

**Church Oriented Religion as a Factor for Global Development:  
Eroded by human well-being and supported by cultural diversity, but still  
kicking and alive?**

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**Abstract**

Most versions of secularization theory expect modernization to drive towards religious decline. In contrast, this paper argues that different dimensions of contemporary modernization processes affect religion in opposite ways. Rising levels of human security and well-being are assumed to drive towards religious decline, while growing cultural diversity is assumed to push towards religious expansion. In the first part of this paper, these two hypotheses are simultaneously investigated, using world wide data for 50 000 respondents from 37 countries with a predominantly Christian heritage. The findings are in accordance with the theoretical expectations and demonstrate that church-oriented religion is positively related to the cultural diversity and negatively to human security and well-being. A simple assumption that modernization unambiguously brings religious decline therefore seems unwarranted. A similar conclusion can be made from findings that demonstrated church-oriented religious involvement among 6 West-European to stable and not decreasing during the last 25-year period.

In the second part of the paper, the hypothesis that church-oriented religion, especially among the rich countries of the world, would be unrelated to support for global development is investigated, using data for the 2006 wave of the World Values Survey in four West-European highly modernized countries. As a theoretical basis for this analysis, the concept of compartmentalization is introduced. The concept refers to “secularization in mind” and the degree to which religious convictions influence people’s socio-political orientations. According to compartmentalization theory, church-oriented religion can still have an impact on the believers’ orientations towards various socio-political issues, global development include, even in highly secularized contexts. The empirical findings support this hypothesis and suggest that church-oriented religious involvement is positively related to both support for global development policies and better conditions for activist pressures for social policies. In a general sense, church-oriented religion therefore appears to strengthen policies for global development.

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## ***Modernization as a general cause of secularization?<sup>1</sup>***

Most versions of secularization theory see modernization as a cause of religious decline.

Economic development, functional and structural differentiation, urbanization, industrialization and rising education are said to weaken religion. Even if the different dimensions of modernization are not seen as equally important for the religious decline, some combination of them is usually said to reduce religion to become a subsystem alongside other subsystems, losing much of its former overarching relevance for both individuals and society. As a result of modernization, secular institutions are said to have become increasingly independent and autonomous in relation to religion, religious institutions to have become increasingly affected by secular norms and patterns, and individual world-views and value systems to have become increasingly emancipated from religious authorities.

Comparative analyses of religious involvement regularly give strong empirical support to the claim that religious involvement tends to be weaker in highly modernized societies. For instance, the national averages for the subjective importance which people attach to God correlate substantively negative with standard measures of modernization like the Human Development Index, the Weighted Index for Social Progress and the Human Well-being Index (Esmer & Pettersson 2006; cf. Inglehart & Norris 2004). The religious decline is also known to be especially apparent in Western Europe, one of the most economically developed regions in the world (Casanova 1994; Acquaviva 1979). But at the same time, the economically advanced countries in Western Europe are also known to diverge considerably in religious matters. Religious participation is substantively higher in the Southern Catholic parts when compared to the Northern Protestant. These differences demonstrate that the levels of religious involvement are also affected by factors other than modernization and economic development. A similar conclusion can be based on relationships between the levels of religious involvement and various key measures of modernization which were mentioned above. Even if each of the reported correlations (ranging around -.60) demonstrate a substantial effect of modernization, they also give room for factors which are not directly related to economic development and modernization in a narrow sense.

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<sup>1</sup> Parts of this paper are based on a recently published article on religious change (Pettersson 2006)

Obviously, one should not expect the strength of such a complex social phenomena as religion to be explained by one single factor only.

Thus, even if most secularization theorists agree that structural and functional differentiation has reduced religion's influence on public life, there is also considerable disagreement among them about the impact of this development at other social levels. Some assume that the differentiation between religious and secular institutions has led to a privatized religion which has remained relevant to personal and private matters. Religion is assumed to have become increasingly assigned to the home – family life, love, and intimacy- and to have become a matter of individual and private taste (see e.g. Turner 1991, 2000). Such a privatized religion is assumed to be disassociated from public and political matters, and secularization in this sense does not necessarily call for a decline in individual religiosity. It is only the societal effects of religion that are expected to have ceased.

The many different views on secularization suggest that one should not speak of *the* secularization theory. Instead, it has been emphasized that the “secularization paradigm” includes several competing understandings of what secularization is and which modernization processes it is driven by (Gorski 2000, 141). In order to investigate some of the different approaches to secularization, this paper will investigate three aspects of how modernization is likely to affect religion. The first concerns the effects of rising levels of existential security and human well-being. The second concerns the effects of growing levels of cultural diversity. The third concerns the privatization of religion.

### **Religion and existential security**

It is regularly assured that economic development brings improved well-being and human security. It is also frequently claimed that lack of human security and well-being brings higher levels of religious involvement, with religion being interpreted as a compensator for poor and difficult conditions of life. In short, religion has been explained as a response to human deprivation. Karl Marx' classical verdict that “religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless

world, and the soul of soulless conditions” is one of the most well-known expressions of this line of thought. It should be especially noted that this understanding of religion also is part of Christian teachings: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matt 11, 28-30).

In the 1960s, U.S. sociologists Charles Glock and Rodney Stark forwarded an extensive theory on how different forms of human deprivation gave rise to different kinds of religious involvement (Glock & Stark 1965; Stark & Glock 1968). Economic deprivation was said to lead to sect activities, social deprivation to church involvement, health deprivation to healing movements, ethical deprivation to reform movements, and psychic deprivation to religious cults. Recently, political scientists Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart have presented new cross-cultural support for the general assumption that religious involvement is driven by existential insecurity. All other factors being equal, they claim that *“the experiences of growing up in less secure societies will heighten the importance of religious values, while conversely experience from more secure conditions will lessen it”* (Norris & Inglehart 2004, 18; italics in the original). The main explanation is that religion reduces insecurity, and that the need for such a reduction is more pressing under conditions of insecurity and deprivation. This mechanism is said to operate at both the societal and the individual level, although the effect at the societal level is assumed to be the most important.

