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Accommodating Religious Pluralism in Denmark

Abstract

This article discusses the room for accommodating religious diversity offered by the particular configuration of secularity existing in Denmark. Theoretically, the article adopts Jose Casanova and Mark Chaves' proposals to separate analytically between the core elements of secularisation, and to leave open for empirical analyses the development and potential connections between these in different geographical and geo-political contexts. From this perspective, the article discusses the conditions for accommodating religious diversity offered by the peculiar combination prevailing in Denmark of a low level of structural differentiation combined with a high level of rationalisation, generalisation, and privatisation of religion. The article argues that the legal inequality existing in Denmark between religious communities stemming from the existence of a state supported church (i.e. a low level of differentiation) matters less for the accommodation of religious diversity than do widely held and strongly embedded popular sentiments and imaginations of the public sphere as strictly secular (i.e. a high level of rationalisation, generalisation and privatisation of religion).

Keywords: Religious diversity; Secularis; Religious minorities; Accommodating pluralism.

AS WARNED BY UNSPECIAL rapporteur on freedom of religion and belief, Heiner Bielefeldt, legal inequality between religious communities comprises a potent source for minority discrimination.¹ Legal inequality between religious denominations exists (also) in countries with an established church or where one or more religion(s) enjoy a series of legal, administrative and/or economic benefits not shared by other religious communities. While there are historical reasons for this form of inequality, rising levels of cultural and religious diversity in Europe mean that legally and administratively favouring some religions over others may prove to be too great a hindrance today

¹ *Report of the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, Heiner Bielefeldt, (A/HCR/19/60), 22 December, 2011.*

for fully and successfully integrating religious minorities and accommodating religious diversity.

While this is indeed the case, this article argues that it is not the legal inequality deriving from the favourable position held by the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Denmark *per se*, which provides the most pressing hindrance for the successful accommodation of religious diversity. It is rather the paradoxical co-existence of a low level of differentiation simultaneously with a high level of rationalisation and privatisation of religion. That is, the prevalence in Denmark of deeply held and widely shared expectations with respect to a strictly secular public sphere, and widely shared ideas about the proper (private) manner of expressing one's religion. The argument is supported by the results from a survey conducted among three religious minority groups in Denmark: Muslims, Buddhists and Hindus.²

Accommodation of religious diversity is a widely discussed topic within many theoretical fields. Analysing the issue from the perspective of secularisation theory is a path somewhat less travelled towards investigating how religious diversity can better be accommodated in contemporary European societies. Yet, as noted by Gorski and Altinordu, conflicts surrounding the religious claims of immigrants in Europe today constitute some of the most important political struggles related to secularity (Gorski and Altinordu 2008: 68-70). The reason why accommodation of religious diversity is relevant for secularisation theory to deal with is that the increasing religious diversity in Europe due to immigration renders taken-for-granted relations between religion, state and society visible and subjects them to evaluation (*ibid.*). An analysis based on secularisation theory therefore brings to the debate insights into the societal conditions and "possibility structures" offered by particular configurations of secularity and the room that such configurations leave for the inclusion, participation and accommodation of religious minorities. What characterises this perspective is that it does not as such

² The survey sample is based on self-selection (through social media) and is thus a non-probability sample, i.e. the sample is not statistically representative of the respective populations of Muslims, Buddhists and Hindus in Denmark. It is difficult to calculate the actual population of Muslims in Denmark, as only members of the Church of Denmark are formally registered. However, it has been estimated at 231,200 (Jacobsen 2012). 119 Muslims answered the survey, with a greater

preponderance of young and female respondents. There are an estimated 28,000 Buddhists in Denmark, approximately 80% immigrants and 20% Danish born converts (Ahlin *et al.* 2012). 85 Buddhists took the survey, with an over-representation of Danish born converts. There are an estimated 13,000 Hindus in Denmark (Ahlin *et al.* 2012). 65 took the survey, with an over-representation of young Danish born children of immigrants primarily with Sri Lankan backgrounds.

engage in the debate about the extent to which religious diversity, religious minorities or religion as such ought or ought not to be accommodated in the public sphere in liberal democratic societies. Rather, it discusses how and to what degree accommodation can even begin to take place under the conditions offered by the various configurations of secularity, in this case in Denmark.

Differentiating Secularisation

The article adopts the theoretical perspective and analytical approach proposed in Mark Chaves' new differentiation theory (Chaves 1994) as well as Jose Casanova's suggestion (Casanova 1994; Casanova 2006), based on Shmuel Eisenstadt's notion of multiple modernities, to separate between the core structural developments widely referred to when speaking about secularisation. Both Chaves' and Casanova's accounts endorse the notion of multiple secularisations, that is, the existence of various forms and configurations of secularity, not only between but also within geo-political boundaries. What also characterises both scholars' accounts is that they reject the assumption of a necessary casual relationship between structural differentiation, privatisation of religion, and decline of religious belief. Accordingly, rather than attempting to answer whether "the world" is secularising or de-secularising, these two scholars, among others, stress that this is an analytical question that must be left open for empirical and contextualised investigation.

Mark Chaves introduced new differentiation theory as an attempt to "re-evaluate processes of institutional differentiation central to Parsons' vision of the social system" while abandoning problematic assumptions such as a "master trend" inherent to social development (Chaves 1994: 751). Freeing new differentiation theory from the prevailing assumption of a causal relationship between modernisation and secularisation, or, to be more precise, between structural differentiation and decline in religious significance enables it not only to separate between various aspects of secularisation, but also to leave open for empirical analyses the development and potential interconnection of these aspects in a given context. In other words, while Chaves takes being structurally differentiated as a point of departure in modernised societies, he leaves open for empirical examination the consequences of this *vis-à-vis* religious development.

In order to analyse the effects of structural differentiation on religious development, Chaves makes the, in his own words, daring suggestion of

abandoning religion as the object of study of secularisation theory, and replacing it instead with religious authority. Accordingly, he suggests that secularisation should not be understood as the decline of religion, but as the decline of religious authority in society (*ibid.*).

In order to analyse the effect of structural differentiation on the development of religious authority at all levels of society, Chaves analytically differentiates between societal, organisational and individual level secularisation. Briefly put, societal secularisation refers to the degree to which societies are influenced by religious authority; organisational secularisation refers to the degree to which religious organisations undergo internal secularisation; and individual secularisation refers to the degree to which individuals in their lives are subject to religious authority (Chaves 1994: 757).³

Abandoning religion as the object of study and replacing it with religious authority implies that new differentiation theory perceives of and analyses religion as an institutional sphere/organisational sector in society among others. Hence, rather than being considered the “glue” providing social coherence, religion is seen as a profane entity with its own particular concerns and interests, which, in a differentiated society does not have functional primacy. This implies that the domains of possibilities of religion, as of other institutional spheres, are fluid and can be altered by other spheres, institutions and actors in society (Chaves 1994: 752). An important feature of new differentiation theory is, thus, that it highlights the political, conflictual and contingent nature of the relationship between structural differentiation and the development of religious authority. Secularisation is something that occurs, or not, in the different spheres of society as the result of social and political conflicts between actors who either enhance or reduce the social significance of religion (*ibid.*).

Also Jose Casanova argues for a conceptual framework that is sensitive to the existence of multiple secularisations, not only on a global scale but also within the same regions (Casanova 1994; Casanova 2006). In this regard, Casanova proposes an analytical differentiation between the various developments that the concept of secularisation refers to, that is, in his terminology:

1. The differentiation of the secular spheres of society,
2. The privatisation of religion, and
3. The decline of religious beliefs and practices in order to test empirically whether and how these (or some of these) developments have occurred in that given context.

