Is religion in decline? Will it fade as science advances and better human organisation conquers the deprivation to which biblical discourse has historically ministered? More concretely, at the national level, the balance between secular and religious subcultures has important repercussions for voting behaviour, party organisation, public policy (i.e. schooling, abortion, citizenship, law) and international relations (i.e. the “war on terror”). Broadly speaking, two forms of secularisation may be isolated, public and private. Many, but far from all, scholars, see the two as intertwined. Public secularisation refers to the relationship between religious institutions and this-worldly public functions like government, education, hospitals, the market and the media. Private secularisation is used here to denote individual piety, whether expressed through private belief, attendance at services, or both. This article is principally concerned with the latter.
Chapter 14
Sacralisation by Stealth? The Demography of De-secularisation

Eric Kaufmann

Introduction

Is religion in decline? Will it fade as science advances and better human organisation conquers the deprivation to which biblical discourse has historically ministered? More concretely, at the national level, the balance between secular and religious subcultures has important repercussions for voting behaviour, party organisation, public policy (i.e. schooling, abortion, citizenship, law) and international relations (i.e. the “war on terror”). Broadly speaking, two forms of secularisation may be isolated, public and private. Many, but far from all, scholars, see the two as intertwined. Public secularisation refers to the relationship between religious institutions and this-worldly public functions like government, education, hospitals, the market and the media. Private secularisation is used here to denote individual piety, whether expressed through private belief, attendance at services, or both. This article is principally concerned with the latter.

The notion of secularisation – of both public and private life – has dominated scholarly discussions of religion since the Enlightenment in the mid-eighteenth century. Only in the late 1960s did a new strain of thinking come to question the inevitability of religious decline. Even here, secularisation arguments continue to be strongly advanced, whether empirically (Dobbelaere, 2000; Bruce, 2002) or normatively (Dawkins, 2006; Hitchens, 2007). This chapter enters this debate, but introduces a new wildcard: demography, arguing that while secularisation may occur at the micro level of individuals, demography plays a cardinal role in determining the vector of secularisation at the macro level. In fact, we shall find that one can have a situation in which secularisation is taking place at the level of the individual while society as a whole becomes more religious. But first, let us revisit the grand debate over secularisation and modernity which seems so compelling in our time.

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The Secularisation Argument

The singular event which historians use to demarcate the modern era, the French Revolution, was defined by its rejection of religious authority. Since then, secularisation and modernisation have been intimately linked in the minds of many. All three “founding fathers” of sociological theory – Marx, Weber and Durkheim – cast a narrative of modernisation in which religion was an inevitable casualty of advancing rationality. For Marx, under the pressure of industrial capitalism and science, “solid” religious certainties would “melt into air”, profaning the sacred public sphere (Marx, 1973, pp. 70–71). Emile Durkheim, drawing on classical and Spencerian thought, proposed a theory of structural differentiation and moral evolution whereby the role of religious expertise is confined to an ever shrinking sphere. Increasingly, as in France after the Revolution, society worships itself rather than a supernatural deity (Durkheim, 1995 [1893]).

More recently, Steve Bruce has synthesised the work of previous modernisation theorists like Ernest Gellner and David Martin to argue for the irreversibility of secularisation in modern society. Social differentiation drives a relativism that leads to a constricting sphere of influence for religion in both public and private (Bruce, 2002, pp. 2–43, 1998, pp. 5–7, 15). The work of Pippa Norris and Ron Inglehart dovetails with that of Bruce. They claim that rising material wealth and political stability reduce the ontological insecurities that drive religiosity (Norris and Inglehart, 2004). Meanwhile, recent analyses of European survey data find a consistent pattern of religious decline encompassing participation (attendance), belief and affiliation (Voas et al., 2002; Norris and Inglehart, 2004).