Analyzing data from some 80 different societies, Norris and Inglehart demonstrated that the levels of people’s religious involvement “could, indeed, be predicted with considerable accuracy from a society’s level of economic development and other indicators of human development” (Norris & Inglehart 2004, 220). The most crucial variables for the explanation of why some countries scored low on religious involvement were those that had an obvious impact on people’s experiences of existential security. However, increasing human security and the decline of religious involvement need not necessarily mean that people lose interest in spiritual issues in a more general sense. To the contrary, Inglehart has also claimed that “spiritual concerns will always be part of the human condition” (Inglehart 1997, 80). In secure circumstances (that is in the economically well

advanced and wealthy societies) people are still assumed to try improving their quality of life with, for instance, the satisfaction of their spiritual needs. “The need for meaning becomes more salient at high levels of existential security so that, even in rich countries, although church attendance is declining, spiritual concerns more broadly are not disappearing” (Norris & Inglehart 2004, 75). As empirical evidence for this, it is demonstrated that those who report being concerned about the meaning of life have increased at the same time as more traditional and church-oriented forms of religious involvement have decreased. Whether such spiritual concerns in the broad sense should be theoretically associated with religion in the same way as church attendance and adherence to traditional church dogmas is, however, an open issue. To equate the two forms of religion would be to dismiss the difference between religion understood in a substantive and a functional sense.

Nevertheless, it should also be noted that the advanced economic and technological developments in contemporary society are said to lead to a so-called risk society where “the threats produced so far on the path of industrial society begin to predominate” (Beck 1994, 6; cf. Beck 1992). The growing risks from nuclear power and atomic bombs, global warming caused by the intense use of oil and petrol for transportation, chemical toxic wastes, biotechnical manipulations and so forth are said to have negative consequences for people’s perception of human security. In fact, the mixture of increased well-being and the emerging new risks which characterize today’s highly modernized society has been said to open for new forms of religious sensibility and spiritual endeavors (Giddens 1991, 207). In a similar way, advanced modernization is said to undermine “all the old certainties”. This would make people more eager to accept religious worldviews which can restore certainty, also in highly modernized societies (Berger 1999).

In summary, modernization and especially economic development are generally assumed to raise human security and well-being and thereby to erode religious involvement. In contrast, others have emphasized that new developments in highly modernized societies towards growing uncertainties and risks have increased human insecurity and assumed that this would be accompanied by a growing sensibility for religious values and beliefs. Thus, advanced economic development may not be such an indisputable path to declining religion as the secularization

paradigm assumes; there are indeed reasons to question advanced modernity as an inevitable cause of secularization and general religious decline.

### **Religion and cultural diversity**

The so-called religious supply side or market theory has been proposed as an alternative to the secularization paradigm. This theory denies that people's religious demands are negatively affected by economic development and rising levels of existential security. In short, the theory refutes that modernization causes any inevitable religious declines. Instead, the religious market theory intends to "explain religious variation by looking at the *supply* of religion" (Finke & Stark 2003, 100; italics in the original). The basic assumption is that religious participation depends on the quality of the religious supply. The religious supply is in turn assumed to depend on the degree of pluralism among churches and denominations and/or the degree of regulation of the religious economy. The higher the religious pluralism and the lower the regulation of religious economies, the better the quality of the supply and the higher the religious participation (for a review, see e.g. Chaves & Gorski 2001). Some relate the positive impact of religious pluralism to competition between the actors in the religious economy. The more competition they face, the more likely they would be to adapt their products to the demands of the "consumers" in order to maintain or increase their market shares. Such market adaptation is said to result in a rich and diversified supply of religious "goods" and thus to increase the likelihood that consumers can find religious services well adapted to their preferences. Another assumption is that regulation of the religious economy limits competition and that it thereby decreases the quality of the religious supply. Therefore, regulation of religious markets is assumed to lead to lower levels of religious participation.

However, a recent review of the research on religious pluralism concluded that it would be more fruitful to search for *the specific conditions* under which religious pluralism has an impact on the vitality of the religious economy than to search for an assumedly invariant positive relationship between religious pluralism and religious participation. Such a general relationship has indeed been difficult to demonstrate (Chaves & Gorski 2001, 278f). It has been especially difficult to

demonstrate such a relationship when investigating religious involvement and religious pluralism at the level of countries. The explanation might be that the religious supply would primarily have an effect when the local religious markets are small enough to give the potential participants a genuine choice (Stark & Finke 2000, 219). It is primarily when the potential participants in a religious service can choose between different kinds of services within a reasonable traveling distance that diversity in the religious supply would have an impact. And yet, because of a lack of local data, studies of the impact of religious pluralism have often investigated religious participation at the national or super-local intra-national level and disregarded the local dimension. For this reason, cross-country analyses of the effects of religious pluralism may have obscured the effects of local religious pluralism. Furthermore, local analyses of religious pluralism may minimize the influences of other factors which might contaminate the results from cross-country analyses. Such arguments may explain why analyses of religious pluralism in comparatively small local religious economies have been able to demonstrate the expected positive relationships between religious pluralism and religious participation, while cross-country analyses have not (Hamberg & Pettersson 1994, 1997; Pettersson 2001; Pettersson & Hamberg 1997). However, it should also be noted that local analyses of religious pluralism have far from always been able to demonstrate the expected positive effects (Olson 2002, 151).

As a possible reason for this, it has recently been suggested that the positive impact of a diversified religious supply is moderated by the degree of heterogeneity in people's religious demands and worldviews (Hamberg & Pettersson 2002). The analysis argued that where there is real diversity in religious demands and worldviews, religious participation will be higher the more pluralistic the religious supply. However, where there is little diversity of religious demands and worldviews, a pluralistic religious supply would have less impact on religious participation. In such a case, there would be fewer potential consumers of the differentiated supply. Therefore, rather than being a universal factor leading to increased religious participation, pluralism in the religious supply would mainly yield increased religious participation where there is sufficient heterogeneity in people's religious beliefs and worldviews.