³ This article deals with societal as well as organisational secularisation, which falls as individual level secularisation, but not outside its scope.

As Casanova writes, separating analytically between these aspects of secularisation

allow for the examination of the validity of the three propositions independently [...] and [...] refocus [...] the secularization debate into comparative historical analysis that [...] account(s) for different patterns of secularization, in all three meanings of the term, across societies and civilizations (Casanova 2006: 8).

Chaves' and Casanova's suggestions to analytically differentiate between the various aspects of secularisation; to "untie" the assumed causal relationship between them, and not least Chaves' suggestion to focus on religious authority rather than on religion as such provide extremely useful heuristic tools for analysing and discussing the configuration of secularity prevailing in Denmark. As we shall see below, it provides a useful theoretical and methodological platform for discussing the, at the outset, curious co-existence of a low degree of structural differentiation in terms of state-church relations and a very high church membership rate simultaneously with a high degree of rationalisation and privatisation of religion and a high degree of individual level secularity.

Religious pluralism and diversity

Before continuing with the discussion of the Danish configuration of secularity, a few words shall be said about how this article defines and makes use of the concepts of religious pluralism and religious diversity.

As Lene Kühle has proposed, one can adequately discern between the presence in itself of several religions, which may be referred to as religious diversity, and the act of reflecting on religious diversity, which may be referred to as religious pluralism.⁴ Ole Riis argues along the same lines stating that, "a sociological analysis of religious pluralism may refer to a state's formal toleration of religious diversity; to religious communities' openness to dialogue and collaboration; or to an individual acceptance of religious diversity" (Riis 2011: 20). In other words, religious diversity may be used as a descriptive term referring to the very existence in the same geographical setting of several religions, while religious pluralism may refer to state accommodation of religious diversity; to the conscious and active evaluation of religious communities and individuals of what it means to them to live in a society with religious diversity as well as interaction between different religious communities.

⁴ Kühle 2004. <http://www.religion.dk/artikel/247994:Undervisning-Sekularisering-er-ikke-doed>.

As Lars Ahlin *et al.* argue in this regard, reserving the term “diversity” for the existence of different religious agents or groups, and leaving “pluralism” to refer to something more, namely the “perceptions of diversity and new patterns of interaction among religious groups” does not mean that religious diversity is a straightforward concept (Ahlin *et al.* 2012: 404 quoting Banchoff 2007: 7). Religious diversity may refer to various phenomena. As James Beckford argues, one can separate between:

- (a) diversity of religious organisations;
- (b) diversity among the individuals who associate with them;
- (c) diversity of faith traditions;
- (d) diversity in terms of individuals who combine different religious outlooks, and
- (e) internal differentiation within a religious tradition (Beckford 2003: 74-75).

The present analysis focuses on the presence in Denmark of several faith traditions and religious organisations, i.e. religious diversity. It also focuses on how religious diversity is and can be accommodated within the existing church/state structure and in accordance with existing laws regulating religion as well as on the Danish population’s perceptions of and opinions about religious diversity, i.e. religious pluralism. As concerns the latter, reflections on religious diversity (that is, religious pluralism), this article focuses not on the extent to which religious communities/individuals themselves reflect on religious diversity and/or the degree to which they interact, but rather on how the Danish population overall perceives of the presence of religious diversity in Denmark and the question of how it can and should be accommodated.

Religious diversity in Denmark

Denmark is characterised by religious diversity, even if the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Denmark is by far the dominant church/religion in the country, numerically as well as culturally. As Ahlin *et al.* point out, the freedom of religion that was granted in Denmark in 1849 rapidly led to the establishment of Christian churches alongside the National Church (Ahlin *et al.* 2012: 407). It also implied that the Catholic Church returned to Denmark after having been banned. Judaism has been present in Denmark since at least the 17th century (*ibid.*), while Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism

arrived to Denmark primarily with migration in the latter half of the 20th century.

Today, in addition to the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Denmark, the country hosts 166 Christian or Christianity-inspired congregations.⁵ The Roman Catholic Church is the second largest religious organisation in Denmark with around 40,000 members, a membership rate that has increased significantly due to immigration. Besides the principal Roman Catholic Church, there is the numerically much smaller (around 550 members) Liberal Catholic Church.⁶ There are about 7,000 Jews, some of whom consider themselves ethnic/cultural Jews and some who mainly consider Judaism their religious identity (Ahlin *et al.* 2012: 410). There are three Jewish congregations (main, progressive and orthodox). Furthermore, there are 56 Islamic congregations; 14 Buddhist congregations; 8 Hindu congregations as well as two Asa /Norse faith congregations; an Alevi organisation (with 8 regional congregations); a Baha'i congregation; and a Mandeian faith congregation.⁷ These numbers include only the congregations that have applied for and obtained official recognition (a category to be discussed below) and, thus, do not indicate the complete number of religious communities and individuals living in Denmark. It is in this regard estimated that Muslims make up the second largest religious *community* in Denmark (while the Catholic church as mentioned comprises the second largest religious *organisation*) including an estimated 4% of the total population (Jacobsen 2012). There are an estimated 28,000 Buddhists and 13,000 Hindus (Ahlin *et al.* 2012: 409), many of whom are not part of a recognised religious organisation.

The peculiarity of Danish secularity

Denmark stands out as being highly secular and highly non-secular at the same time. In order to understand why and how this is the case, one must distinguish between the institutional

⁵ <http://www.familiestyrelsen.dk/samliv/trossamfund/anerkendteoggodkendtetrossamfundogmenigheder/>.

⁶ "Religion i Danmark 2013". En e-årbog fra Center for SamtidsReligion 5. Årgang. Center for Smatidsreligion,

Institut for Kultur og Samfund, Aarhus Universitet.

⁷ These numbers are publicly available on the website of the *Familiestyrelsen*, the register of officially approved congregations.

arrangements between state and church, and the widespread conceptions about the role and space for religion in society prevailing in Danish society.

The Church of Denmark vis-à-vis state and society

Church-state relations in Western Europe can roughly be divided into three main models: 1) countries with a state or national church; 2) countries with a strict separation between state and church (limited in number but including, for example, France and the Netherlands); and 3) the cooperative model. The latter is the model most European countries fall under, characterised by constitutional separation of church and state but mutual cooperation between the state and, typically, historically dominant religions in the country (Barbalet, Possamai, and Turner 2011).

Denmark, along with Norway, England, and Greece, falls under the first model as it has a state supported church (while Malta has the Roman Catholic Church as its official state religion). In Sweden, the Evangelical-Lutheran Church was state supported until the year 2000. In Denmark, the state supported Evangelical-Lutheran Church is referred to as the *Folkekirke*. The official Danish translation into English of the *Folkekirke* is The Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Denmark. In this article it is referred to as *the Church of Denmark* or, simply, *the Church*. The Church of Denmark is strongly tied to the Danish state and counts a great majority of the Danish population as members. As of January 2013, 79.1% of the Danish population were members of the Church. Membership is slowly but steadily decreasing at a rate of 0.5% per year. The decrease is caused to a minor extent by members leaving the Church, by people not having their children baptised, and by the increasing share of young Danes who do not confirm their baptism. The primary cause of the decrease is the changing composition of the Danish population: the share of immigrants in Danish society from other religious backgrounds as well as their children, who are not and will most likely not become members of the Church, accounts for a significant part of the diminishing membership rate (Luchau 2012).