Demographic Aspects of Religion

Much of the research on the sociology of religion has focused on religion as a social phenomenon whose rise or decline depends upon the conscious choices of individuals within changing structural contexts. However, it is apparent that even in the absence of socially-inspired revivals/declines of religion, the degree of religiosity in a society can fluctuate. The chief non-social mechanism of change is demography. If we consider “the religious” population affected not only by assimilation/dissimilation into the secular population but by migration, fertility (number of surviving offspring per woman) and mortality, we arrive at a more multivalent picture. David Voas is one sociologist who has urged that greater attention be paid to the use of demographic methods in the study of religion. “People enter, exit, and move within religion”, he remarks, “just as they are born, will die, and migrate, in life” (Voas, 2003, p. 94). For Michael Hout, “demography helps shape the religious landscape . . . . The combination of differing demography and stable intergenerational religious socialization would be sufficient to equalize or even reverse the relative sizes of the religions” (Hout, 2003, pp. 79–80). “Silent” demographic effects can be profound in the long term. For example, Rodney Stark
shows how early Christians’ favourable fertility and mortality rates as compared to Hellenistic pagans helped to fuel a 40% growth rate in the Christian population of the Roman Empire over several centuries. This gave rise to a population increase from 40 converts in 30 A.D. to 6 million by the year 300 leading to a “tipping point” which helped Christianity become institutionalised within the Empire (Stark, 1996).

Currently, many Islamic parts of what was once the Roman Empire have seen major declines in their Christian and Jewish populations due to emigration, lower fertility and mixed marriages (Fargues, 2001).

Those who study the religious marketplace in the United States have been impressed by the extent to which denominations have grown through migration and fertility advantage. Sherkat (2001), for example, finds that American Catholics have been able to offset large net losses to other denominations through gains arising from (largely) Hispanic-Catholic immigrants and their higher fertility. Fertility differentials can also play a key role – especially in the long term. Mormons, once a very small sect, now equal or surpass Jews among post-1945 birth cohorts due to their fertility advantage over Jews and other denominations (Sherkat, 2001, pp. 1472–1474). Conservative Protestants, a much larger group than the Mormons, also benefit from relatively high fertility. Using the General Social Survey, Roof and McKinney (1987) noted that Southern Baptists had roughly twice the fertility of Jews and secular (unaffiliated) Americans. A recent article extends this finding by showing that three-quarters of the growth of conservative Protestant denominations is due to fertility rather than conversion (Hout et al., 2001). This has powered the growth of the religious right and increased the base of the Republican party. Indeed, a recent article demonstrates the extremely significant and robust correlation between non-Hispanic white fertility patterns and the Republican vote – especially in 2004. States whose white population tends to be liberal and postmaterialist have lower fertility – as per “second demographic transition” theory (SDT) – and a lower pro-Bush vote share (Lesthaeghe and Neidert, 2006).

In Europe, there has been less attention paid to fertility differences between denominations. However, the growth of the European Muslim population through immigration is a trend that is widely acknowledged (Rath and Buijs, 2002). Several studies have discovered that immigrants to Europe tend to be more religious than the host population and – especially if Muslim – tend to retain their religiosity. Though some indicators point to religious decline toward the host society mean, other trends suggest that immigrants become more, rather than less, religious the longer they reside in the host society (Van Tubergen, 2006, 2007). Austria is one of the few European countries to collect religious data on their census. A recent attempt to project Austria’s population to 2051 found that a combination of higher fertility and immigration will increase the proportion of Muslims (excluding apostates) in the country from 4.6% of the population in 2001 to between 14 and 26% by 2051. Certainly the secular/unaffiliated population increased from 4% in 1981 to 10% in 2001, and is projected to grow in the near future. However, the secular population in Austria has a total fertility rate (TFR) of just 0.86 children per couple, limiting its long-term growth potential. This means that in the event that secularisation ceases – to say nothing of religious revival – the secular population will peak
and begin to decline as early as 2021 (Goujon et al., 2006. p. 24). All of this suggests that secularisation may fail even if the secularisation thesis is correct. This chapter will thereby test the hypothesis that a combination of higher religious fertility and immigration will lead to a growth in the religious population (defined in terms of belief) that exceeds the net loss of communicants through religious apostasy.