In this regard, it is of special interest to note that contemporary highly modernized society tends to be culturally diversified (Crook et al. 1992, 221f), marked by considerable diversity in people's religious worldviews and also by a great number of different kinds of religious organizations. Advanced modernity is said to give rise to a kind of consumerist orientation towards ready-made lifestyles and the breaking down of unified cultural traditions into different cultural segments and to foster multiple and cross-cutting identities which are situated in a number of "imagined communities", where membership is a matter of taste and choice. In individualized contemporary society, people are said to make their own decisions, "rather than simply living up to the expectations of community or fulfilling obligations to someone else" (Wuthnow 1991,12), and individual identity is assumed to be increasingly open, reflective, differentiated, and individuated (c.f. Berger *et al.* 1973; but see Woodhead and Heelas 2001 for an alternative view on this). In contemporary society, there are few compulsory obligations; people are assumed to be increasingly free to choose the convictions, beliefs, and practices they like (Giddens 1991, 84). There is also a growing number of market oriented suppliers of ready-made world views which offer an increasing number of options to choose from. The new information technology is an important device for the marketing of such ideological alternatives. Thus, the emergence of a whole range of small-group, non-class political practices-micropolitics is a prominent characteristic of today's world (Thomson 1992, 235). In this way, contemporary society is associated with increasing influences for personal choices from a growing pool of equally permissible and feasible, but different, options. And as a consequence, ideological memberships have become more pluralistic and fragmented. When growing numbers of people, with different value priorities, choose freely from an enlarged pool of ideological options, the probability that they will choose differently increases. In situations where individuals have more options for their daily lives, personal beliefs and values will increasingly replace shared norms as influences on the choices people make (Berry 1994, 83).

In this sense, one of the hallmarks of individualized contemporary society is cultural pluralism and diversity, both with regard to individual world views and to ideology-based associations and communities. *The recent extension of the religious market theory which was mentioned above*

*concluded that it is precisely the combination of these two dimensions of cultural diversity which would drive towards higher levels of religious participation.* Since contemporary society is characterized by these two features of cultural diversity, it can therefore be expected to promote religious involvement. Where, *ceteris paribus*, secularization theories would assume the modernized well-fare societies to be associated with increased security and hence with lower levels of religious involvement, the extension of the religious market theory which is forwarded in this analysis would assume the modernized and culturally diversified contemporary society to be associated with comparatively higher levels. Thus, two different dimensions of contemporary society are assumed to push in opposite directions with regard to religion.

The assumption of increased religious participation in culturally diversified societies is not new. It has been argued that a return to religion is required in order to solve post-modernity's growing emphasis on self-interest and its negative impact on morality (Bell 1976, 171; for a fuller discussion, see O'Neill, 1988; cf. Berger 1999). It has also been suggested that secularization is primarily related to the industrialization phase of modernization, but not to the subsequent developments into the advanced knowledge and service society. During the latter developments, previous secularization processes are said to be counterbalanced by growing concerns for the meaning and purpose of life (Inglehart & Baker 2000, 49; compare also the above discussion of secularization theory). But, even if the assumption that cultural diversity fosters religion is not new, the theoretical foundation for this claim, which is forwarded in this paper, differs from the theoretical underpinnings of the earlier assumptions in this regard. In this paper, the assumption is based on a recent extension of the religious market theory.

In order to clarify the concept of cultural diversity, a theoretical model for allocentrism and idiocentrism can be of help (Triandis 1994). The model is partly based on a typology for four elementary forms of social relations (Fiske 1991, 13f). Communal sharing is a relationship in which people are merged so that the boundaries of individual selves are indistinct, while authority ranking is a transitive asymmetrical relationship of inequality. Equality matching is an egalitarian relationship among peers who are distinct but co-equal individuals, while the relationship of

market pricing is mediated by market values. These four distinct types of social relations are said to be *fundamental* in the sense that they build the most basic grammar for social relations and *general* in the sense that they give order to most forms of social interaction, thought and affect. They are further said to be *elementary* in the sense that they are basic constituents for all social forms of a higher order and to be *universal* in the sense that they form the basis for social relations in all cultures. These four types of social relations can therefore be used as a basis for cross-cultural analyses of social relations. We propose that they can also be used as basis for the analysis of cultural pluralism.

The model for allocentrism and idiocentrism holds that these four types of relationships are differently sampled in different societies. Allocentric types (communal sharing and authority ranking) are more often sampled in collectivist countries while idiocentric types (equality matching and market pricing) are more often sampled in individualist societies. In an allocentric and collectivist context, groups tend to be the basic unit for social perception, while in an idiocentric and individualist context, the individual is the basic unit. For instance, it would be idiocentric to attribute individual success to people's own ability, but allocentric to attribute it to the help of others. It would be idiocentric to appreciate achievement for self-glory, while it would be allocentric to appreciate it for the groups' sake. In idiocentric societies, personal goals have primacy over in-group goals, while the opposite would be the case in allocentric societies. Comparisons of how attributes like these are chosen in different societies would therefore indicate the degrees to which the cultures of these societies can be characterized as allocentric/collective or as idiocentric/individualistic. Based on the claim that individualism fosters cultural diversity, idiocentric attributes can then be seen as indicators of a diversified culture.

In summary, then, this paper assumes that cultural diversity with pluralism among ideology based small-scale communities in combination with heterogeneity in people's world views cause religion to thrive. In contrast, advancements in human security and well-being are assumed to cause declining levels of religious involvement. In addition to the impact of cultural diversity and human security, the levels of religious involvement are also known to differ between different

religious traditions. For instance, religious participation is known to be higher in Catholic and Orthodox contexts than in Protestant. Religious involvement is also known to depend on several micro-level factors. It has frequently been showed that the younger and better educated, the males, those who are single without children, and those who live in urbanized areas tend to be less interested in religious participation (see e.g. Argyle & Beit-Hallahmi 1975; Inglehart 1997; Pettersson 1994). In this investigation, these micro-level factors are mainly introduced in order to control for the impact of factors which might be related to the key factors of cultural diversity and human security.