The Danish Church is legally governed by Denmark's first constitution of 1849 according to which, "the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Denmark is the church of the people and, as such, is

supported by the state". The constitution states that the Church of Denmark is to be regulated by an Act. The idea behind this provision dating back to 1849 was for the Church to have a more independent role *vis-à-vis* the state. However, an actual church constitution has never been agreed upon, even though a committee was set up in 2012 to evaluate and provide recommendations on how to modernise (but not separate) the relationship between the Church and the State. The recommendations of the committee were released in April 2014 but have yet to undergo a public hearing and Parliamentary deliberations before any changes may be implemented.

Instead of an actual church constitution, different laws have been passed over time empowering members of the Church of Denmark to influence the government of the Church via parochial church councils. There are laws governing the way in which priests are appointed and bishops elected, and; how bishops are elected; the way in which churches are used, and the way in which the Church is funded. However, it is the Minister for Ecclesiastical Affairs who decides on many if not most matters relating to the Church (Christoffersen 2010: 147). A recent example of the ministerial regulation of the Church was the decision of June 2012 (a law passed by parliament with an 85-24 vote) that the Church of Denmark can (and must) marry same sex couples. Since 2005, same sex couples have been able to be blessed in a short ceremony following a regular service. The new law makes it possible for all couples, regardless of their sexual orientation, to be married according to the same ritual. The law does not coerce priests who do not wish to marry same sex couples but, in such cases, the bishop is obliged to find a priest who can act as a substitute. Besides the strong constitutional and regulatory ties between the Church of Denmark and the state, the Church also carries out a number of duties on behalf of the state, attesting to the low degree of structural differentiation in this country.

The Church administers the registration of births and deaths for all Danes, regardless of their religious or non-religious affiliation. After the first Danish constitution of 1849, the right and duty to register births, deaths and marriages was extended to all officially recognised religious communities. However, in 1968 the duty to conduct the civil registration of births was again bestowed on the Church due to the implementation of a centralised personal register. Since then, the law has been modified to remove the need for any physical contact with the Church in regard to personal registration. In 2004 and 2005, the procedure for registration was changed: it is no longer necessary to

personally attend the Church's offices as it is possible to register electronically. As of 2010, it became the responsibility of hospitals to register births and deaths rather than the family members (Vejrup Nielsen and Kühle 2011). Nevertheless, requests for the civil register to be transferred to the state have been and are continuously being brought forward, in particular by the Catholic minority.

The Church of Denmark is also the official burial authority in Denmark. Most burials (including of non-members) take place in the cemeteries of the Church with the exception of the relatively limited number of religious minorities who have established their own cemeteries (*ibid.*). Because of the increased numbers of burials of members of other religions or non-religious persons in the Church cemeteries, more and more of its cemeteries include land that is not consecrated. In 2013, sections of two of the Church cemeteries in the Copenhagen area became reserved for non-religious burials, implying that no religious symbols may be portrayed on the gravestones in those sections of the cemeteries.

The first independent Muslim cemetery was inaugurated only in 2001 but cemeteries owned by the Jewish community, the Reformed Church, the Moravian Church, and a few Free Churches have been in existence for a longer time (*ibid.*). Muslims in particular have met significant public resistance and bureaucratic obstacles in their attempts to establish cemeteries. Furthermore, the Church of Denmark and the state are highly intertwined in economic terms. In Kærgaard's and Petersen's words, their economic relationship is very similar to that of an old married couple, which implies that it is very difficult to actually calculate who gains economically from their close relationship.

Besides administering the civil register and being the official burial authority, the Church is also legally obliged to "preserve culture" in the sense of restoring church buildings worthy of preservation as well as to pass on the church's musical tradition (Kærgaard and Petersen 2012). In terms of funding, 10-15% of the Church's budget is paid by the state while the remaining 85-90% is covered by member taxes. These taxes are collected by the state along with the general taxes (Christoffersen 2010; Kærgaard and Petersen 2012). It is unclear if the state's contribution fully covers the Church's expenses in carrying out its administrative duties. What is clear is that in purely economic terms, the officially recognised religious communities apart from the Church of Denmark (discussed below) are actually at an advantage: monetary contributions to these communities are tax exempt while

member taxes paid to the Church are not (Kærgaard and Petersen 2012). At the same time, it should be noted that this “estimation” does not take into account the value of the church buildings possessed by the Church of Denmark.

The cultural relationship between the Danish state and the Church of Denmark is both subtle and blunt. The more visible parts of the historical ties include the annual invitation of members of the government and parliament to a Church service prior to the opening of the parliament after its summer closure. Likewise, priests and bishops from the Church are invited to official events and celebrations of the Royal House. Finally, Church services are broadcast on public media. The Church of Denmark thus culturally and symbolically enjoys a favourable position in Danish society, which is continuously re-affirmed by these traditions. While there may be good historical reasons for this, critical voices point out the benefit of revising some of these practices in a more inclusive manner in order to accommodate the increasingly diverse religious and cultural landscape in Denmark instead of continuously re-affirming the cultural primacy of the Church of Denmark.

The low degree of structural differentiation in Denmark is also attested to by the courses in Christianity taught in public schools 1-2 hours a week. The courses do not involve preaching but are informative, including teachings in ethics, philosophy, the history of Christianity and its impact on culture and art, as well as teachings in evolution theory and the difference between science and religion. Only at a later stage, however, at the end of primary education do the courses include non-Christian religions. All parents have (and have had since 1851) the right to exempt their children from courses in Christianity according to the school law. In reality, only a few parents, including parents of non-Christian affiliation, seem to make use of this right. For example, (non-scientific) surveys indicate that only a few parents of Muslim students exempt their children from courses in Christianity.⁸

Legal and societal position of other religious communities

There is religious freedom in Denmark. According to the Danish constitution, members of the public are entitled to associate in communities to worship God in accordance with their convictions as

⁸ <http://www.kristeligt-dagblad.dk/artikel/138904:Danmark-Faa-muslimmer-fritages-fra-kristendom>.

long as nothing is taught or done that contravenes decency or public order. It also states that no one may be deprived of access to the full enjoyment of civil and political rights or evade the fulfilment of any general civic duty on the grounds of his or her profession of faith or descent. The constitution furthermore states that no one is under an obligation to make personal contributions to any form of worship other than his or her own.

Indeed, people who are not members of the Church of Denmark are exempted from paying taxes to the Church. However, since the state pays 10-15% of the expenses of the Church and finances this via general taxes, everyone does in fact contribute in economic terms to the Church of Denmark regardless of their religious or non-religious affiliation. This is also something that has raised criticism, in particular from the Catholic minority. Because there is religious freedom in Denmark, religious communities do not need, and are by no means required, to become officially recognised/approved by the Danish state. In fact, the only legal framework that constrains these religious communities is the Penal Code; in terms of organisational freedom, this gives these communities a great advantage compared to the Church of Denmark as the latter is highly regulated by the Church Ministry (Christoffersen 2010: 583).