The State of Current Research

Work in the sociology of religion, cultural demography and labour economics has uncovered an important relationship between religiosity and demographic indicators which can affect the size of religious and secular populations. For instance, one postulate of SDT is that secularisation is linked to lower fertility (Surkyn and Lesthaeghe, 2004; van de Kaa, 1987). Several studies examine the link between religiosity and fertility in Europe and the United States, and most have found a significant positive effect on fertility in at least some models (Norris and Inglehart, 2004: 110; Adsera, 2004: 23; Berman, et al., 2005; Frejka and Westoff, 2006; Berghammer et al., 2006).

What is lacking here, however, is some measure of the sociological side of the equation: in other words, are the children remaining with the faith of their parents, or succumbing to secularism? After all, even a strong fertility premium will be of little consequence if most children defect from their religious inheritance to secularism and pass a different tradition on to their offspring. One of the few works to encompass both religious fertility and secularisation is that of Norris and Inglehart (2004). These political scientists remark that: “One of the most central injunctions of virtually all traditional religions is to strengthen the family, to encourage people to have children, to encourage women to stay home and raise children, and to forbid abortion, divorce, or anything that interferes with high rates of reproduction. As a result of these two interlocking trends, rich nations are becoming more secular, but the world as a whole is becoming more religious” (Norris and Inglehart, 2004, pp. 22–23, emphasis added).

However, the authors view religious growth as a temporary phase. For them, sociology eventually overwhels demography, allowing secularisation to eventually win out. As human development proceeds, religiosity survives mainly among those who experience lower levels of human security (Norris and Inglehart, 2004, p. 54). Unfortunately, the authors do not systematically test this bold claim with individual-level data – even in the developed world where time series are available. Moreover, research which uses inputs from models of past behaviour to make demographic projections of future secularisation scenarios is missing. Finally, we know almost nothing about the degree to which the children of immigrants retain their religiosity.

This chapter attempts to fill these lacunae in the literature and map their theoretical significance. The primary focus is on western Europe, though some comparative attention will also be paid to the United States.
Data and Results

In order to test our religious demography hypothesis, we draw upon data from several sources. These include the European Values Surveys (EVS) of 1981, 1990 and 1999–2000 and the second wave European Social Survey (ESS) of 2004. We use these data sets because of their time-series dimension and the fact that they ask the same (or similar) questions on religiosity and fertility. The study is limited to ten west European countries, France, Britain, Holland, Ireland, Spain, Belgium, Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Iceland. This is because these are the only cases that were sampled across all specified waves of the EVS on our variables of interest. Germany, though also consistently sampled, was dropped because of the difficulties of pre and post-Unification data collation. The second wave ESS data was used because, unlike wave 1, this data set has a fertility measure and enabled us to match countries with the EVS. Rather than weighting our sample by relative country population size (i.e. weighting Britain at 180 times Iceland), we have opted to create a standardised west European data set with roughly 1,000 cases per country. This is to maximize case diversity by preventing large countries from dominating the results. We will also be using three surveys of ethnic minorities in the United Kingdom to probe the phenomenon of second-generation immigrant religiosity: the Fourth National Survey of Ethnic Minorities, 1993–1994 (Berthoud et al., 1997), and the 2001 and 2003 waves of the UK Citizenship Survey (Home Office, 2003; Office for National Statistics and Home Office, 2005). These are augmented by data from the ONS Longitudinal Survey (ONS-LS) of 2001 (Office for National Statistics, 2001).

Western Europe

We begin our story in western Europe, the historic home of secularisation.

Religious Attendance

The first trend to note (Fig. 14.1) is that the proportion of respondents attending religious services on a weekly basis has systematically declined across birth cohorts in these ten west European countries. Roughly 30–40% of the generation born 1915–1925 attends weekly, and this falls to 10% or less among those born in 1975–1985. This pattern holds across survey waves, demonstrating that the effect is a generational, i.e. secularising, one and not a life-cycle pattern in which younger people attend more as they age.

