

ReligionMonitor

Understanding Common Ground

An International Comparison of Religious Belief





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Preface

Liz Mohn
Vice-Chair of the
Bertelsmann Stiftung
Executive Board



Religious diversity is part and parcel of the world we live in today. In many countries, adherents of different religions and denominations coexist with nondenominational people and with atheists. At the same time, religion plays an important international role in the coexistence of different states and cultures. Thus one of the primary challenges faced by modern society is to ensure the peaceful coexistence of people from different cultural and religious backgrounds.

The question of where people find common ground and what gives them security and guidance has occupied my mind for many years. On my travels and in my encounters with people of widely divergent backgrounds, faiths, and biographies, I am always struck by the variety of human experience. This variety is a precious good in its own right that we should take care not to jeopardise.

In my experience, dialogue can surmount even differences that appear to leave little common ground. Openness and tolerance, however, are crucial prerequisites for dialogue. At the same time, there must be a consensus about fundamental values such as freedom, justice for participation in social life, and a profound humanity as the basis for successful coexistence in diverse societies.

All over the world, religious belief significantly affects the way people think and act.

It provides orientation and lends meaning to life. When we look beyond the borders of Europe towards other continents, the great importance of religion for society and politics becomes clear. In Brazil, for example, an overwhelming majority of the population are believers and the growing evangelical religious communities have become perceptible social actors with significant political influence. In the USA, too, religious belief is of high importance in public life.

Religion plays an important role in the cohesion of many societies. We should not forget, however, that encounters between different religions also contain a high conflict potential. How, then, can people be persuaded to focus more on the shared fundamental values that all world religions have in common?

The Religion Monitor was developed by the Bertelsmann Stiftung as an instrument for helping to shed light on the interactions between religion and society. This is an international project that was carried out with the participation of experts from a wide variety of different fields. The questionnaire that was developed for the project can be applied uniformly across all countries and religions in order to provide comparable results.

The analysis of the 2013 Religion Monitor data includes responses from 14,000 people from 13 countries who were asked to answer

approximately 100 questions. While all the respondents gave very personal answers about their convictions, attitudes, and behaviour patterns, the information they provided is also representative of millions of people around the world. It is clear that religion remains a significant force in society. If we want to continue living together in freedom and diversity in the future, we must strive toward a deeper understanding of religion and its roles in social development. The Religion Monitor aims to help us gain that understanding.



Introduction

In recent years, debates about secularisation (Bruce 2002), the return of religion (Riesebrodt 2001) or of religiosity (Graf 2004), and the “clash of cultures” (Huntington 1996) have significantly shaped public discourse about religion and its role in society. Against the background of contradictory media coverage, one recurring question that has repeatedly been raised is whether we can expect to see a resurgence of religion (in some form or another) or whether the decline in church service attendance and the numbers of people formally leaving the church are indications that religion is losing its social significance. Proponents of the secularisation theory point out that the importance of religion in the minds of the people is on the decline, while supporters of the individualisation theory assert that religion is still thriving and has merely taken on different forms, becoming more “individual” and thereby “invisible” (Luckmann 1991).

Many of these diagnoses, however, are regarded as pertaining only to Europe (Casanova 2009). Where religion is concerned, Germany and Europe are on a path that is not representative of other parts of the world. Internationally, there is a great deal to suggest that the significance of religion remains constant and may even be increasing; Africa, Asia, and Latin America are recording massive increases in membership numbers in “traditional” churches,

while religious convictions play a crucial role in many political conflicts.

Against this background, the Religion Monitor was launched a few years ago by the Bertelsmann Stiftung as a new tool for measuring the manifestations of religiosity. The tool is based on a substantive definition of religion that is applicable to all faiths and also encompasses individualised forms of religiosity. The representative data for the Religion Monitor were collected in 21 countries in 2007 and served as the basis for the first well-founded comparison of individual religiosity in every region and on all continents worldwide.

The revised and enlarged Religion Monitor goes one step further, undertaking an empirical investigation of the social and political relevance of religion and thus including both the tried-and-true questions on the centrality of religion from the first Religion Monitor and also questions about values and attitudes towards values, about the perception of religious diversity, and about social cohesion. Thus the 2013 Religion Monitor facilitates a deeper analysis of some fundamental aspects of modern societies.

The Religion Monitor does not claim to present a picture of the development of religiosity everywhere in the world. Rather, the countries in the study were specifically

selected with a view to comparability, allowing us to perform more detailed analyses in order to develop strategies for dealing with socio-political challenges. The main reference group, therefore, consists of Germany, Great Britain, Sweden, Switzerland, France, Spain, Canada, and the USA. Additionally, we gathered data in countries which have special relevance from a German perspective (Turkey, Israel) or in terms of the global picture (Brazil, India, and South Korea).

Our initial evaluation of the results took the form of an overview which is presented in the present study for the international data and in a parallel publication for Germany. Reports on individual countries and on specific issues relevant to Germany will follow in additional publications.