However, there is the possibility for religious communities to apply for official approval and thereby obtain the benefits accruing to such approval. Currently, religious communities may fall under a number of categories if they choose to enter the jungle of official recognition: 1) recognised religious communities; 2) approved religious communities; 3) religious communities; and 4) groups recognised in accordance with the tax law. The first category bestows the right to conduct marriages with civil validity; the right and duty to have their own civil register of their members (a practice that was, however, abandoned in 1969 due to the introduction of one common official register); the right to issue birth certificates; the ability to obtain permission to establish independent cemeteries; and a series of tax benefits. "Approved religious communities" enjoy most of the same benefits as "recognised religious communities", except they are not able to issue birth certificates and also enjoy fewer tax benefits. While the "recognised" and "approved" religious communities are approved by an independent committee set up by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Integration, religious communities under categories three and four are recognised solely by the tax authorities for tax exemption purposes only; they do not enjoy the same benefits as the "recognised" and "approved" religious communities.

Despite the attempt to make the process of approval as transparent and neutral as possible, the procedure has been criticised. First of all, religious communities complain that becoming recognised is too difficult, too lengthy and too bureaucratic a process, while others are not at all interested in obtaining official recognition even if it does confer access to certain benefits. In particular Buddhists in the survey I conducted noted that they find the process of recognition (which they explain that they seek mainly for tax purposes) bureaucratically complicated and the criteria for recognition unfit for their type of religious organisation.

Low degree of societal differentiation: Does it matter?

As can be deduced from the above, freedom of religion and equality of religion in Denmark are two very different things. However, whether it is easier or more beneficial to be, respectively, the Church of Denmark, a recognised or approved religious community or “simply” a religious community not having applied for any form of official recognition is not clear-cut, but greatly depends on the parameters used in the evaluation.

From a purely economic perspective, the Church of Denmark is not necessarily better off than the other religious communities. In terms of organisational freedom, the regulatory status of the Church of Denmark may not necessarily be considered the most attractive in the eyes of the Church itself. Recognised and non-recognised communities alike enjoy a much greater degree of organisational freedom than does the Church of Denmark. This is due to the fact that the latter comes under the regulation of the Church Ministry while the former “only” has to comply with the Penal Code. At the same time, it also appears obvious that the symbolism of having a system that operates with different levels of official recognition and approval of religious groups, even if only for tax and administrative purposes, as well as the continuously reaffirmed cultural primacy of the Church of Denmark vis-à-vis other religious groups cannot but create a climate of value-ranking. Hence, as warned by Bielefeldt, having a situation of legally differentiated treatment does impact on a society’s ability to accommodate religious diversity, and this is also the case for Denmark.

Yet, as I will argue in detail below, a low degree of structural differentiation is not the most pressing concern as regards state and societal accommodation of religious diversity. This is confirmed by

the concerns expressed by the religious groups (Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists) surveyed for this article. While separation of church and state figures among the top three priority changes suggested for improving Danish society's accommodation of religious diversity, it is considered far less important than combating prejudices and discrimination. It is also considered as far less important than better reflecting in the public school curriculum the fact that Denmark has become a religiously and culturally diverse society. Combating prejudices and discrimination is mentioned as a top priority twice as frequently as separation of church and state, and reflecting religious diversity in the school curriculum is mentioned one and a half times as frequently as church-state separation.

Breaking down the answers by religious affiliation reveals that Muslims are about three times more likely than both Buddhists and Hindus to mention combating prejudices and discrimination as a top three priority. Buddhists are almost three times more likely than Muslims and twice as likely as Hindus to mention separation of church and state as a top three priority policy for improving Danish society's accommodation of religious diversity (see figure 1 below).

The higher percentage of Buddhists of the opinion that the Church should be separated from the state can very likely be explained by the fact that the majority of Buddhist respondents (over 80%) are Danish born persons above 30 years of age. There is therefore a greater possibility that many of them may have been former members of the Church of Denmark, or they were atheists or "cultural Christians" as many people define themselves in Denmark. In converting to Buddhism, they may have developed a more conscious and elaborated opinion about the Church of Denmark and its state supported status.

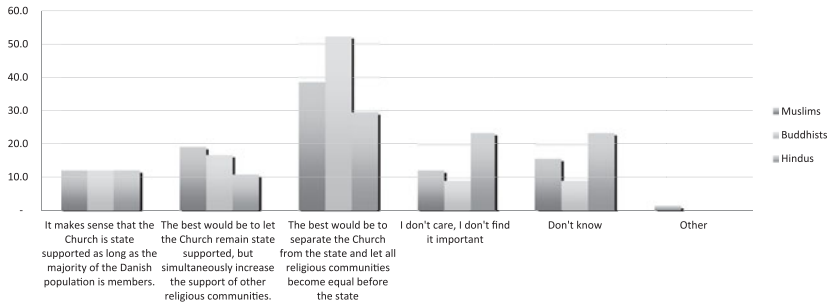
When asked about the Christianity classes conducted in public schools, Muslims and Buddhists are divided on whether the title of the course should be changed from "Christianity" to "Religion" and include all major religions relevant to Denmark (Muslims: 58.3%), or to "Religion, Philosophy and World-Views", with greater attention paid to non-Christian religions and philosophies (Buddhists: 60%). Hindus are fairly evenly distributed among the other options listed in figure 2 below.⁹

⁹ Far more Hindus than Muslims and Buddhists stated that religion should not be taught in public schools. This may be due to the fact that many of the Hindu respondents are recently arrived immigrants from India. Their views on religion and public schools

(as well as religion in society more broadly) are therefore influenced by an Indian configuration of secularity, which is characterized by a greater degree of structural differentiation than is the case for Denmark.

FIGURE 1

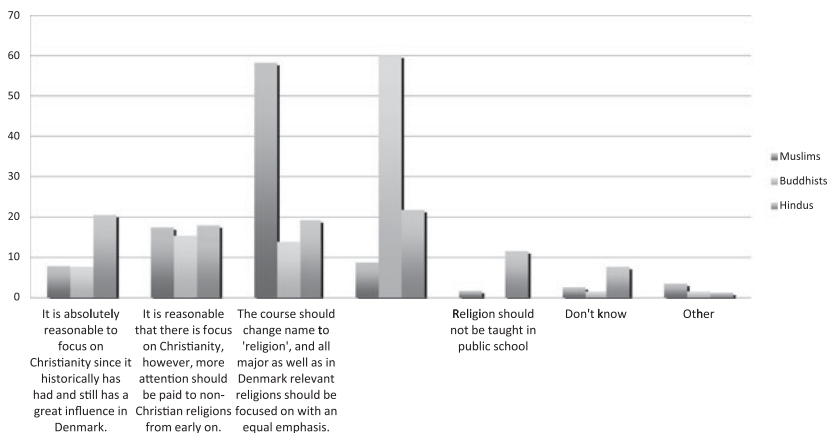
“In Denmark the Evangelical-Lutheran Church is state supported. What do you think about that?” (percentages)



The failure of the Danish school system to reflect on increased cultural and religious diversity is internationally recognised. The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) has strongly recommended that school curricula at all levels should include teaching on cultural diversity, human rights in general and racism and racial discrimination in particular, and recommends that

FIGURE 2

“What do you think about the course on Christianity in public schools?” (percentages)



the contribution of minority groups to Danish society be taught in all schools at all levels.¹⁰ Likewise, the latest UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) report notes with concern that Danish school curricula, at all levels of education, do not seem to include sufficient information on Danish cultural diversity. It also notes that the culture of national or ethnic minorities is not sufficiently reflected in the fields of culture and information.¹¹