However, when we narrow our focus to the societies which secularised earlier (Britain, France and four Scandinavian countries), we see a curious pattern. Attendance falls as expected across the generations, but then proceeds to flatten out among post-World War II (1945) cohorts. This trend is confirmed across survey waves, and seems to indicate that secularisation has hit a floor of around 5%
*Data for 2000 uses Norway responses from 1997
**Data for 2004 from ESS which uses same question but different methodology

Fig. 14.2 Weekly attendance by cohort, early secularising societies (Sources: EVS 1981, 1990, 1999–2000; ESS 2004)
*Data for 2000 uses Norway responses from 1997
**Data for 2004 from ESS which uses same question but different methodology
N=5,978 (1981); 6,002 (1990); 3,245 (1999–2000); 6,017 (2004)
attendance in these societies and is holding steady (Fig. 14.2). This is a lower level of attendance than in the ten country sample as a whole, but while attendance in the Catholic societies (Spain, Ireland, Belgium plus part-Catholic Holland) is higher, it continues to fall sharply in contrast to these six – mainly Protestant – societies.

**Religious Belief**

When we shift the focus of our attention from attendance to religious belief, we find that western Europeans suddenly appear to be five to ten times more religious (Fig. 14.3). This phenomenon reflects Davie’s insight that Europeans are “believing without belonging” (Davie, 1994). For instance, a majority of respondents from the six “early secularising” societies claim to believe in God. When asked whether they are “a religious person”, a majority say yes. Even among the most recent birth cohorts, 40–50% answer in the affirmative. We also find that – unlike attendance – religious belief seems to rise with age since each birth cohort tracks upward across survey waves. So, while the lines all trend downward, the starting point of each line seems to be rising or holding steady. This means that, in contrast to attendance, life cycle effects are at work which counteract cohort effects. The result, paradoxically, is therefore similar to what we find for attendance: a steady state in which there is no further evidence of secularisation among post-1945 birth cohorts.

Should trends in Catholic Europe follow those in the early-secularising countries, we may well see a future in which western European church attendance falls to very

![Fig. 14.3 Religiosity by cohort, early secularising societies (Sources: EVS 1981, 1990, 1999–2000; ESS 2004)](image-url)

*Data for 2004 from ESS which uses same question but different methodology N=5,581(1981); 5,711(1990); 3,053 (1999–2000); 6,035 (2004)
low levels (i.e. 5%) even as society remains fairly evenly divided between religious and non-religious populations.

Recall that our thesis concerns the balance between secularising and demographic forces. We have examined secularisation in some detail. We found a historic pattern of secularisation which continues strongly in Catholic western Europe but appears to have exhausted itself in the six relatively “mature” societies which have a long history of private secularisation.

Religious Fertility

Let us now turn to the other, demographic, prong of our argument. Here the evidence corroborates current research. For instance, the fertility difference in terms of number of children ever born (among women aged 18 or over) between those who describe themselves as “religious” and those who describe themselves as “not religious” or “atheist” averages between 0.5 and 0.6 of a child (50–60 percentage points) depending on the wave of the EVS or ESS we consider. In 2000, for example, adult females in the EVS who were religious bore an average of 2.19 children over their lifetime as against 1.59 for the non-religious. These numbers are misleading since religious respondents tend to be older and thus are more likely to have completed their fertility and come from more fertile cohorts. However, when we control for cohort, age, and a series of background variables, we find that religiosity retains its significance for fertility. Its coefficient of 0.176 (Table 14.1) suggests that, all else being equal, a religious woman in these ten west European societies will bear 15–20% more children over her lifetime than her non-religious counterpart.

Table 14.1 Regression coefficients on number of children ever born, females aged 18+

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Marital status</td>
<td>0.353*** (0.007)</td>
<td>0.246*** (0.015)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religiosity</td>
<td>0.176*** (0.028)</td>
<td>0.045*** (0.008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postmaterialism</td>
<td>–0.089*** (0.023)</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>0.002 (0.007)</td>
<td>0.008 (0.012)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>–0.059*** (0.004)</td>
<td>–0.025*** (0.007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.036*** (0.008)</td>
<td>0.035*** (0.005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohort</td>
<td>–0.031 (0.046)</td>
<td>0.116 (0.080)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wave year</td>
<td>–0.088 (0.039)</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>_cons</td>
<td>2.607*** (0.337)</td>
<td>73.072*** (15.230)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>0.356</td>
<td>0.205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>12,046</td>
<td>3,980</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