### **Societal consequences of church-oriented religion?**

However, irrespectively of the general level of macro-level secularization in a country, religious involvement at the individual level can still have an impact on socio-political issues. Even the sternest critics of secularization theory agree that modernization has meant a “decline in the social power of religious institutions, enabling other social institutions, especially political and educational institutions to escape from prior religious domination” (Stark & Finke 2000, 59. If this is would be secularization theory *in toto*, and especially if the discussion is limited to Europe, “there would be nothing to argue about” (ibid). However, the issue is not whether differentiation at the societal level has taken place or not, but rather what the consequences have been for the strength of individual-level religious involvement, it’s potential impact on secular socio-social issues, its meaning for individual coping and social adaptation, etc. Irrespectively of the approval of the differentiation thesis, it is still relevant to investigate whether the macro-level differentiation between religion and secular institutions is accompanied by a similar cognitive differentiation among religious laypeople or not. The latter kind of ‘differentiation’ has been discussed as ‘secularization-in-mind’ and as ‘compartmentalization’ between people’s religious orientations and their views on secular issues (Dobbelaere 2002). In this sense, compartmentalization and “secularization in mind” can be thought of as the psychological parallel to macro level differentiation between religion and the secular.

Obviously, differentiation between religion and the secular at the macro level may drive

individuals to isolate and compartmentalize their religious orientations from their views on secular issues related to politics, international relations, gender relations, bio-ethical issues, etc. However, this need not be the case (Casanova 1994; Dobbelaere 2002). Even if the religious institutions have become differentiated from secular society, religious laypeople can still want religion to have a social impact, and they can still base or legitimate their views on secular issues on their religious convictions. And in turn, their views on this can also have an impact on social development. One obvious issue is voting preferences, which may alter the balances between the political parties. Therefore, a key question concerns whether people's preferences for a religious impact on socio-political secular matters have declined or not. A related problem concerns whether the actual relations between a religious commitment and views on secular issues have weakened or not. In the second part of this paper, we will address the issue of compartmentalization. As an example, we will investigate the relations between church-oriented religious involvement and support for global development.

## ***Data and results***

In this section, we will describe our empirical analyses for the two over-arching research questions on the religious consequences of modernization and the compartmentalization of religious and secular orientations, respectively. The first part will present our analysis of the model for religious change. We will investigate this in two analyses, one cross-sectional and one longitudinal. After that, we will present some cross-sectional findings for the compartmentalization issue.

### ***A: Data and results for the model of religious change,***

The empirical investigation of the model for religious change is primarily built on data from the European Values Study (EVS)/World Values Survey (WVS). A first analysis will rely on the data 1999/2000 while a second analysis will rely on the data from 1981, 1990, 1999/2000 and 2006. For further information on the EVS/WVS projects, see e.g. Harding *et al.*, 1986; Ester *et al.*, 1994; Inglehart, 1990, 1997; Halman 2001; Inglehart and Baker, 2000; Inglehart *et al.* 2004; see also the EVS and WVS websites, <http://evs.kub.nl> and [www.worldvaluessurvey.org](http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org). The cross-sectional

analyses are based on the data from 37 countries being mainly influenced by Christianity in their religious traditions. This selection is made in order to limit the investigation to concern, in principle, similar dimensions of religious involvement. The 37 countries and their respective sample sizes are as follows, Argentina 1280, Austria 1552, Belarus 1000, Belgium 1912, Bulgaria 1000, Canada 1931, Chile 1200, Croatia 1003, Czech Republic 1908, Denmark 1023, Estonia 1005, Finland 1038, France 1616, Germany 2036, Greece 1142, Hungary 1000, Iceland 968, Ireland 1012, Italy 2000, Latvia 1013, Lithuania 1018, Luxembourg 1211, Malta 1002, Mexico 1535, Netherlands 1003, Philippines 1200, Poland 1095, Portugal 1000, Romania 1146, Russia 2500, Slovakia 1331, Slovenia 1006, South Africa 3000, Spain 1200, Sweden 1015, Ukraine 1195 and United States 1200. Unfortunately, due to missing data for some key variables, a few countries with a Christian cultural heritage which participated in the 1999/2000 wave can not be included in this analysis.

*Dependent variables: Religious involvement and the relationship between religion and politics*

For reasons of space, this analysis will consider only two dimensions of church-oriented religious involvement. The first is a broad dimension of a church oriented religious involvement, while the second covers people's preferences for a religious impact on politics. Referring to the introductory theoretical discussion, these two dimensions can be said to relate to two of the main aspects of secularization, namely the level of religious involvement, and the degree of differentiation between religion and the secular. The church-oriented religious involvement is investigated by 5 items/indicators. These are, 1) one item on how often the respondent attends religious services, 2) one indicator for church attachment which taps confidence in one's church together with opinions on whether this gives adequate answers to problems in relation to moral issues, family life, spiritual concerns, and social life, 3) one indicator for the importance of God, 4) one indicator for eschatological beliefs in life after death, heaven and hell, 5) one indicator for religious devotions, which taps personal prayer and whether one gets support from one's religion or not. Views on the relationship between religion and politics are measured by two items. These tap the degree to which one rejects that 1) religious leaders should not influence how people vote in elections or not, and 2) that religious leaders should not influence government decisions (for a discussion of the

validity of these two items for this purpose, see Halman & Pettersson 2002a, Norris & Inglehart 2004). It should be noted that people's views on the relationship between religion and politics only indicates whether they prefer a differentiation between religion and politics or not. Thus, it is important to keep in mind the distinction between the actual level of differentiation between religion and politics in a society, and the micro level compartmentalization with regard to whether or not people prefer a separation between religion and politics (cf. Dobbelaere 2002, 169f).

Table 1 shows the results from an explanatory factor analysis of a two-dimensional factor structure for these 7 items/indicators. As expected, the results demonstrate that the items/indicators are related to the two theoretical dimensions of religious involvement as expected. It should also be noted that a component analysis of the *aggregated* items/indicators demonstrate the same two-dimensional factor structure. The factor scores from either the individual level or the national aggregated level can therefore be used to measure the two dimensions of religious involvement.

\*\*\* include Table 1 about here \*\*\*

*Independent micro-level variables for social background:* In order to explain why people differ on the two dimensions of religious involvement, five indicators for individual level social background will be used. These relate to age, gender, education, family status (having children) and life satisfaction (see the above theoretical discussion on this). Education is measured by a question about when the respondents finished/will finish his or her education. Admittedly, this is a crude measure of the degree of education. However, more nuanced measures, taking each country's specific education system into account, would infringe on cross-country comparability.