That Denmark is one of the countries in Europe with a considerably high level of discrimination and xenophobia, especially with respect to Muslims, is also internationally recognised. The ECRI stresses in its four reports on Denmark to date that discrimination against immigrants and minorities, and in particular against Muslims, has worsened, especially as concerns the tone of public and political debate. As various Danish media surveys also attest, Islam is predominantly equated with extremism in the media and described as a repressive, dangerous religion that poses a threat to Danish society (Berg and Hervik 1997: 28; Madsen 2000; Andreassen 2005). The ECRI continues to encourage Danish media and politicians to play a more responsible role in the way in which minority groups in general and Muslims in particular are portrayed. It has also urged Denmark to take a more proactive approach in prosecuting people making racist statements in accordance with the existing anti-discrimination law, and to strengthen efforts in monitoring and prosecuting hate crime overall.¹²

The 2008 International Social Survey Program on Religion (ISSP 2008)¹³ supports the finding of Muslims, in particular, being victims of discrimination and prejudice. Comparing popular attitudes towards the principal non-Christian religious minority groups in Denmark, it appears that people are significantly more likely to hold negative attitudes towards Muslims than towards Hindus, Jews or Buddhists.¹⁴

¹⁰ All four country reports on Denmark can be found on the ECRI website http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/library/publications_en.asp.

¹¹ "Reports submitted by States Parties under Article 9 of the Convention: International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination: Information provided by the Government of Denmark on the Implementation of the Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination." [http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/publisher,CERD,CONCOBSCOMMENTSDNK_478369ob2.o.html](http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/publisher/CERD,CONCOBSCOMMENTSDNK_478369ob2.o.html).

¹² "Reports submitted by States Parties under Article 9 of the Convention: International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination: Information provided by the Government of Denmark on the Implementation of the Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination."

¹³ ZA4950: International Social Survey Programme 2008: Religion III (ISSP 2008).

¹⁴ 35.4% have very negative feelings towards Muslims while 9.6% have negative feelings towards Jews, 9.4% towards Hindus and 6.9% towards Buddhists.

My own survey supports these findings. Among the three religious minority groups surveyed, far more Muslims than Buddhists and Hindus state that they find discrimination against them to be a “very big” or simply a “big” problem.

The survey also confirms that Muslims are the most concerned religious minority (and significantly more so than the other two religious groups) as to their portrayal in the media, with half of the Muslim respondents stating that they are “almost always” negatively portrayed in the media, and 25% of Muslims stating that they are “always negatively” portrayed (in contrast to 14.6% of Hindus and 4.6% of Buddhists).

There are, in other words, good reasons for Muslims to mention combating prejudices and discrimination three times more frequently than both Hindus and Buddhists as a way for Danish society to improve its accommodation of religious diversity. It seems reasonable in this regard to argue that at least part of the reason why Buddhist respondents are less likely than Muslims to mention combating prejudices and discrimination is that their religious “otherness” is not intertwined with an ethnic or immigrant “otherness”. It can also reasonably be argued that the reason why Hindus, then, are less likely than are Muslims to mention combating discrimination as the most pressing policy concern may be related to their practice of religion,

FIGURE 3

“How big a problem do you think discrimination of the religious minority you belong to is in Denmark?” (percentages)

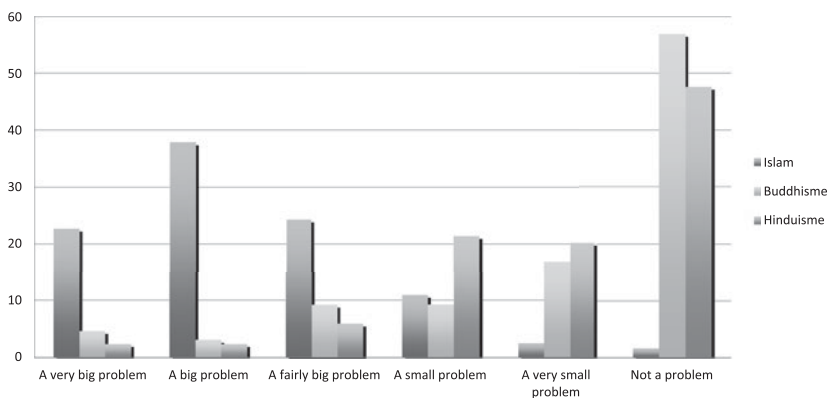
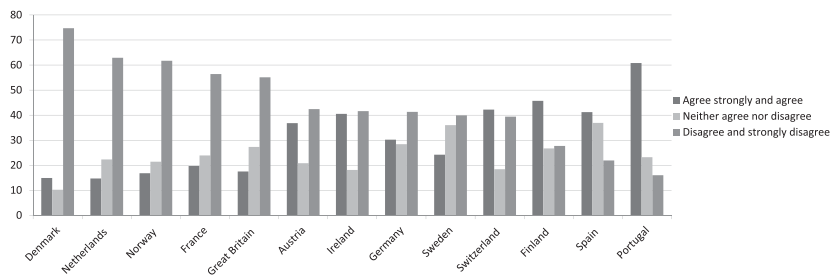


FIGURE 4

“Ethnic minorities should be given government assistance to preserve their customs and traditions.” (percentages) ISSP 2003



which is less visible than for many Muslims (e.g. the wearing of headscarves by female Muslims). Finally, the reason why so many Muslims are concerned about discrimination compared to the other religious groups is due to the fact that Muslims are subjected to a high degree of *securitisation*. That is, after 9/11 and other foiled or successful attacks carried out in the name of Islam, Muslims and their religion are negatively associated with religious fundamentalism, extremism, and terrorism. There is therefore a much more negative focus overall on Islam and Muslims compared to the other religious groups surveyed. The numeric fact that there are considerably more Muslims than Hindus and Buddhists in Denmark also appears to generate concern among the general public as to the impact of this on Danish culture and society.

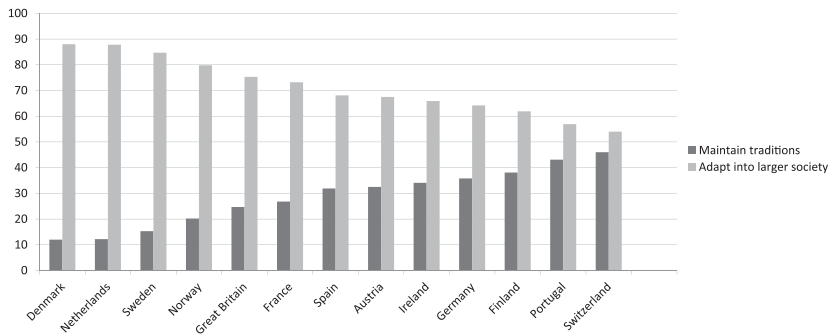
As well as indicating that discrimination is a main concern in particular for Muslims, survey data also indicates low support among the Danish population overall of cultural and religious diversity. Close to two-thirds (64%) of the Danish population does not think that all religious groups should have equal status in Denmark.¹⁵ This is substantiated by the ISSP 2008 showing that while most Danes (77.9%) tend to agree that all religions in Denmark should enjoy equal respect, fewer people agree that all religious groups should also enjoy equal rights (53.2%). Along the same lines, Denmark is the Western European country in which most people think that ethnic minorities should not have public support to preserve their customs

¹⁵ While 23% think they should and 13% do not know. A representative survey among 1,002 Danes conducted by YouGov on behalf of the

national broadcast station, *Danmarks Radio*. <http://www.dr.dk/Tro/Artikler/20120413153719.htm>. Accessed 18 February 2013.

