars Program for support in connection with the preparation of this article.

2 Dawkins makes repeated uses of the rhetorical device of arguing that 'memes' are not like genes and proceeding on the assumption that they are. Meme pools are not like gene pools, he says, but it is not 'silly' to think they could be. Which is exactly what Dawkins think they are: a combinatorial logic that makes all religion essentially the same thing just in different combinations, and Christianity and Islam happen to be the strongest tuned, again, through natural selection.

3 March and Olsen described the rigid domestic order associated with the Westphalian system, but their argument about the post-Westphalian system focused exclusively upon the changes to the international order.

4 Stein Rokkan's theory of path-dependent nation-building and the subsequent 'freezing' of partisan cleavages in the age of mass politics depended upon the unacknowledged but assumed stability of basic religious affiliations.

5 The resolution is available at: http://assembly.coe.int/Main.asp?link=/Documents/AdoptedText/ta07/EREC1805.htm.

6 Sam Harris writes that 'respect for other faiths or the unbelievers is not an attitude God endorses' (2004:13).

7 Definition taken from the British Medical Association's website, http://www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/Content/LIBAlternativeMedicine.

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