In our initial evaluation of the international data, the following questions were of paramount priority: What forms of religiosity and spirituality can be observed today in the countries that were studied? How do people cope with the growing diversity of religious beliefs? What role does religion play in social cohesion? We should like to thank the author, Gert Pickel, for his initial evaluation and analysis of the international data of the 2013 Religion Monitor. Additionally, special thanks are due to Stefan Huber, who spearheaded the development of the first Religion Monitor and served in an advisory

capacity during subsequent developments. We are also grateful to Carsten Gennerich, Constantin Klein, Olaf Müller, Detlef Pollack, and Richard Traunmüller, who provided valuable input during the development process, and José Casanova, David Voas, Jinhyung Park, Eva Hamberg, Tamar Hermann, Franz Höllinger, Peter Beyer, and Üzeyir Ok for their services in verifying the different national versions of the questionnaire. Finally, the Religion Monitor would have been impossible without the dependable coordination and implementation of the interviews by infas (represented by Robert Follmer and Janina Belz) and by Matthias Kappeler of ISOPUBLIC.

Stephan Vopel
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1. Overview

Religiosity: National differences

Adherence to religion and personal religiosity varies significantly from country to country. This phenomenon is attributable both to national traditions and to global developments. The highest levels of devotion to religion are found in countries outside Europe, which are represented in the 2013 Bertelsmann Religion Monitor by Brazil, India, Turkey, and the USA. While Brazil is a representative example of Latin American countries, most of which are highly religious (Schäfer 2009, 2010), the USA is a global exception since a high proportion of its population belongs to migrant communities and its society is characterised by religious pluralism, competing denominations, and a high level of modernisation. However, Europe too exhibits marked differences in religiosity from country to country, which may be expressed in terms of belief in God, religious practices, and the relevance that is conceded to religion in everyday life. Among the countries in this study, the proportion of religious people is lowest in Protestant Sweden, laicist France and the states of former East Germany, while it is highest in Switzerland, former West Germany, and Spain. The differences affect different dimensions of religiosity (personal religiosity, religious practices such as prayer or attendance of religious services, spirituality, and religious

experiences) in very similar ways. The international differences in the significance of religiosity arise from a combination of religious and cultural traditions, modernisation, and specific national developmental phenomena, which may have historical or current political causes.

Lower levels of religiosity in young people

The secularisation theory can be used to explain the observable differences between different countries. In particular, socio-economic well-being generally results in a decline in the social significance of religion in society and a decrease in the numbers of people who base their life praxis on religious norms and rules. This analysis is corroborated by inter-generational differences in religiosity. Almost all the countries in the study (with the exception of Israel) exhibit a decline in the centrality and significance of religion for daily life from one generation to another. As a general rule, the younger people are, the lower their religiosity. Interestingly, contrary to what previous studies have shown, this generational change is observable not only within Europe, but also in non-European countries. Europe, however, is the region where this development has advanced the



furthest. Thus a majority of the population favours the separation of religion and politics, just as a relevant number of people describe themselves as neither religious nor spiritual.

Europe: Religious and secular

Amid the complexities of everyday life in modern societies, religion plays a subordinate role and may be lived entirely in private. This situation is attributable in large part to the effects of social modernisation.

This does not mean that religiosity and religious behaviour have vanished or will vanish completely from people's lives: between 40 % and 80 % of European citizens exhibit at least a medium degree of religious belief according to the centrality index of religiosity.

“Despite the processes
of secularisation,
Europe is not a
secular continent”

Despite the processes of secularisation, therefore, Europe is still a long way from being “secular”, and care should be taken to

distinguish between the developmental trend and the level that it has reached to date. It must be noted, however, that only 30 % to 50 % of those interviewed regard religion as important in their own lives, and respondents tend to describe themselves as only moderately religious. Thus the population of Europe exhibits a high degree of heterogeneity ranging from the religious to the secular or religiously indifferent. The “beacons” of high religiosity have largely emigrated from Europe to other parts of the world.

Cultural influences and religiosity

Religious belief and the centrality of religion in everyday life is very strongly dependent on the denominational and religious identity of the individuals and their surrounding culture. For example, Muslims, Catholics, evangelicals, and members of the Pentecostal movement exhibit higher degrees of religiosity than Lutheran, united, and reformed Protestants (see Martin 2001; Schäfer, H. 2008; Schäfer, F. 2009). The same differences in religious intensity are often characteristic of the corresponding religious cultures as well. Accordingly, it is Switzerland that exhibits the highest levels of personal religiosity and the greatest significance of religion in Europe.

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All highly religious countries (Brazil, India, and the USA) are located outside Europe. But there are major differences within Europe too. Sweden, France, and former East Germany have the lowest proportion of religious people, while Switzerland, former West Germany, and Spain have the highest.

“Religious cultures are not exempt from secularisation processes”

Similarly, Europe’s Catholic countries are more religious on average than Protestant countries, but specific religious minority groups in other countries also display varying degrees of religiosity. It is impossible to say with certainty whether this is due to the specific faith, to the influence of cultural traditions from the country of origin, or to the diaspora effect of minority status itself. At the same time, religious cultures are not necessarily free from secularisation processes; they merely influence the ways in which these processes manifest themselves.

Religions and feelings of threat

The findings of the 2013 Religion Monitor show that the perception of other religions as a threat is a global phenomenon. Europe in particular exhibits a certain fundamental fear of Islam. As a generic concept, Islam is most strongly perceived as a threat in Israel, Spain, Switzerland, and the USA. Specific contexts and events as well as the link between Islam and terrorism in the minds of the population may play a major role in determining this correlation.