FIGURE 5

“Should minorities preserve their own traditions or adapt to society at large?” (percentages) ISSP 2003. Denmark



and traditions. It is also the country in which most people think that minorities should adapt to the traditions of the host/majority society rather than maintaining their own.

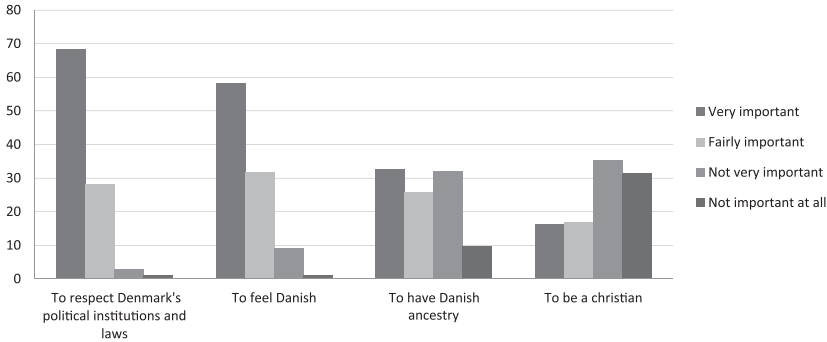
Moreover, close to two-thirds of those surveyed believe that it is only possible to become fully Danish by sharing Denmark's customs and traditions.¹⁶ What these customs and traditions are, however, is left open for interpretation: respondents may have been referring to the celebration of Christmas, or they may have been thinking about democracy and the rule of law. The latter seems more likely given that the ISSP 2003 survey on national identity shows that respect for political institutions and laws is considered the most important part of being Danish, more so than religious identity.

In the following I will argue that Danes are less likely to favour an active accommodation of religious diversity because they consider themselves to be highly secular. They consider religion to be a private matter that should not be explicitly or publicly accommodated beyond the legal right to practise one's religion.

¹⁶ ZA3910: International Social Survey Programme: National Identity II - ISSP 2003. 30.1% strongly agree that it is impossible for people who do not share Denmark's

customs and traditions to become fully Danish while 31.3% agree; 8% neither agree nor disagree; 16.9% disagree and 13.9% disagree strongly.

FIGURE 6
 “How important is... for being Danish?” (percentages) ISSP 2003



Belonging and believing: Disenchanted Danes?

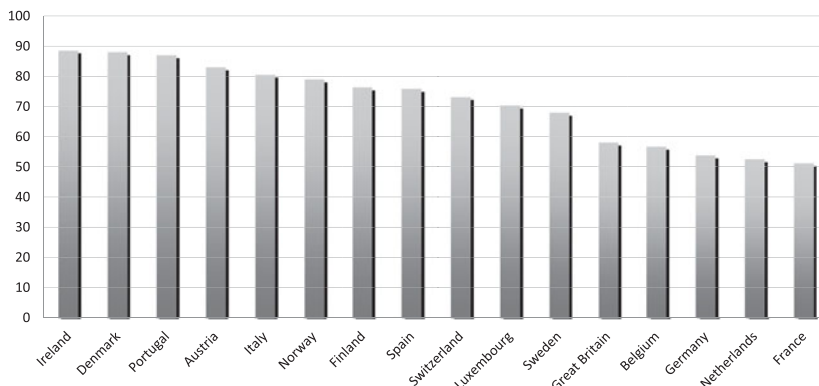
Grace Davie has described changes in religiosity in Britain as a situation in which people “believe without belonging” (Davie 1994). Daniele Hervieu-Leger has offered the reverse characterisation of the situation in Europe as one where people “belong without believing”. That is, many people are still affiliated with the church despite not being firm believers (Hervieu-Leger 2004). While neither of these descriptions fully captures most Danes’ way of being religious, Daniele Hervieu-Leger’s characterisation comes closest. A large percentage of the population are registered members of the Church of Denmark. In the most recent survey on this point, the European Value Study of 2008¹⁷ (EVS 2008), 88% of the population declared itself a member of a religious denomination. However, very few people attend religious services on a regular basis. Around 40% of the population never attends religious services, and 40% attend less than once or twice a year.¹⁸ Only around 10% attend religious services several times a year and less than 2% attend more often.¹⁹

¹⁷ ZA4800: European Value Study 2008: Integrated Dataset.

¹⁸ ISSP 2008. 40.7% never go to church; 21.7% participate in church activities less than once a year; 20.4% participate once or twice a year.

¹⁹ ISSP 2008. The distribution is supported by the EVS 2008 showing that around one-third never attend religious services and one-third only on specific holidays, while 15.3% attend once a year; 10.8% attend less often. 7.4% attend once a month and 2.6% once a week or more.

FIGURE 7
 “Do you belong to a religious denomination? “Yes” (percentages) EVS
 2008



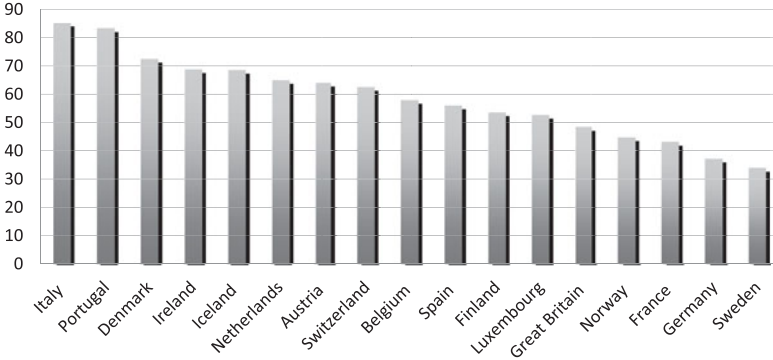
The high membership rate of the Church of Denmark combined with the low frequency of attendance at religious services confirms the general impression that the Church is used to celebrate major life events such as births, confirmations, marriages and burials; many people only attend religious services on such special occasions.²⁰ But the figures also reveal a picture of people who do in fact *belong* and are quite loyal “*belongers*” even if they do not use the Church very often. A majority of Danes belong, but do they also believe? About two-thirds (63.6%) of the population believe in god and more than two-thirds (72.3%) consider themselves a religious person.²¹ This illustrates a situation in which a majority of people both belong and believe. Indeed, while Denmark is often hailed, along with other Northern European countries, as the epitome of a highly secularised society, this masks a much more complex picture. In terms of those belonging to a religious denomination or declaring themselves to be religious, Denmark is among the “top scoring” Western European countries in terms of personal religiosity.

However, if we measure only belief in god, Denmark is among the mid- to low-scoring Western European countries.

²⁰ <http://www.kristeligt-dagblad.dk/artikel/266064:Statistik-om-religion-Hvorfor-gaar-danskene-saa-sjaeldent-i-kerke>; <http://videnskab.dk/kultur-samfund/flere-gar-i-kerke-juleaften>.