Sources: 1981–2000 EVS; 2004 ESS

N.B. No data for Norway in 2000. Postmaterialism not asked in ESS. For cohort, higher values refer to most recent
Projections of Religiosity

Alone among the surveys considered here, the 1991 EVS asked respondents: “Were you brought up religiously at home?” Cross-tabulating this question with the “are you a religious person” question in the same survey gives us a picture of how many religious individuals have left the faith and how many of the secular have become religious. We find that women in the childbearing age ranges are much more likely to remain religious than men, which has implications for the transmission of religious orientations to the next generation since we assume that females are the conduit for inter-generational transfer of beliefs. Men tend to return to faith later in life, and if women had the same life cycle behaviour as men, we would find a reduced rate of religious socialisation of children and hence a faster rate of secularisation.

In the following analysis, we focus on the six countries which secularised earlier as they are arguably in the vanguard of religious apostasy and thus closest to the endpoint envisioned in secularisation theories. Apostasy/conversion rates by 5-year age group and sex for the two groups (secular and religious) come from the 1991 EVS (the only survey which asked about previous belief). Using the 2000 EVS, we derived assumptions regarding the age structure of the two base populations by sex. Age and sex-specific fertility rates for the groups come from the same survey. Thus we produce tables for total population, fertility, transitions between religion and secularism, and mortality for each 5-year age band. Using People 3.0 software, these inputs enable us to produce a cohort component projection of the religious composition of these countries to 2100. Allowing our input assumptions – notably on fertility and conversion – to vary from their current values results in alternative projection scenarios. This is certainly a long-term projection, more suited to theoretical exploration than the concrete policy and planning objectives of many demographers who work with shorter-run data. We begin with an assumption that religious women will have a constant total fertility rate of 1.8, as against 1.6 for non-religious women. This represents an average intra-cohort fertility difference between religious and non-religious women in 1991 that is in the 10–15% range.\(^1\) Next, we calculate a constant annual “net migration” flow of apostates/converts between the religious and non-religious populations for each 5-year age band. In practice, the fluctuations in migration by age that we see are only partly the result of life cycle effects, and most likely reflect period or cohort effects or statistical fluctuations in the data. Consequently, we opt to smooth out fluctuations by averaging the flows into three 20-year age bands.\(^2\)

\(^1\) Note that this figure is for the six most secular countries and is somewhat less than the 15–20% for all ten countries sampled.

\(^2\) These grouping assumptions have important consequences for our projections because the unsmoothed data show a large influx of female converts in the 18–24 age group and a slow apostasy thereafter whereas the smoothed results assume a more modest influx of female converts into the childbearing age ranges. Smoothing substantially reduces the proportion of religious population in 2104, by around ten percentage points.
Figure 14.4 shows the results of our projection under three scenarios. First, as the highest line, is our expected scenario (1.8 vs. 1.6 religious-secular fertility gap, and six-country conversion/apostasy trend), labelled “fertility gap, no secularisation”. Next comes a projection, labelled “no fertility gap, no secularisation”, which assumes the same conversion/apostasy trend, but with no fertility gap (TFR 1.8 vs. 1.8). Finally, we consider a “fertility gap, secularisation” scenario in which there is a 1.8 vs. 1.6 religious-secular fertility gap, but with conversion/apostasy flows drawn from an average across all ten countries in this study (including fast-secularising Catholic ones). Figure 14.4 shows that secularisation has flattened out by around mid-century in the first two models, but continues strongly in the “fertility gap, secularisation” model since this postulates a reversion to rates of secularisation which are closer to what is now taking place in Catholic Europe but were last witnessed among pre-1945 cohorts in the six mainly Protestant countries in our sample.

Notice the trajectory of our expected model. It shows that for these six vanguard countries, secularisation will begin to move in reverse after mid-century, culminating in a slight return of religion by 2104 compared to 2004. This runs counter to much of what has been written about west European religious trends and, at the very least, should raise a question mark over the secularisation thesis. On their own, our projections largely point to long-term stability rather than religious increase. But, if we consider that these projections contain virtually no ethnic minorities and take no account of immigration, which will be the biggest demographic driver of religious growth in these countries, we must conclude that religious growth is in fact the most likely prognosis.