*Macro-level measures for cultural diversity and human well-being and security:* The key research issue of this analysis is to investigate how the two dimensions of religious involvement are related to the national levels of cultural diversity and human security, respectively. Considering the available data, it is a difficult task to measure the levels of cultural diversity. This analysis relies in a tentative manner on three macro-level indicators for this purpose. These tap the degree of

cultural idiocentrism, the degree of pluralism among social movements and voluntary associations, and the size of the information technology sector. The introductory theoretical discussion pointed to these three aspects as especially relevant for the analysis of cultural diversity.

The measure of cultural idiocentrism is obtained as factor scores from five aggregated indicators of idiocentric orientations (cf. the above discussion on this). These indicators tap a) views on whether there are general rules for what is right and wrong, true or false, or whether this always depends on the situation, b) appreciation of independence and respect for others as a personal quality, c) the experience of free choice and control in one's life, d) the opinion that it is important to be able to take initiatives in one's job, and e) how many different social movements and organizations, except religious organizations, one is active member of. These 5 indicators can all be seen as indicators of an idiocentric orientation (cf. Triandis 1994, Table 3.1, see also the introductory theoretical discussion of this). It should also be noted that the indicators are positively related to each other and belong to one and the same dimension. This has been forwarded as a criterion for their use in cross-cultural analyses (Triandis 1994, 46). Obviously, better indicators of idiocentrism might be preferred, but these five items are the best available in the EVS/WVS data set. The indicator of organizational pluralism taps the degree of pluralism with regard to memberships in a number of voluntary organizations and social movements. This measure is based on the well-known Herfindahl index. The more evenly spread the memberships across a given number of different movements, the higher the level of organizational pluralism. The measure of organizational pluralism is calculated from the responses to a series of questions on organizational memberships in the EVS/WVS questionnaires. Finally, the measure for the size of the information technology taps the national number of Internet connections per capita. This measure is obtained from the World Bank.

The results of a principal component analysis of the three indicators for cultural diversity show that they all relate to one and the same latent dimension. The first component explains about 65 percent of the total variance in the three indicators. The mean correlation between the three indicators is .45. The country factor scores for this dimension can, therefore, tentatively be used to

measure the national levels of cultural diversity.

In order to measure the degree of human security and well-being, a somewhat modified version of the so-called Human Well-being Index (HWI) will be used (Prescott-Allen 2001). The modified HWI measure covers four components of human security. These are health and population (life expectancy at birth and fertility rate), wealth (average of household and national wealth), community (two indices for, respectively, freedom and governance and peace and order), and equity (average of household and gender equity). The equity index is only included in the human well-being index if it decreases the average of the three first-mentioned components. This prevents the well-being index from offsetting poor performance in the first-mentioned three components of well-being (Prescott-Allen 2001, 152). The four components of human well-being are all positively correlated. The HWI measure has been showed to correlate positively with other measures of standard of living (Prescott-Allen 2001). This demonstrates the validity of the index as a relevant measure of human security and standard of living.

*Country differences in the independent and dependent variables,* It should first be noted that there is a significant positive correlation between the macro-level measures for human well-being and cultural diversity ( $r = .65$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Even if this correlation does not cause a serious multicollinearity problem (Edlund 1997, 84-100), checks for multicollinearity are called for when both of these measures are used in regression analyses. A scatterplot of the index for human well-being and the measure for cultural diversity which is not presented here shows that societies which score comparatively low on human well-being and high on cultural diversity are largely missing among the 37 countries which are chosen for this study. Thus, roughly one fourth of the scatterplot is empty. However, an investigation of the relationship between cultural fractionalism and standard of living has suggested that there are no binding mechanisms which would prevent countries from falling in this part of the scatterplot (Pettersson & Esmer 2005). To the contrary, it has even been suggested that cultural fractionalism may actually lead to lower levels of economic development and standard of living (Alesina et al. 2003).

*Religious involvement, human security and cultural diversity:* As already emphasized, the first research question of this paper concerns the ways in which people's church oriented religious involvement and their preferences for a religious impact on politics, respectively, are related to the levels of human security and cultural diversity in the countries where they live. In order to investigate this, two multi-level analyses which combine micro- and macrolevel data have been performed, using the HLM program which enables the estimation of the simultaneous effects of both micro- and macro level independent variables (see e.g. Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002; Hox, 1995). The results are presented in Table 2.

\*\*\* Table 2 about here \*\*\*

The results from the hierarchical multi-level regression analyses clearly demonstrate that even after allowing for the various micro-level characteristics, there is still a significant impact of human security and cultural diversity on each of the two dimensions of church-oriented religious involvement. The levels of human security and well-being are negatively related to the levels of religious involvement, while the levels of cultural diversity are positively related. With regard to the individual level predictors, the results are also quite in accordance with the theoretical expectations. A set of additional analyses which are not reported in this paper have yielded rather similar results. This underlines the robustness of the findings.

In summary, it can therefore be concluded that human well-being and security is negatively related to religious involvement, while cultural diversity is positively related. Accordingly, one should be careful in assuming that modernization unequivocally drives towards religious decline.

*A longitudinal analysis of religious change:* The conclusion that modernization should not be treated as a general path towards religious decline is also supported by the findings from a longitudinal analysis of religious change. These findings are based on the EVS/WVS data for six West-European countries. For these countries, data on church-oriented religious involvement are available for the entire period when the European Values/the World Values Survey have fielded

their surveys. In this analysis, we will consider the data from 1981, 1990, 1999/2000 and 2006, respectively. Because of lack of data for some countries from the 1996 wave, this wave will be omitted from the analyses. The six countries are France, Germany (only West-Germany is considered since the period started in 1981), Great Britain, Italy, Netherlands and Sweden. Using the data for these six countries, we have performed a component factor analysis with three indicators for church-oriented religious involvement. The three indicators are 1) importance of God, 2) church attachment and 3) service attendance. Except that the indicator for church attachment only includes confidence in the church, these indicators are identical to the ones which were presented in relation to Table 1 above. The factor scores from the component analysis of these three indicators have been transformed into a measure of church-oriented religious involvement, calculated to have a grand mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 10. This allows easy interpretations of both differences between countries over the different years and within countries for the same year. Table 3 below shows the results for this measure.

