

Sociologists of religion often overlook the role of demography. An exception to this rule is the work of Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart, who link religious decline to human development and the demographic transition. However, their thesis is based on bivariate trends, largely at the aggregate level. This article tests their thesis at the individual level using data from the World Values Surveys across a wide range of countries. Analysis of aggregate trends shows that measures of human development which appear significant in bivariate correlations do not survive multivariate scrutiny. Moreover, the paper employs multilevel analysis to explain why aggregate trends provide a misleading picture of how rising national education and income levels affect individuals' religious beliefs. The results cast the developmentalist version of the secularisation thesis into doubt. Instead, the paper suggests that religious belief becomes increasingly varied in modern societies as religiosity takes on a self-conscious, as opposed to taken-for-granted, character. Religious populations' demographic advantage - notably in the developed world - suggests that the future of secularisation, far from heading in a teleological direction, remains indeterminate.

*Keywords:* secularisation; sociology of religion; religion; fertility; developing countries; World Values Survey; modernisation; development; demographic transition; human development