Thus only 20 % of those interviewed in Spain and up to 50 % in Germany and South Korea agreed with the statement “Islam is compatible with the Western world”. Turkey was the exception here with 70 % agreement. However, these diffuse fears do not necessarily result in a wholesale rejection of other religions, still less of their adherents. The feelings of threat associated with ideas about a given religion decrease sharply

when people rather than names of religions are mentioned: “Muslims” provide less cause for concern than “Islam”, and trust in the adherents of another faith is not significantly lower than trust in members of the respondents’ own religion.

Religious pluralism

This phenomenon also affects attitudes to religious diversity in the respondents’ own countries. In general, attitudes towards religious pluralisation are ambivalent, with approximately 60 % of interviewees in almost all the countries in the study viewing religious pluralisation as both threatening and enriching. Wider discrepancies between the two assessments were observed in Spain and Turkey, where the number of those who view religious diversity as enriching exceeds the number of those regarding it as a source of conflict by 10 % to 20 %. The opposite is the case in Israel and Switzerland, where the view is more negative. Overall, a wait-and-see, pragmatic attitude to religious pluralism was observed, though it must be said that people are easily influenced by public discourse and political decisions since their attitudes are often based on emotions rather than on knowledge.

Dogmatism and religious tolerance

The pragmatism that dominates attitudes towards other religions is also reflected in the fact that an average of approximately 70 % of the population acknowledges that every religion may contain a kernel of truth, so that one should adopt a correspondingly open attitude to its adherents. This positive attitude, however, is undermined in some countries by groups that believe their own faith has an exclusive answer to religious questions and offers the sole path to salvation.

Such groups are strongest in Israel, Turkey, and South Korea, where their size ranges between 27 % and 44 % of the population. In Europe itself, as well as in the other non-European countries studied for the 2013 Religion Monitor, dogmatic groups with exclusivist religious views are relatively small in number. Given this comparative lack of support, therefore, religious dogmatism is unlikely to be one of the primary problems in Europe's future. At the same time, however, there is a kind of polarisation in some countries between dogmatic and highly religious groups on the one hand and secularists on the other. This is most clearly visible in Israel and the USA, while Spain is the only country in Europe that shows tentative signs of a similar phenomenon.

Social cohesion: Volunteer involvement and trust

Most of the countries in the study display a high degree of civic involvement. Participation in volunteer networks and social groups is of considerable importance both for the individuals involved in them and for civil society, which is constitutive for democracy. Involvement in religion and participation – which does not necessarily have a religious dimension – in groups associated with a church represents a significant part of such volunteer involvement, with religious people being somewhat more active, as a rule, than non-religious people. The reasons for this may be ethical or religious in nature but may also be attributable to the excellent civic infrastructure provided by religious communities.

“Religious people display higher levels of social trust than non-religious people”

Involvement in volunteer networks has the effect of increasing social trust. At the same time, it is evident that religious people display higher levels of social trust than non-religious people, although the precise role that religion plays in these networks is not always clear. It may provide an opportunity structure for largely secular networks or for religious people to congregate. Modernisation, bringing with it the availability of spare time for civil activities, and the normative combination of civil society and democracy has beneficial effects for promoting increased civic activity and supporting the development of networks and opportunity structures associated with churches.

Democracy: High approval ratings

This is another important factor for the relationship between democracy and religion. Democracy appears to receive almost identical degrees of approval from religious and non-religious people and from Catholics, Protestants, and Muslims. Such approval is fostered by participation in civil society networks and the social trust acquired within them. Against the background of this high acceptance of democracy, minor differences between Christians and Muslims in Europe are relatively unproblematic. The extent to which the separation of politics and religion, which meets with widespread approval, is a decisive factor in this issue must remain an open question, but it is clear that religiosity can make a difference in attitudes to political questions. Religious people are slightly more likely to have a negative attitude to immigrants (participants in religious networks form the exception here), but attitudes to immigration as a whole are more strongly influenced by specific national attitude patterns than by religious ones.

Israel: A special case

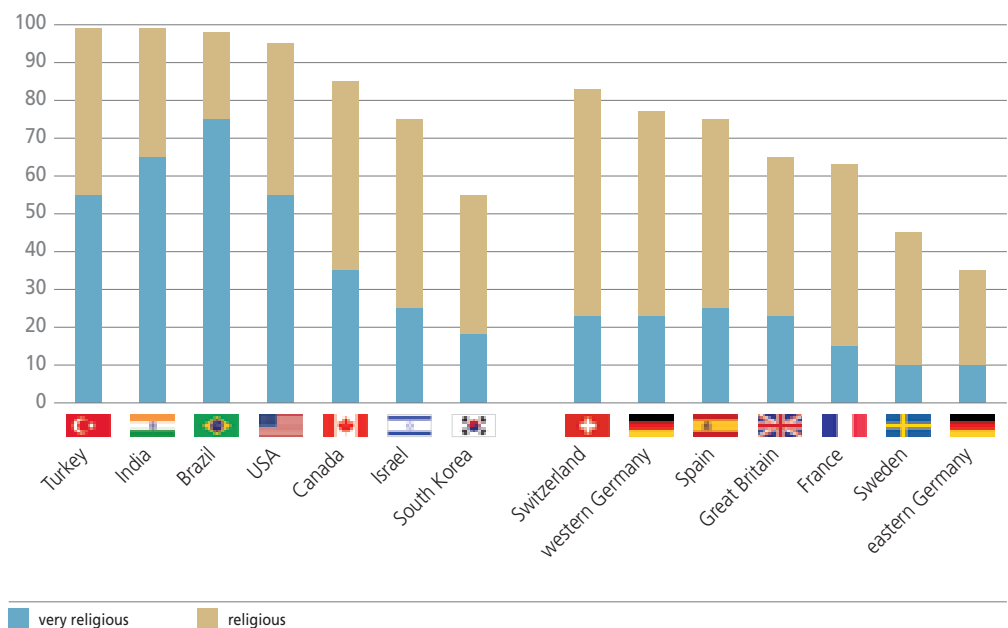
Because of its political situation, Israel represents a special case in terms of religion. The divergence between the public significance of religion and personal religiosity appears to be as wide as the developing polarisation of society into religious and secular sectors. Thus there is a dichotomy in Israel between highly religious people on the one hand and secular or religiously indifferent people on the other. At the same time, the country's political situation is one of the primary factors from which religion derives a relatively high social and political significance, even among those Israelis who are not, or not very, religious themselves. This factor is expressed in a high awareness of threat which particularly colours attitudes towards Muslims and Islam in general. Thus Israel exhibits a unique – and seemingly contradictory – scenario in which religion has high relevance in daily life while personal religiosity is limited, a constellation which is difficult to identify in any other country in the world.