\*\*\*\* Table 3 about here \*\*\*\*

In contrast to what secularization would predict, the results demonstrate that church-oriented religious involvement did not follow any general downward trend in each country. Rather, the main pattern over the period is religious stability, although some countries show some different tendencies. The Netherlands demonstrated a significant linear downward trend, while Italy showed the opposite pattern with linear increases. The net result for the entire period and all the countries is however religious stability. In accordance with the previous finding on the differential effects of standard of living and cultural diversity, one can therefore assume that increasing levels of cultural diversity and improved standard of living, respectively, have balanced each other with the net result of neither increases, nor decreases, but stability. At least in a general manner, one can therefore tentatively conclude that the longitudinal analysis of religious change have supported the conclusion that modernization should not be seen as unequivocal cause of religious decline. In our example, increased levels of standard of living would have pressed religious involvement downwards, while increased cultural diversity would have pressed it upwards. The net result

would then be that the two pressures have neutralized each other.

***B: Data and results for religious compartmentalization***

In order to analyze the degree of compartmentalization between church-oriented religion and views on global development, we will rely on data from the 2006 wave of the World Values Survey in four Western-European countries. These countries are Finland and Sweden, two highly secularized Protestant countries, Germany, a less secularized country, divided into two blocks of Catholics and Protestants, and finally Italy, a less secularized core Catholic country. These four countries are chosen due to the availability of data on orientations towards global development.

As measures of church-oriented religious involvement, we will use the same measurements as in the analyses of religious involvement in relation to standard of living and cultural diversity, except for the indicators for eschatological beliefs and moments of devotions. The reason why the latter two indicators are not included is simply that the items which these indicators were based on were not included in the 2006 questionnaire. Nevertheless, controls show that the two-dimensional structure of the relevant indicators is the same in 2006 as it was in the previous data sets from the World Values Survey.

As a first indicator for views on global development, the responses to a single question will be used. The question had the following wording. “Thinking at your own country’s problems, should your country’s leaders give top priority to help reducing poverty in the world or should they give top priority to solve your own country’s problems?” As response scale, a 10-point scale was used, ranging from “top priority to help reducing poverty in the world” (value 1) and “top priority to solve my own country’s problems” (value 10). In the below tables, this scale has been recoded so that a higher score means stronger support for reducing poverty in the world. In order to investigate the “impact” of church-oriented religious involvement on the orientation towards reducing poverty in the world, a multiple regression analysis has been performed in three steps. This allows controls for country specific factors and socio-economic background, respectively. In a first step, the respondents’ country of living is controlled for (dummy variables scored 0 and 1

for each country, Sweden being the reference category). In the second step, the impact of a set of SES-variables are also controlled (age, gender, education, subjective social class, and household income). In a third step, church-oriented religious involvement is finally introduced as a predictor. The results are presented in Table 4.

\*\*\* Table 4 about here \*\*\*

The results from the regression analyses clearly demonstrate that church-oriented religious involvement has a statistically significant positive relation to the opinion that one's country should place priority on reducing poverty in the world. This relation appears to be independent of both country level characteristics and individual level socio-economic background. In the four West-European countries, those who are more exposed to church teachings (church-attendance), who find God to be more important in their lives and who have greater confidence in their churches and find that these provide adequate answers to man's social and moral problems also tend to be more positive to giving priority to reducing poverty in the world. This finding demonstrates that compartmentalization has not (yet?) made church-oriented religious involvement irrelevant to socio-political concerns. It is therefore contrary to what a pronounced secularization theory approach would predict. As a detail, it should also be noted that Table 4 demonstrates support for global development to be higher among the young, high income families, and among those who see themselves as belonging to the higher social strata. The results also demonstrate that support for global development is highest in Sweden, followed by Finland, Italy and Germany.

Furthermore, data from another battery in the WVS questionnaire demonstrates that the stronger support for global development among the church-involved also extends to a more positive view on the Millennium Development Goals, adopted by the United Nations and the Millennium Declaration. Except for the goal to halt the spread of AIDS/HIV and other serious diseases, those who are more involved in the churches also tend to give stronger priorities to the various MDGs.

The analyses which have shown this are of the same kind as the ones which are presented in Table 4 above. However, due to lack of data on the MDGs, Italy was not included in these analyses. In this regard, it is however also of considerable interest to note that those who score high on church-involvement tend to be significantly less interested in having the United Nations to handle the practical details of giving aid to the developing countries. A series of multiple regression of the same kind as the ones presented in Table 4 clearly demonstrate this. An explanation might be that those with higher scores on church-oriented religious involvement are more inclined to see the churches as the most proper agents for such matters, maybe relying on state subsidies. It might even be assumed that church involvement in development policies are seen as a kind of strategy for missionary work, bringing more people to the churches. If this would be the case, the stronger support for global development among the church-involved would have an instrumental flavor. However, we have no data to support this rather tentative option. And maybe, the most likely explanation for the stronger support for global development among the church-involved can be found in religious doctrines calling for diaconal efforts to help those who live under difficult circumstances.

Of course, a mere idealistic support for global development among the church-oriented need not have any practical implication for developmental policies. It is therefore of interest to look into some issues that are related to the implementation of development policies. Even if it is more or less self-evident, it is of interest to mention that church-involved people tend to be comparatively strongly in favor of religious spokesmen's efforts to influence how people vote in the general elections and also decision making in parliaments. To illustrate the strength of this tendency, it should be noted that the multiple coefficient of determination for the preferences for a religious impact on the political system as a dependent variable and country of living and socio-economic background variables is about 0.12 ( $p < ,001$ ; similar kind of regression analyses as shown in Table 4). However, when church-oriented religious involvement is introduced as predictor, the coefficient increases by 300 percent to 0,36! Even if this finding is not especially astonishing, it demonstrates that those who are church-involved are also in favor of their religious leaders' efforts to influence various kinds of policy-making processes. We have no reason to assume that this

would not apply to support for global development. A parallel finding is that the church-involved are also more likely to be active members in political parties, environmental movements and humanitarian organizations. Also this tendency is statistically significant. It suggests that church-involved people also have access to other arenas than the churches where they can support policies which are in accordance with their stronger support for global development.