David Coleman (2006), for example, drawing on extant official estimates of the foreign-origin population, indicates that the proportion of non-European origin in the major western European countries in 2050 will range from a low of 5.1% in
Austria to a high of 24.5% in Britain, with many countries in the 10–15% range (Coleman, 2006, p. 414). There are several reasons to treat the non-UK projections as highly conservative, as Coleman rightly points out. Consider that the projections for countries outside the UK assume that the third generation is no longer of foreign origin and has been absorbed by the ethnic majority. This greatly underestimates the size of the ethnic minority population. These projections also assume no increase in immigration as a result of an aging population. In Austria, for instance, where Coleman’s cited projections envision a 5% minority population in 2050, more precise projections work with the Austrian census finds that Muslims alone will comprise between 14 and 26% of the total population in 2050 (Goujon et al., 2006).

Most non-European immigrants come from highly religious developing countries, largely Christian or Muslim rather than secular. In many deprived London neighbourhoods, pious Muslims from the Indian subcontinent rub shoulders with Pentecostalist Christians from Africa or the Caribbean. A slight majority of London’s practicing Christians are now of non-European origin and, across England, weekly Muslim worshippers outnumber those from the largest Christian denomination, the Church of England (Islamonline, 2005). Since Muslims have historically comprised a significant share of the European immigrant inflow and come from societies that are connected to Europe through family networks and are geographically quite close to Europe, they merit closer attention. Data from both the EVS (2000) and ESS (2004) confirm that young Muslims across Europe are as religious as their parents and grandparents (Fig. 14.5).

Indeed, Fig. 14.6, based on ethnic minority surveys, shows that there is little or no decline in religious observance between immigrant (solid bar) and British-born (bricked bar) Muslims. By contrast, East European and Afro-Caribbean Christians experience significant secularisation between the first and second generations. Ethnic minority surveys from Holland show similar patterns, this time

![Fig. 14.5 European Muslims, attendance at religious services, by age, 2004 (Source: ESS, 2004)](image)

Note: Muslims comprise just over 3% of the sample, in this instance drawn from ten countries: Holland, Britain, Ireland, France, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Iceland, Belgium, Spain

\[N=173, \text{ or } 3.17\%\]
Fig. 14.6 Religious retention by faith and birthplace, UK, 2001–2003 (Sources: Office for National Statistics and Home Office, 2005; Home Office, 2003)
For 2001, N=409 (UKBP), 936 (FBP), 1,071 (UKAC), 8,893 (UKWC), 400 (FWC)
For 2003, N=277 (UKBP), 817 (FBP), 57 (UKAC), 39 (FAC), 6,304 (UKWC), 151 (FWC)
Note: “BP” designates Bangladeshi and Pakistani, and “Afro” refers to African and Caribbean. Excludes non-identifiers. Practice is self-description

between largely North African and Turkish (rather then Indian subcontinental) Dutch Muslims and the more assimilated Afro-Caribbean Christians from the Antilles (Van Tubergen, 2006).

The second generation appears to be holding the line against assimilation in other ways. Consider the high endogamy rates of Muslim ethnic groups (i.e. Bangladeshi, Pakistani) in the UK (Fig. 14.7). Inter-marriage between Muslims and non-Muslims

Fig. 14.7 Ethnic endogamy rates, couples, 2001 (Source: ONS Longitudinal Survey 2001)
N=3,558 B Caribbean, 2,061 Chinese, 2,710 B African, 8,798 Pakistani, 3,298 Bangladeshi
in Britain remains rare – less than 10% of couples which include a Muslim are
religiously mixed, though it should be noted that Sikhs and Hindus (both from the
Indian subcontinent) have similar endogamy rates (Office for National Statistics,
2001). This is reinforced by the Islamic practice of returning to the home coun-
country (i.e. Pakistan, Bangladesh, Turkey, Morocco) to find a spouse. These statistics
on intermarriage and secularisation contrast sharply with the far more assimila-
tionist behaviour of Black Caribbeans and East Asians in Holland and Britain.
Black Africans, for instance, are a relatively recent, heavily foreign-born group,
yet, already, one in three couples involving a Black African is a mixed marriage
(largely with White British Christians). Thus we seem to have two paths emerging
in Europe: an assimilationist path for Blacks and East Asians, and an ethnic reten-
tion path for most Muslim ethnic groups (as well as Sikhs and possibly Hindus), and
one cannot simply assume that the all groups will converge toward assimilation.