2. A comparative look at the importance of religion

One of the core questions in an international study of religion is the significance of religious belief for individuals and for society in general. Is religion gaining ground, or should we expect to see processes of secularisation all over the world in the future? Comparative international studies can help to shed light on this question. An examination of the tried-and-tested centrality index of religiosity

(Huber 2009), which was also used in the 2008 Religion Monitor (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2007, 2009) suggests that not much has changed in the last five years. While the forms of religiosity exhibited minor fluctuations between 2008 and 2013, their range is too narrow and the time period too short to allow conclusions about their significance for developments.

Figure 1 Centrality of religiosity in different countries (percentage values)



Centrality index of religion. Categories: very religious, religious – residual category: not very religious or not religious. For construction see Huber 2009.



Religious shifts as a long-term process

Although the time span of five years is so short as to give almost no indication of a comprehensive secularisation process or a broad revitalisation of religion, it is nevertheless possible to detect a certain constancy in the centrality of religion for individuals in all regions worldwide. Changes in religiosity are a long-term process and must be measured in generations. A crucial factor determining religiosity is the form and the intensity with which individuals experience and internalise religion during their youth and thus the extent to which it influences their thought. Where religious belief is abandoned, the change typically coincides with the succession of one generation by the next (Norris/Inglehart 2004; Pollack 2003).

These long-term processes are culturally determined, since the ways in which succeeding generations are socialised, along with the effects of that socialisation, are substantially dependent on social background conditions and on the role which religion plays in society. This can be demonstrated by examining differences in religiosity in different countries.

According to the available figures, the centre of religious commitment is no longer to be found in Europe, but has shifted to other regions of the world. This finding of the 2008 Religion Monitor was confirmed in 2013. The centrality of religiosity and the subjective importance of religion in life is noticeably stronger in Brazil, India, the USA, and Canada than in the European countries in the study, and this supports the thesis that secularisation is relatively far advanced in Europe. Proportions of highly religious people higher than 50 %, such as were recorded in Turkey, are only found outside Europe (in Brazil, India, and the USA). The number of highly religious people in Israel and South Korea, and especially in the European countries of Spain, Switzerland, Germany, Great Britain, France, and Sweden is significantly lower. In Sweden even the number of citizens classified as “religious” is below the 50 % mark, putting the country almost on a par with the highly secularised and dechurched eastern Germany, which is listed separately in figure 1.

“Europe is no longer
the centre of
religious commitment”

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Europe has reached a significant level of secularisation, but still retains a living cultural tradition shaped by Christianity. Religion has declined in significance for Europe’s citizens and trails the family, work, and recreation, but this does not mean that it has disappeared. Some European countries have as many religious as non-religious residents.

Europe: Secularisation with a Christian stamp

But this certainly does not mean that Europe can be described as secular. While it is justified to speak of a significant level of secularisation, the continent still retains a cultural tradition that bears a predominantly religious stamp – and, by and large, it also retains a culture of Christianity. Only Albania and Bosnia-Herzegovina have Muslim majority cultures. As we have seen, the centrality index still identifies a majority for whom religion has at least a medium centrality, while people’s assessments of the significance of religiosity and spirituality in their own lives yield appreciable levels of agreement, albeit below the 50 % mark (see figure 2).