### ***Concluding discussion***

This investigation started from the assumption that religion is eroded by human security and fostered by cultural diversity. Thus, two different dimensions of modernization were assumed to affect religion in opposite ways. As dependent variables for the two hypotheses, two dimensions of religious involvement were investigated. The first was church oriented religiosity, while the second concerned people's preferences for a religious impact on politics. These two dimensions relate to two core aspects of secularization theory. The assumption of a differential impact of human well-being and cultural diversity was tested on a comprehensive set of data from 37 countries with a predominantly Christian cultural heritage. The results supported each of the two macro level hypotheses, and it is difficult to conclude that one of them explained more of the variance in religious involvement than the other. In stead, the results suggest that in analyses of religious change, one should not treat modernization as one homogeneous factor; rather different dimensions of modern society seem to be associated with different kinds of religious change. Thus, with two well-known statements in mind, the results neither recommend any immediate burial of the thesis that economic development erodes religion (cf. Stark and Finke 2000, 79), nor call for a deadly strike at the assumption that religion is positively affected by cultural diversity (cf. Bruce 1999, 2).

The conclusion that human well-being and cultural diversity have opposite effects on religious involvement was based on an analytical strategy which allowed that these two factors were investigated simultaneously, using one and the same comprehensive set of empirical data. In contrast, previous conclusions on the merits of the two different theoretical outlooks on the

relationship between religion and modernization have too seldom been based on such a simultaneous analytical strategy. However, the analyses which have been reported in this paper relied on cross-sectional data. Needless to say, cross-sectional analyses do not give unequivocal support for theoretical assumptions on longitudinal developments. It was therefore of considerable interest to observe that the results from the longitudinal analyses of religious change between 1981 and 2006 gave results which were in accordance with the assumption of two over-arching modernization processes which would tend neutralize the effects of each other.

Secularization theory often refers to quite general differentiation processes and interprets secularization as the repercussion of these processes on the religious subsystem (Dobbelaere 1995, 1). Paradoxically, in this view of secularization, the religious subsystem has become more occupied with “pure religion”, unsoiled from various this-worldly concerns as for instance politics and various socio-political matters! However, this view has also been severely challenged. As an example of this, Jose Casanova’s (1994) criticism of the assumedly “necessary” differentiation between religion and secular society deserves attention. Contrary to the thesis of an ongoing differentiation and the privatization of religion, Casanova argues that the Islamic revolution in Iran, the rise of the Solidarity movement in Poland, the role of Catholicism for the Sandinista revolution in Latin America, and the increased political importance of North American Protestant fundamentalism, respectively, demonstrate that contemporary religions refuse to accept the marginal role which secularization theory reserves for them. Referring to such developments, Casanova claims that contemporary religions have turned *de*-privatized and increasingly important to public issues. However, this claim is not part of any absolutist dismissal of the differentiation thesis. To the contrary, differentiation is seen by Casanova as a key characteristic of modern society, and he regards differentiation between religion and the secular to be the still defensible core of secularization theory (Casanova 1994, 212). However, to maintain that differentiation *necessarily* must entail the privatization of religion is according to him no longer defensible (Casanova 1994, 7). Rather, the privatization of religion is more seen as an option than as an inevitable structural trend. This view is built on the view that religious privatization is caused by a number of different factors, which differ between different contexts. Casanova sees religious rationalization, including pietism, religious individuation, and religious reflexivity, as some of the

many causes of religious privatization. General structural differentiation which constrains religion into a specific religious sphere is seen as another cause. Liberal categories of thought, which are said to permeate modern Western culture, is said to constitute a third causal antecedent of religious privatization (Casanova 1994, 215). In addition to these general factors, Casanova also assumes that other circumstances can drive towards the privatization of religion. For instance, a given religion is said to be less likely to assume public roles, the less it draws on a public collective identity among its disciples. Similarly, the more a religion has loosed convinced followers, the more likely it is to become privatized. And the less global and transnational a religious tradition, the less probable Casanova finds its impact on public matters (Casanova 1994, 225).

It is in this context that Dobbelaere's notion of compartmentalization has a special interest in giving a theoretical tool to analyze how ordinary laypeople relate to the differentiation thesis. The analyses which we presented on this issue by and large supported the claims which Casanova has forwarded. In stead of privatization, church-oriented religion showed to a kind of resource for policies for global development. Even if this is a fairly general conclusion, it nevertheless adds empirical support for the claim that contemporary religion should not be interpreted as a primarily privatized business. Rather, the findings support that church-oriented religion can still be seen as a factor with potentially important social consequences.

Obviously, the analyses presented in this investigation need critical examination. With regard to the empirical measurements, especially the indicator for cultural diversity calls for further development, preferably based on data which would allow a broader coverage of different dimensions of macro level culture. At the same time, a valid indicator for the degree of heterogeneity in people's world-views and religious preferences should preferably be based on individual level data. In order to establish a macro level measure of cultural diversity from such data, the theoretical perspective introduced in this investigation seems promising. Thus, to equate cultural diversity with idiocentric outlooks in combination with heterogeneous small-group, non-class political practices-micropolitics might be a fruitful avenue to follow. With regard to our measurements of church-oriented religiosity, these appear to be fairly straightforward. Even so, it might prove worthwhile to continue this kind of investigation for other dimensions of religious

involvement as well, not the least for dimensions which are less church oriented since such more open, non-organized forms of religious involvement are often said to be on the increase. Better measures for such dimensions of religious involvement might therefore cast further light on the processes which are discussed in this investigation.