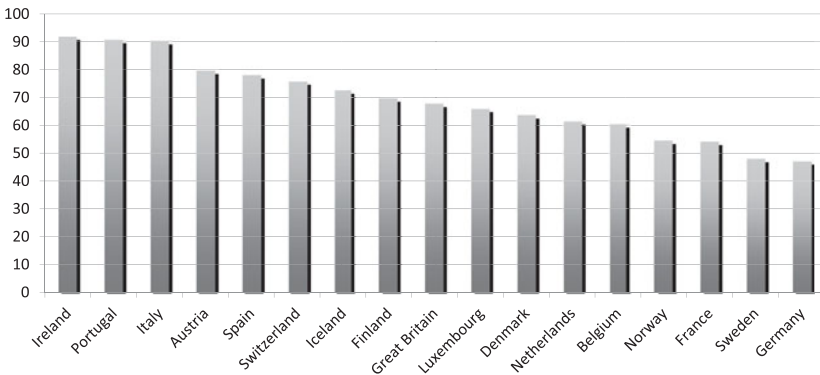
²¹ EVS 2008. 63.6% answered yes to being a religious person; 72.3% considered themselves a religious person, while 20.9% answered no to being a religious person; 6.8% stated that they were convinced atheists.

FIGURE 8
Are you a religious person? "Yes" (percentages) EVS 2008



A detailed exploration of the question of *how* the Danes believe reveals more of this complex picture. While approximately two-thirds declared in the EVS 2008 survey that they believed in god (yes/no answer), only a little over 10% (13.4%) of the population surveyed in the ISSP 2008 survey stated that they believed in god with certainty, which is very low compared to other Western European countries. The three “top scoring” countries where most people “know god really exists and have no doubts about it” are Portugal with 54.4%,

FIGURE 9
“Do you believe in god? “Yes” (percentages) EVS 2008



Ireland with 45.1% and Italy with 42.9%. Only in Sweden do fewer people believe in god with certainty (10.3%) than in Denmark (ISSP 2008). A little less than one-third of Danes are more doubtful but “feel that they believe in god” or that they believe in god “sometimes” and “sometimes not”. Rather than believing in god, 25% of the population believes in “a higher power” while 18.4% state that they do not believe in god (topped only by Germany (23.6%), France (21.9%), the Netherlands (19.8%) and Sweden (19.5%) ISSP 2008).

It is likewise interesting to note that while 72.3% declared they were religious in the EVS 2008 survey, the picture becomes more complex when people were asked in the ISSP 2008 survey to describe the *level* of their religiosity in more precise terms. More than one-third of the population (41.1%) claims to be “neither religious nor non-religious” and less than one-quarter (18.3%) claim to be “somewhat religious”. More than one-third declare themselves to be “somewhat non-religious” to “extremely non-religious”.²²

An even more curious picture emerges when we consider the question of how religion and god *matter* in peoples’ lives. With a somewhat high percentage of the population claiming to be religious and to believe in god (with lesser or greater certainty) or a higher power, and a high level of people belonging to a religious denomination one could presume that religion would matter a fair amount in the lives of Danes. However, that is not the case. While 82.1% of the population were registered members of the People’s Church in 2008 and 88% declared that they belonged to a religious denomination, more than two-thirds declared either that religion is “not at all important” (20.9%) or simply “not important” (49.1%) in their lives; two-thirds also declared that they do not “find comfort or strength” in religion.²³ A picture that is confirmed by the 65.8% of the population who “strongly disagree” with the statement that life is meaningful because god exists.²⁴ In the same vein, only 2.2% of the population finds that religion matters in describing them as a person (ISSP 2003).

Hence, a curious picture emerges when looking at how religion factors into the lives of Danes. A great number of Danes are “loyal”

²² ISSP 2008. 13.5% declare themselves to be somewhat non-religious, 13% to be very non-religious and 9.5% to be extremely non-religious. Only 3.3% consider themselves to be very religious and 1% extremely religious.

²³ EVS 2008. Precisely 64.9% declared that they did not find comfort and strength in religion.

²⁴ ISSP 2008: “Life is meaningful because god exists”: 9.7% disagree; 12% neither disagree nor agree; 6.8% agree; and 5.7% strongly agree.

church members in the sense that they use the church throughout their lives for important events and for special occasions, although not for much more. At the same time, while the percentage of the population that supports church-state separation is increasing, especially among young people, close to two-thirds of the population still supports the idea of a state supported church.²⁵ A complex picture also emerges with respect to people's beliefs. A majority declare that they believe in god or in a higher power, although only a few do so with certainty. A majority declare that they are religious, but very few find strength and comfort in religion, or find that god matters. In other words, Danes *belong* and they *believe* to some extent, but religion does not matter or play a major role in most people's lives. This may reflect the fact that, in parallel to belonging and somewhat believing, Danes are in fact highly secularised in the sense described by Chaves. That is, very few Danes have their lives regulated by a religious authority, and a great majority of Danes are of the opinion that religion is and should remain solely a private matter.

Individual-level secularisation

Surveys indicate that the Danish population has high expectations of maintaining a secular public sphere, with religion as a private matter. A great majority (79.2%) finds that religious leaders should not impact on voters' choices. An even greater majority (92.3%) finds that politicians who do not believe in god are perfectly fit for office,²⁶ and a great majority (83%) finds that religious leaders should not influence government policies.²⁷ Most people also prefer religious leaders not to speak out in public on social and political matters: 80.2% do not want religious leaders to speak out in public on government policies; 65.7% do not want them to speak out on unemployment; 60.7% do not want them to speak out on abortion; and 66.2% do not want them to speak out on homosexuality (EVS 1990). Indeed, it is rare to hear religious

²⁵ In 2010, 59% of the population was in favor of a state supported church compared to 70% in 1999. <http://jyllands-posten.dk/indland/article1814001.ece> (a poll undertaken by *Rambøll/Analyse Danmark* on behalf of *Morgenavisen Jyllands-Posten*), <http://www.information.dk/telegram/233992>. Survey conducted by Capacent on behalf of *Kristeligt Dagblad*. Accessed 21 February 2012.

²⁶ ISSP 2008. 65.5% strongly disagree and 26.8% disagree.

²⁷ ISSP 2008. 69.9% strongly agree; 13.1% agree while 7.3% neither agree nor disagree; 5.4% disagree and 4.4% disagree strongly. EVS 2008 likewise shows that 78.4% of the population find that religious leaders should not impact on government decisions; 57.9% strongly agree; 20.5% agree; 5.4% neither agree nor disagree; 10.8% disagree and 5.4% disagree strongly.

leaders in Denmark, in particular leaders from the Church of Denmark, speak out in public on sensitive issues. Issues that are considered somewhat more “philanthropic” in character are perceived as more reasonable topics for public discussion by the church and religious leaders. Hence, 63.7% of Danes find that religious leaders may reasonably speak out in public on development aid.

Data also suggests that Denmark is a society with a very high level of individual-level secularisation in the sense proposed by Chaves, i.e. that the lives of individuals are not regulated by religious authority. Two-thirds of the population declares that there are no clear guidelines for good and evil; three-quarters of the population declares that the church does not provide answers to problems of family life, and over three-quarters of the population declares that the church does not provide answers to social problems (EVS 2008). As to the question of what should take precedence in situations where one’s religious principles conflict with the law, over one-third of the population states that the law should be followed, one-third that they have no religious principles, and less than one-third that religious principles should be followed.²⁸ Hence, while Danes both belong and believe to some extent, they are “secularised” believers and do not want religious authority to impact on the public and political sphere.