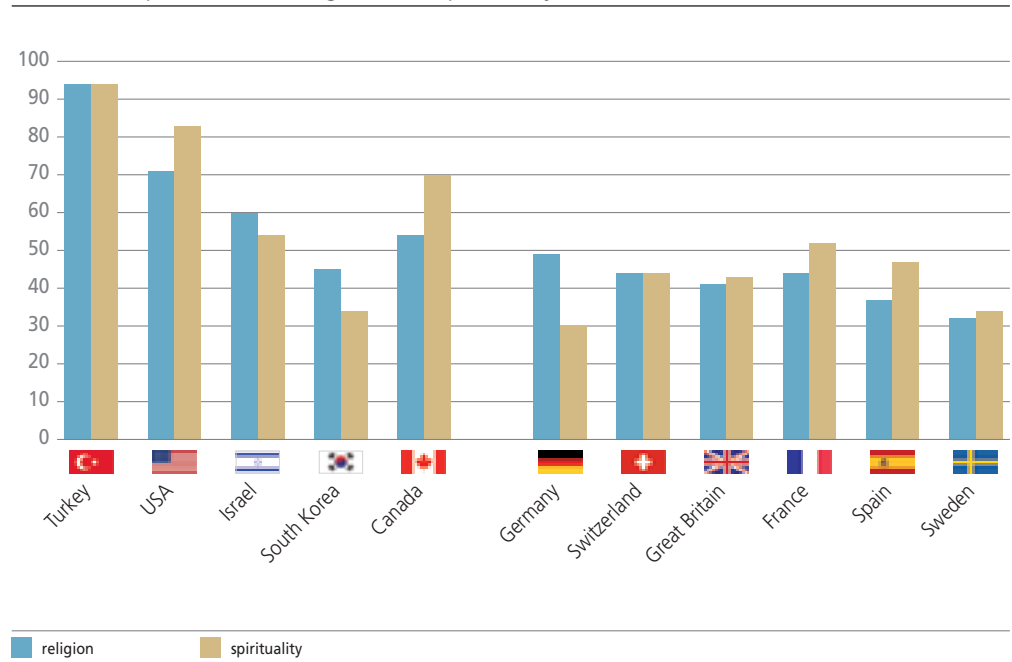
The significance of religion has certainly declined in the eyes of European citizens and, according to other Religion Monitor data, now trails spheres of life such as family, work, and recreation; however, it is still deeply rooted in the culture of European countries and has not withdrawn exclusively into the private sphere. But even if many people in Europe continue to have recourse to religion during various phases of their lives, the proportion of people doing so appears to be decreasing, and religious people are frequently offset by an equally large number of people who are religiously indifferent.

“Religion has declined in significance in Europe, but it has not disappeared”

Religious self-assessment

The subordinate status of religion also becomes clear from people’s assessments of their own religiosity. The cultural differences between the countries in the study are

Figure 2 Importance of religion and spirituality for life (percentage values)



Agreement (“very important”/“fairly important”) with the statement: “I would like to read you a list of subjects and ask you how important they are in your life”.

especially wide here, and it is clear that the number of people who regard themselves as not religious or not very religious has reached a significant level in certain parts of Europe.

incidence of religious indifference in South Korea and Israel not only contradicts many media reports, but also, at least in the case of Israel, contrasts to some extent with the social significance of religion.

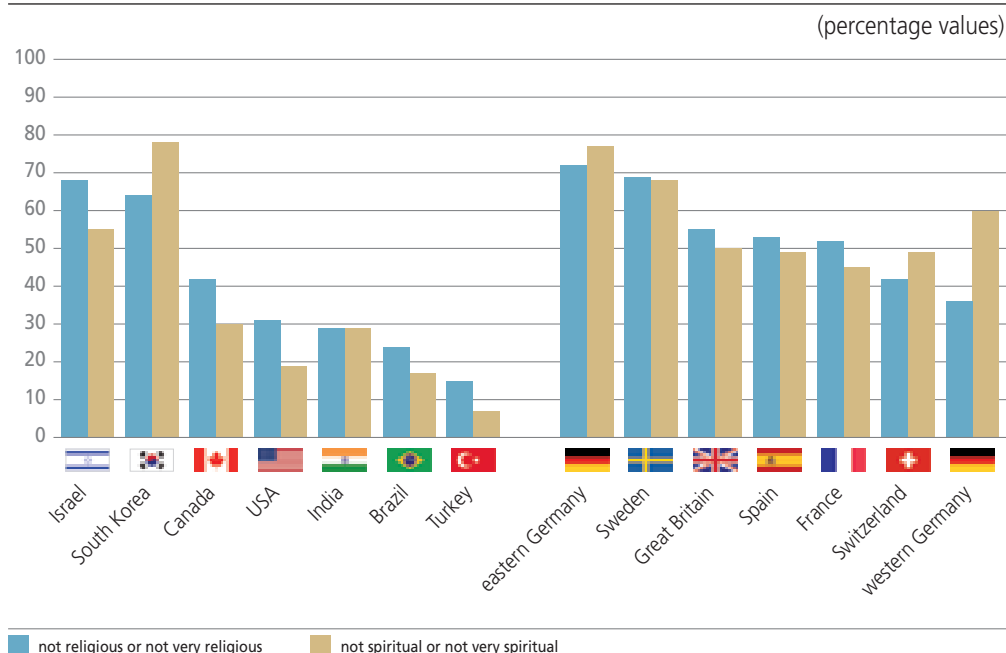
“The number of people who regard themselves as **not very religious** has reached a significant level in some parts of Europe”

The number of people who describe themselves as non-religious is conspicuously large in Sweden, Israel, and South Korea. 70 % of Swedes identify as non-religious, a figure close to that of eastern Germany, which is frequently cited as an example of particularly severe de-Christianisation in Europe (see Pickel 2011b). However, the majority of the population of Spain also identifies as either not very religious or not religious at all. The conspicuously high

