Explaining Secularization
Murat Somer ©
Intl 440
Secularization theories

• Traditional secularization theory (Marx, Durkheim, Comte, Freud, Tonnies, old Berger etc.) = with modernization, science and rationality => faith ↓

• Disenchantment with religion, God

• Shown not to be true, faith and rationality do not necessarily conflict.
Revised Secularization theories

• Faith does not necessarily decline, but other things happen.

• **Charles Taylor: the possibility of unbelief ↑**
  (it becomes thinkable not to believe)

• Peter Berger: pluralism ↑

• Bruce: R becomes something that people can pick and mix as they wish. Supermarket religion
Revised Secularization theories

• Fox: Both secularization and sacralization are happening in different areas. R tries to reinvent itself. Some components of modernization/globalization gives an advantage to religious communities.

• Grace Davie and others: functional and actual differentiation of religious and non-religious institutions, practices, and rationality
Revised Secularization theories

• Casanova: secularization theory has three components.
  1. Differentiation of secular spheres from religious norms and institutions
  2. ↓ religious beliefs and practices
  3. Privatization of R.

• 1 occurs but not necessarily 2 and 3. Legitimate role for R is possible in public sphere, as long as R can reinvent itself.
• Norris and Inglehart: with ↑ existential security, rel values and practices ↓
Religion by Society

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious Participation by %</th>
<th>Agrarian</th>
<th>Industrial</th>
<th>Post industrial</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attend Church at least weekly</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pray “every day”</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WVS 1981-2001

Within these designations there is significant variation:
- Older Populations are more religious than younger
- Women are more religious than men
- Socially disadvantaged individuals are more religious than the affluent
Trends in Religious Participation and Beliefs

• What evidence is there for the erosion of religious values over time?
  – Substantial decline in all surveyed European countries 1970 - 1998
  – Similar data does not exist for developing countries
  – Increasing interest in the meaning and purpose of life
  – Values of agrarian societies have remained constant
Norris and Inglehart: economic security and secularization
Participation

North South Religion Gap
- Southern European Catholic states are experiencing a slower decline in religiosity.
- Northern Protestant States are experiencing more rapid decline.
- Differences in economic equality may explain disparities
- Stronger religious cultures
Important Trends:

Secularism rising in Developed countries with low birth rates

Religion is growing in less developed countries with high birth rates
What causes cross-country differences in secularization?

• The theory of Religious Markets
  – Assumes a constant demand for religion
  – Argues that changes in religious participation result from the “supply” factors. Religious freedom, competition and vitality of religious organizations (e.g. churches) and appeal of religion

• Secularization based on Existential Security (Norris and Inglehart)
  – Demand for religion hinges on existential security
What causes cross-country differences in secularization?

- Martin:
  - crucial events
  - Calvinism, enlightenment (ideational changes in religion itself)
  - relation of R to nationalism and cultural identity

- Norris and Inglehart: states’ ability to provide existential security

- Casanova: autonomy of religious civil society from state.

- Jurgensmeyer: ability of secular ideologies and projects to address needs (major problem in Middle East)
• While religion adapts to markets, nation-states, modernity and globalization, often modern nation states also feel that they need religion and support it.

• Example: civil religion
Civil religion

• The dogmas of CR (Rousseau):
  1. the existence of God
  2. The life to come
  3. The reward of virtue and the punishment of vice
  4. The exclusion of religious intolerance
Civil religion

• Fox: While the state does not officially endorse any specific religion, one religion unofficially serves as the state’s civil religion

• Example1: Turkey (discuss how)
Civil religion

- Example 2: The 5 Pancasila principles of Indonesia

1. Belief in the one and only God (*Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa*).

2. Just and civilized humanity (*Kemanusiaan Yang Adil dan Beradab*).

3. The unity of Indonesia (*Persatuan Indonesia*).

4. Democracy guided by the inner wisdom in the unanimity arising out of deliberations amongst representatives (*Kerakyatan Yang Dipimpin oleh Hikmat Kebijaksanaan, Dalam Permusyawaratan dan Perwakilan*).

5. Social justice for all of the people of Indonesia (*Keadilan Sosial bagi seluruh Rakyat Indonesia*)
American Civil Religion

• Robert Bellah: Americans uphold a common “civil religion” with some fundamental beliefs, values, holidays, and rituals, parallel to, or independent of, their chosen religion

• God Bless America!

• I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.
## Civil Religion

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Civil Religion</th>
<th>Religion</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nebulous definition of God</td>
<td>Explicitly defined, Jesus, Mohammed, Yahweh, Vishnu etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part of a larger socio political narrative “...our government make no sense unless it is founded in a deeply held religious faith – and I don’t care what it is” -Eisenhower</td>
<td>Ideologically imperative “I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and that Mohammed is His messenger.” –Shihada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Realm</td>
<td>Spiritual Realm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sovereignty is a combination of classical natural law and biblical religion “laws of nature and of natures God” -Kennedy</td>
<td>Sovereignty is a divine mandate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• What does Eisenhower mean?

• “our government make no sense unless it is founded in a deeply held religious faith – and I don’t care what it is”
Biblical Archetypes in the American Political Experience

• “American Shinto” high value of personal sacrifice for the state
• Exodus – England to America
• Chosen People – Americans
• New Jerusalem – America
• Sacrificial Death and Rebirth – Assassinated leaders and war dead
## Religion and Nationalism

### 4 Modules (Uri Ram)

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<th>Nationalism Strong</th>
<th>Nationalism Weak</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Religionism Weak</td>
<td>1. Secular nationalism (France, Ataturk’s Turkey)</td>
<td>3. Civic Constitutionalism (US?, Reform Judaism, New Age transnational spiritualisms)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religionism Strong</td>
<td>2. Religious Nationalism (Irish Catholicism; Hammas; Israeli-Jewish Block of Faithful)</td>
<td>4. Traditional Religionism (Diaspora Judaism; post-national communal fundamentalism: Al-Qaeda, ISIS)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Ram: Israel moved from 1 to 2.. “inimical to secularism”

• Turkey?
• Can also secularism (and laicism) “need” religion or some versions of it?

• Can religion need secularism?
Paradox of Secularism

Secularism needs/claims to be neutral. But, this creates a paradox because it cannot tell religious people “why” they should accept secularism.
Therefore:

• Secularism alone is insufficient to realise its own aims (political stability, political autonomy and peaceful coexistence).

• Secularism should be justified within religious traditions.
Religion needs secularism to prevent corruption of religion and to maintain freedom of faith