Policy developments that attest to religion being considered a private matter in Denmark include the introduction within the last decade of laws restricting the display of religious symbols in the public sphere. While there is no general ban in Denmark on face-covering religious headwear as is the case in other European countries (e.g. France and Belgium), a law was passed in 2009 prohibiting court personnel from appearing in any way that could be perceived as an expression of their religious or political affiliation, or as an expression of their opinions concerning religious or political questions. The Danish police force has reaffirmed its ban on religious headwear for police officers, and the Danish Home Guard has banned a female member for wearing a Muslim headscarf. Ad hoc administrative bans have also been issued. Municipalities have denied authorisation to public childcare facilitators wearing the burqa or niqab, as this was found to impede their contact with children, and Muslim women

²⁸ ISSP 2008. 13.6% answered “definitely follow the law”, 26.2% answered “probably follow the law”, 36.6% answered that they have no religious principles, 16.1% answered

“probably follow religious principles”, and 7.5% answered “definitely follow religious principles”.

wearing burqas have been denied public unemployment support. Sikhs (of whom there are few in Denmark, approximately 1,500-2,000) have also been subject to restrictions. In 2006, a high court ruled against a Sikh who sought to wear his kirpan in public, and there have been reported instances of airport security controls requesting Sikhs to remove their turbans (cases that were resolved through dialogue between the Sikh community and airport security personnel). Moreover, a 2010 amendment of the Penal Code makes it illegal to force another person to wear face-covering headwear. The provision was motivated by a Parliamentary majority to support Muslim women in cases where they are forced to wear face-covering scarves by spouses/families. Parliamentary hearings show that the rationale for the law was to send a clear signal that Denmark considers the burqa or niqab incompatible with gender equality.²⁹

Danish secularity and religious diversity

The simultaneous existence of a low degree of differentiation, a high degree of rationalisation and privatisation as well as a high degree of individual-level secularisation may appear contradictory. This not least if one assumes that differentiation is a precondition for and is inevitably tied to the other conditions. As discussed in the beginning of this article, it is possible to untie the assumed causal relationship between structural differentiation, rationalisation, privatisation and decline in religious belief and significance. Nevertheless, it appears paradoxical that a considerable majority of the Danish population are members of and support the state supported status of the Church of Denmark while at the same time being of the strong opinion that religion should remain a private matter and not “impose” itself onto the public and political spheres of society. The reasons behind this apparent paradox, I will argue, are manifold.

Part of the explanation is that this is not a paradox for most Danes. The Church is perceived, I will argue, by many as forming part of the Danish welfare state. Due to the services it provides (official burial

²⁹ In this regard, it should be noted there is no Danish case law of women being forced to wear face-covering headwear. A report conducted by Copenhagen University on behalf of a Government Working Group concluded that only approximately 100-200 women wear a niqab in Denmark and that no

women wore the traditional typically Afghan version of the. The Report also found that half of the women who wear niqabs are ethnic Danes who have converted to Islam. http://ec.europa.eu/ewsi/UDRW/images/items/docl_12652_61274484.pdf.

authority, registration of births and deaths, etc.) and the fact that it has received state support since 1849, the Church is seen as catering to major life events as well as taking care of “earthly” administrative duties. The fact that Danes see the Church as part of the Danish welfare state means that the Church of Denmark has been generalised, in a Parsonian sense, into the very fabric of Danish society, and this has neutralised its highly “non-differentiated” position in Danish society. Accordingly, most Danes do not see a paradox in having a state supported church and, simultaneously, a strictly secular public sphere. Nor do they see this as conflicting with the demand that religious minorities respect the Danish public sphere as one where claims of public recognition and accommodation of personal religious beliefs, traditions, and sensitivities are inappropriate.

This naturally brings us to the question of the extent to which the configuration of Danish secularity leaves room for religious diversity. While the low degree of differentiation poses some challenges to accommodating religious diversity, the high level of rationalisation, privatisation, and generalisation as well as the high level of individual-level secularisation pose even greater challenges. Since religion is perceived by a large majority of Danes as something that should not impact on the public and political spheres, and since few individuals are themselves subject to religious authority, there is little tolerance of other perhaps less private and less “individual-level secularised” ways of being religious and expressing religiosity. In particular, there is little support towards it being accommodated in the public sphere. But since religious diversity is characterised precisely by various and different ways of being, portraying and practising religion, the strictly private and non-authoritative space for religion offered by the Danish configuration of secularity cannot but pose some limitations on the accommodation of religious diversity.

Concluding remarks

I have with this article provided an example of how the main concepts offered by the “old” secularisation paradigm still function as useful analytical tools for describing and discussing secular structures and configurations, in this case in Denmark. I have also provided an example of how separating between these concepts, i.e. structural differentiation, rationalisation, privatisation, and generalisation as

well as individual-level versus societal level secularisation, and not least untying the often assumed causal relationship between these, serves to nuance the picture of what secularity might look like in different contexts.

I have also argued that the peculiar combination existing in Denmark of a state supported church (low degree of structural differentiation) combined with a high level of rationalisation, privatisation and generalisation of religion, and a high level of individual level secularisation, provides a somewhat narrow structure for accommodating the changing and increasingly diversifying religious landscape in Denmark. Moreover, this appears to matter more than religious legal inequality in and of itself.

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Résumé

Cet article étudie la manière dont la configuration particulière de sécularisme propre au Danemark accorde l'espace nécessaire à la diversité religieuse. Il adopte le cadre théorique proposé par José Casanova et Mark Chaves pour distinguer analytiquement les composants centraux de la sécularisation et garantir l'étude empirique de leurs développements et de leurs rapports dans différents contextes géographiques et géopolitiques.

Dans cette perspective, l'article étudie les conditions requises pour établir la diversité religieuse au Danemark à travers la combinaison d'un faible niveau de différenciation structurelle, et d'un haut niveau de rationalisation, de généralisation et de privatisation de la religion. L'article suggère que l'inégalité légale existant au Danemark entre les communautés religieuses issue de la relation forte entre l'État et l'Église (ex. le faible niveau de différenciation) compte moins pour la diversité religieuse que les sentiments et imaginaires séculaires largement et fortement partagés dans la sphère publique (ex. haut niveau de rationalisation, généralisation et privatisation de la religion).

Mots-clés: Diversité religieuse ; Sécularisme ; Minorités religieuses ; Pluralisme.

Zusammenfassung

Es geht in diesem Beitrag um die Art und Weise, wie Dänemarks säkulares System der religiösen Diversität den notwendigen Spielraum einräumt. Der theoretische Rahmen von José Casanova und Mark Chaves erlaubt es, die zentralen Elemente der Säkularisierung analytisch zu unterscheiden und die empirische Studie ihrer Entwicklungen und Verhältnisse in verschiedenen geographischen und geopolitischen Zusammenhängen zu ermöglichen. Unter diesem Gesichtspunkt untersucht der Aufsatz, welche Voraussetzungen das dänische System basierend auf einem niedrigen Niveau struktureller Differenzierung und einem hohen Niveau an Rationalisierung, Verallgemeinerung und Privatisierung der Religion für die religiöse Diversität bietet. Es zeichnet sich ab, dass die legale Ungleichheit, die in Dänemark unter religiösen Gemeinschaften aufgrund der starken Beziehung zwischen Staat und Kirche (z.B. das geringe Niveau der Differenzierung) besteht, weniger Bedeutung für die religiöse Diversität hat, als die weitverbreiteten und stark geteilten Gefühle und säkularen Vorstellungen (z.B. ein hohes Niveau an Rationalisierung, Verallgemeinerung und Privatisierung der Religion).

Schlüsselwörter: Religiöse Diversität; Säkularismus; Religiöse Minderheiten; Pluralismus.