Spirituality and religiosity

In their personal definitions of spirituality, most people do not discriminate between spirituality and religion, treating the former as a component of the latter, as can be seen in the close correlation ($r=.53$) across all countries. Thus spirituality seems to be viewed primarily as a religious experience or a diffuse sense of religiosity, and this definition allows a distinction to be drawn between spirituality and the concept of religiosity, which is more closely associated with institutionalised religion. This distinction is also highlighted by the fact that almost all countries in Europe, with the

Figure 3 Self-assessment as not religious/spiritual or not very religious/spiritual



Answers (“not at all”/“a little”) to the questions “Altogether: How religious would you consider yourself to be?” and “Irrespective of whether you consider yourself a religious person or not: How spiritual would you describe yourself as being?”

exception of Germany and Switzerland, rate the importance of spirituality slightly higher than religion. Overall, however, the proximity between both views outweighs these differences, so that one should not construe these figures as representing too powerful an argument for the individualisation theory (characterised by a stronger personal spirituality) nor for a “spiritual revolution” (Healas/Woodhead 2005; Luckmann 1967).

“Almost all countries in Europe rate the **relevance of spirituality** slightly higher than religiosity”

At the same time, religious indifference is a phenomenon not limited to Europe: in both South Korea and – remarkably – Israel, fewer than 40 % of the people describe themselves as religious. Suggestions of an upsurge in religious belief in South Korea should be examined critically, since any such upsurge does not appear to affect the population as a whole. The findings for Israel are slightly contradictory in that there seems to be a somewhat stronger discrepancy in this country between the significance of religion and individual religiosity. Corresponding to the results of the centrality index, citizens of Turkey, India, and Brazil most frequently identify themselves as religious people. The variation is considerable even within Europe, as the differences between Sweden, Germany, and Spain demonstrate.

Religiosity and socio-economic modernisation

The findings for Sweden are consistent with those of other studies (Pickel 2010) and with the fact that the Protestant regions of Europe (see below) have undergone the strongest secularisation processes. Additionally, the

findings for South Korea and Israel point towards a supplementary explanation: it appears that socio-economic modernisation processes have a detrimental effect both on the social significance of religion and on individual religiosity (Norris/Inglehart 2004). Against the background of a broader distribution of wealth, the significance of religious belief appears to be declining while the accompanying processes of democratisation and pluralisation undermine the importance of religion in everyday life. In societies that have benefited from socio-economic modernisation, many people are no longer driven by poverty and hardship to hope for a better life in the hereafter. Increasing affluence not only leads people to turn their main attention to life in this world, but also makes them largely content with their situation as their lives begin to seem less unpredictable and uncertain. This does not mean, however, that religion should be interpreted only as a mechanism for coping with material wants, as doing so would constrain the concept of religion too tightly to only one factor among many that motivate a religious outlook on life.

“The **modernisation process** offers a growing number of **alternatives** to religion”

At the same time, the modernisation process offers a growing number of alternatives that compete with religion (Stolz 2009). While this variety of options does not cause people actively to abandon religion, it does combine with increasing individualisation, which challenges people to be more self-determined and to make and justify their own decisions, to diminish the social significance of religion in relation to competing priorities (such as a wide choice of leisure activities as well as opportunities for career change and professional advancement).

It is important to note the context-dependency of the relationship between religiosity and socio-economic modernisation. Increasing social inequality and the poverty that still affects large sectors of the population in many countries are two of the factors that may have the effect of reactivating religious belief. However, socio-economic modernisation is not the only factor that advances secularisation. The spread of education, rationalisation, bureaucratisation, increased mobility, democratisation, and functional differentiation may still serve as deterrents to such revival movements, since many of these processes are connected to socio-economic modernisation (Pickel 2011a: 141; Bruce 2002: 4; Norris/Inglehart 2004).

Protestantism and secularisation

Against the background of socio-economic modernisation and its effect of declining church membership in general, Protestantism in particular seems to have been less successful in recent decades than other denominations in retaining its members and defining religion as a central factor in the daily life of the individual (Pickel 2010). The current comparative results appear to show that countries with a Protestant cultural history have made considerable advances on the path of secularisation. It is no coincidence, therefore, that Sweden has the lowest number of people who may be classified as religious or very religious according to the centrality index. The same argument (along with a socialist past under a repressive government) can be brought into play in the case of eastern Germany. Within the German states, too, members of the mainstream Protestant churches generally describe themselves as less religious than members of other religious communities (see figure 4). Specific historical developments like those that took place in France have also resulted in similar conditions (low religiosity and low

significance of religion) in some non-Protestant states.

Religio-cultural lines of tradition

The effects of religio-cultural lines of tradition should not be underestimated. It is clear that an Islamic tradition such as that of Turkey has a vitalising effect on religion, and the different degrees of religiosity prevalent in different religions is evident within the various countries as well. In all countries, members of the various Muslim traditions (with the exception of the Alevites) display a higher degree of religiosity than members of Christian churches (see figure 4). However, an examination of Muslims by age groups – to the extent that this is possible given the limited number of cases for Muslims in most of the countries in the study – reveals an interesting development. It appears that, over time, Muslims become assimilated to the level of religiosity of their environment.