Finally, it must be emphasized that the levels of both religious participation and compartmentalization, respectively, in all likelihood depend on a number of factors which are not investigated in this paper. For instance, country specific developments in church history, country specific relationships between religion and nationalism, country specific relations between religion and different social and ethnic strata, country specific relationships between religion and the political party system, etc., may all effect the levels of church involvement and people's views on the relationship between religion and political issues. Therefore, the results which we have demonstrated in this analysis can also depend on factors which we have not investigated or controlled for. Even so, the systematic relationships which have been demonstrated between human security and well-being, cultural diversity, religious participation and views on global development, respectively, still deserve attention. These systematic relationships were found in a comprehensive set of data from countries with different Christian traditions and different levels of cultural pluralism and social progress. Furthermore, these relationships are also highly relevant with regard to both secularization theory and the religious market theory, two key perspectives in contemporary religious studies. In summary, it can therefore be concluded that both the research strategy which has been developed in this investigation and the empirical results which have been found deserve attention in the search for a deepened understanding of the intriguing relations between human well-being, cultural diversity, religious change and the social influences of religion.

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AGFI = ,980, RMSEA = ,049, p = ,805, n = 41.500  
 Test for a similar two-dimensional factor structure in 37 countries:  
 Chi-square/df = 4,894, AGFI = ,965, RMSEA = ,010, p = 1,000.

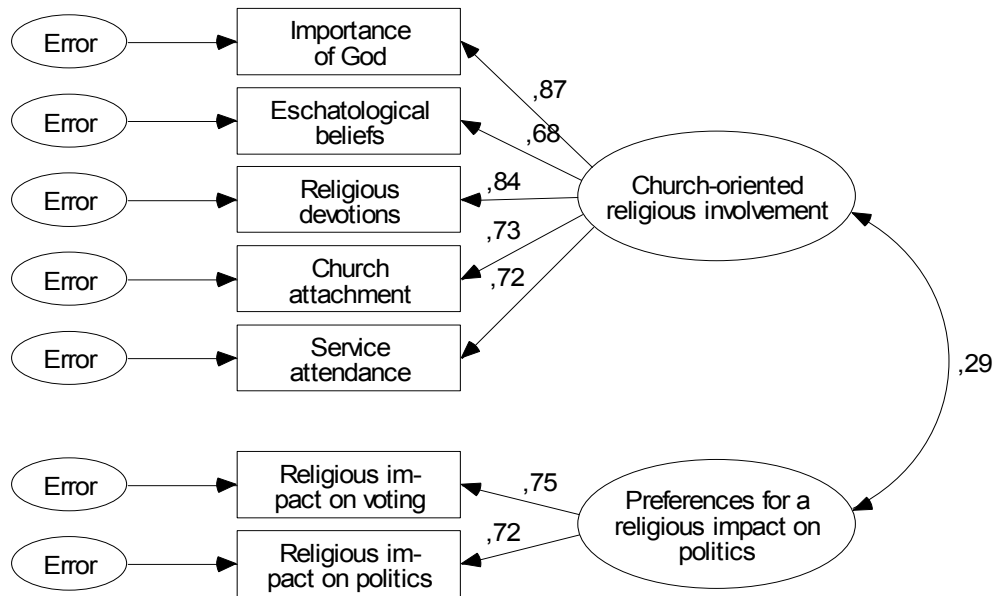


Table 1. Results from an explanatory factor analysis of a two-dimensional model for 7 indicators for religious involvement. EVS/MVS data from 37 countries with a predominantly Christian cultural heritage

Table 2. Results from two multi-level hierarchical linear regressions of micro- and macro-level factors affecting people's church-oriented religious involvement and their preferences for a religious impact on politics. Entries are unstandardized multi-level regression coefficients. 1999-2000 EVS/WVS data for 39,200 respondents from 37 countries.

	Church-oriented religious involvement, degrees of freedom, p-value	Preferences for a religious impact on politics, degrees of freedom, p-value
<b>Micro-level factors,</b>		
Age	.01, df 36, p < .001	.00, df 36, n.s.
Gender	.32, df 36, p < .001	.06, df 36, p < .001
Education	-.02, df 36, p < .001	-.01, df 36, n.s.
Have children	.03, df 36, p < .001	.02, df 36, p < .01
Life satisfaction	.04, df 36, p < .001	.00, df 36, n.s.
<b>Macro-level factors</b>		
Human well-being	-.03, df 32, p < .001	-.01, df 32, p < .01
Cultural diversity	.26, df 32, p < .01	.16, df 32, p < .001
Catholic tradition	1.26, df 32, p < .001	-.18, df 32, n.s.
Orthodox tradition	.89, df 32, p < .01	-.25, df 24, n.s.

Table 3. Means scores for church-oriented religion in six European countries (grand mean = 100; standard deviation = 10). Data from the European Values Study/World Values Survey in 1981, 1990, 1999/2000 and 2006. For each year and country, the data are weighted to yield number of respondents to approximately 1 000).

Country,	Year,				Diff 2006 – 1981 ?
	1981	1990	2000	2006	
France	98,2	97,6	96,6	97,1	Decrease, p < ,02
Germany (West)	102,1	101,1	101,1	101,5	Stability
Great Britain	100,5	99,4	97,6	100,2	Stability
Italy	104,8	106,0	106,8	107,5	Increase, p < ,001
Netherlands	99,3	97,8	97,5	96,7	Decrease, p < ,001
Sweden	97,8	96,3	97,9	97,7	Stability
All six countries	100,5	99,8	99,6	100,2	Stability

Table 4. Results from multiple regression analyses with preferences for giving priority to help reducing poverty in the world as opposed to solving the problems in one's own country as dependent variable, and socio-economic background and church oriented religion, respectively, as independent. Results for Finland, Germany, Italy and Sweden (reference category). Data from the 2006 World Values Survey. Entries are unstandardized regression coefficients.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
<b>Country level</b>			
Finland	-0,96 ***	-0,80 ***	-0,90 ***
Germany	-1,59 ***	-1,47 ***	-1,40 ***
Italy	-0,71 ***	-0,68 ***	-0,95 ***
<b>Individual level SES variables</b>			
Old age		-0,01 ***	-0,01 ***
Female gender		0,19 **	0,13
High education		-0,07	-0,05
High household income		0,07 ***	0,07 ***
High subjective class		0,21 ***	0,18 ***
<b>Religion</b>			
Church-oriented involvement			0,25 ***
<b>Multiple R</b>	0,26	0,30	0,31
<b>Change multiple R?</b>		Yes; p < 0,001	Yes; p < ,001