Immigration is likely to continue at current levels into the foreseeable future
due to Europe’s aging population, strong migrant networks and escalating depen-
dency ratios (Pedersen et al., 2006; Jackson and Howe, 2008). The largely religious
immigrants, mainly Christian and Muslim, will eventually replace the ageing secular
population in their new host societies. From the limited evidence we possess on the
immigrant second generation, it appears that Christian immigrants will begin to sec-
larise while Muslim (and perhaps Hindu and Sikh) immigrants will largely retain
their faith. In combination with a cessation of further religious decline among the
European host populations, this picture points to a long term increase in European
religiosity by the end of the twenty-first century.

Goujon and Skirbekk’s work on Austria and Switzerland provide the only cohort
component projections of religious affiliation available to date for Europe. These
display an increase in the proportion of Muslims to around 10% in Switzerland
and no less than 14% in Austria by 2051. Such projections also predict a rise
in the religiously unaffiliated (i.e. “secular”) population in both countries, but,
tellingly, their trajectory hits its zenith by the middle of the twenty-first century.
If secularisation were to slow down Europe-wide, as indicated by the evidence
for the six early secularising northwest European societies reviewed above, then
the proportion of seculars would peak and start to decline between 2020 and
2050.

These findings may be usefully compared to those from the United States in
Fig. 14.8. Recent projections, based on General Social Survey (GSS) and U.S.
Census immigration data, show the proportion of secular Americans – which grew
markedly in the 1990s to 14% – peaking in 2030 and embarking upon a gentle
decline thereafter. This is mainly because of low secular fertility (TFR of 1.66
among the religiously unaffiliated versus the national average of 2.08). Second
demographic transition effects can also be seen in the fertility gulf between pro-
choice (TFR of 1.83) and anti-abortion (TFR of 2.47) Americans. In addition, new
immigrants to America are 83.2% religiously affiliated (close to the 85% rate found
in the native population), which places yet a further impediment to the growth
of the secular population within an increasingly diverse society (Skirbekk et al.,
forthcoming).
Conclusion

Ever since the Enlightenment in the mid-eighteenth century, social thinkers have assumed that secularisation and modernisation proceeded hand in hand. Late twentieth century trends in west European church attendance and religious belief seemed to confirm these hypotheses. However, religious decline at the individual level need not imply religious decline at the national level. Strong demographic growth among the religious population can offset secularising processes within individuals. This chapter contends that just as the globe is becoming more religious because more people are being born in religious than in secular countries, so too Europe will become more religious in the twenty first century for demographic reasons. Already, a slowing rate of secularisation in northwestern Europe is combining with large-scale religious immigration to bring about religious “revival” – notably in major immigration gateways like London and Amsterdam.

Across western Europe, the United States and in the world as a whole, religious populations have significantly higher fertility than seculars (Kaufmann, 2008). Cohort component projections for western Europe and the United States presented here show that despite the young age structure of the current secular population and a continued net negative outflow from religion, religious fertility and immigration will contribute a growing counterweight to secularisation at the macro level.
On current trends, by the mid-twenty first century, Europe and America seem destined to enter a “post-secular” mode in which the proportion of secular people peaks while these societies embark upon a gradual path toward greater religiosity. This is a counterintuitive finding which raises searching questions about the future of the Enlightenment and the meaning of modernity. Perhaps the exhaustion of many of the potent “secular religions” of the past two centuries (nationalism, socialism, anarchism), which did so much to combat clerical influence, has opened the gates for religion to again play a lead role on the stage of history. If so, this is a story – much like the European conquest of the Americas or the rise of Christianity – in which demography plays a hidden, but central, mediating role.

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### Chapter 14

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<tr>
<td>AQ1</td>
<td>Please provide the citations for table foot notes “∗” and “∗∗”.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