However, the centrality of religion varies among the members of the Christian churches as well. It is lowest among mainline Protestants and highest among members of evangelical Christian churches and the Pentecostal church (Martin 2001), where the largest proportion of very religious people can be found both in Europe and in the USA. These two religious groups also have a far higher proportion of members than other Christian churches who display an orientation classified as fundamentalist by Riesebrodt (2001). Fundamentalism is defined as a form of religious belief that is uncompromisingly based on religious texts which are deemed

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The high level of secularisation exhibited by the predominantly Protestant states of Europe should not obscure the fact that the primary factor reducing the significance of religion is the socio-economic modernisation of societies. South Korea is a case in point. In societies that have benefited from socio-economic modernisation, many people are no longer driven by poverty and hardship to hope for a better life in the hereafter. Increasing affluence causes people to turn their main attention to life in this world. This does not mean, however, that religion must inevitably decline as a result. Once material needs have been met, new questions arise about the quality of life, self-actualisation, and the meaning of life, and people may turn to religion in their quest for answers.

“Members of different Christian churches display different levels of religiosity”

to be exempt from discussion and interpretation and that explicitly regards only one faith as the “true religion”. The success of these Christian churches in countries like Brazil is rooted in a dogmatism that ensures a certain degree of security, in the strong socially integrative capacity of these churches, and in the high charisma of their preachers. Their appeal is especially high among the socially disadvantaged underclasses of these countries. Brazil, for example, has significantly higher social inequality and therefore a larger poor population than Europe.

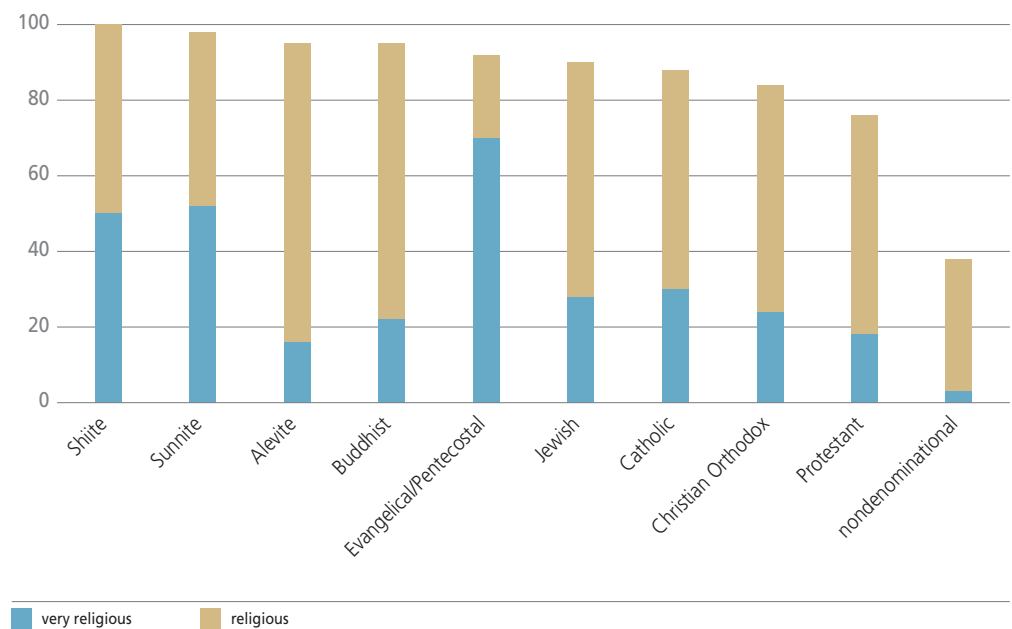
The data clearly show that membership in a denomination plays a significant role in determining paths of religiosity (Martin 1978; McLeod 2000; Norris/Inglehart 2004; Pickel 2010). Thus the dominance of different religious and denominational cultures is in large part responsible for the national differences with respect to many facets of

personal religiosity and to people’s attitudes to religion in general. Furthermore, taking into account the fact that religiosity is explicitly meaningless for most of those unaffiliated to any religion, the spectrum of religio-cultural positions also includes high degrees of cultural secularisation (such as those of eastern Germany and France).

Dimensions of religiosity in different countries

For the purpose of comparing different countries, these data concerning attitude are the mirror image, so to speak, of other criteria. Charles Glock (1962; see also Glock/Stark 1965) divided religiosity into faith, praxis, knowledge, religious experience, and the consequences. Stefan Huber (2003) conceptually expanded these dimensions

Figure 4 Centrality of religion by religious denomination in Europe (percentage values)



Centrality index of religion by membership in religious denominations.

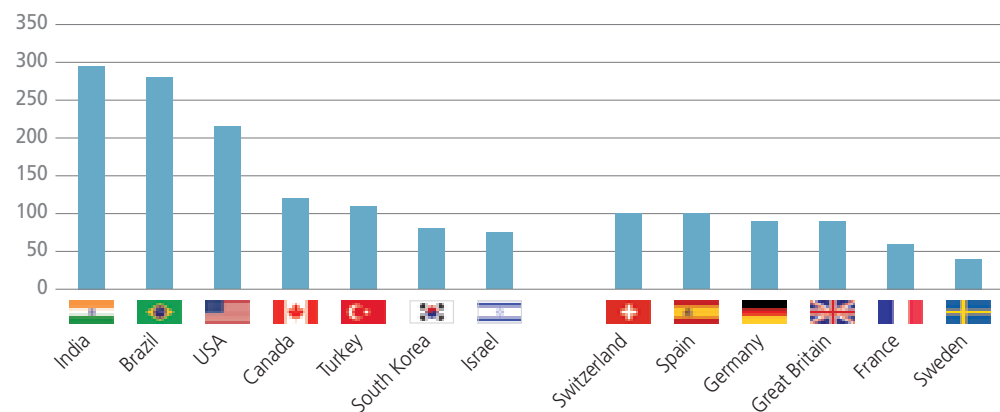
and implemented them for the 2008 Religion Monitor. Both Huber and Glock proceed from the core assumption that the dimensions are interlinked. One of the crucial consequences of this assumption is that we must additionally assume that the other dimensions of religiosity will manifest themselves in very similar ways in different countries. An examination of the average number of personal prayers per year and country¹ (which admittedly is a rather rough average) largely confirms this assumption (figure 5).

The ranking of the countries corresponds to the results of the preceding description of the characteristics, which are confirmed by correlation analyses. Thus the different characteristics of personal religiosity, religious practice, and spirituality have correlations of over $r=.50$, an extremely high correlation for individual data. Put another way, religious practice and religious attitudes are very closely interlinked, and this is true both within countries and across national borders. Additionally, this means that religious change too represents a phenomenon in which convictions and practices are inter-related, and the data of the 2013 Religion Monitor show that this is true of the majority of the countries in the study.

¹The number of prayers refers to private prayer practice and was deliberately selected here since there are differences between Catholics and Protestants in the widespread collective practice of church service attendance. The results, however, show overarching effects that are presumably attributable to social background conditions such as modernisation.

“Religious practice and religious attitudes are closely interlinked”

Figure 5 Average frequency of prayer by country



prayers per year

Answer to the question: “How often do you pray?” (with culture-specific variations and adaptations); mean value of prayers per year.

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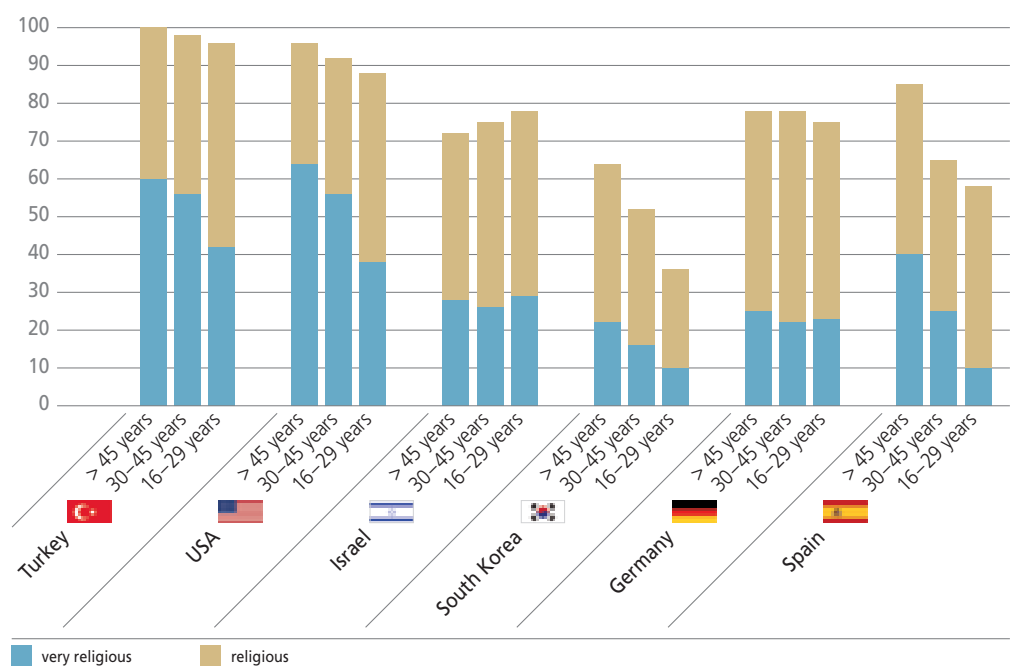
Is religiosity destined to decline?

Religious socialisation is a powerful factor for the transmission of cultural influences. Today’s levels of religiosity are therefore dependent on the extent to which parents transmit religious values, traditions, and knowledge to their children, and a comparison of the different age groups appears to suggest a tendency to abandon religion. In all the countries in the study (except Israel), the centrality of religious belief decreases with every new generation. As a rule, the number of highly religious young adults under 29 years of age is lower than in the 30–45 age group and lower still than in the age group over 45. A more detailed breakdown into smaller age brackets reinforces the picture of a progressive abandonment of religion and, together with the different paths of secularisation, produces the observable differences between countries. Although one should not entirely discount the possibility that people simply become more religious as they grow older (one of the so-called life

cycle effects), both together may be interpreted as an indication that no religious upswing is taking place in Europe. According to the findings of the Religion Monitor, the number of very religious people is declining from age group to age group in South Korea and in Turkey as well, albeit proceeding from a high level (figure 6).

The results given here for the centrality of religion are corroborated by the age distribution on other questions. The significance of religion declines with decreasing age along with respondents’ self-assessment of their own religiosity and church service attendance, and even individual religious practices such as personal prayer decrease in frequency in younger respondents. This loss of significance does not proceed with the same speed and at the same time in all dimensions of religiosity, developing instead in successive stages; nevertheless, it is not confined to religious practices or to the social significance of religion (Pickel 2012; Pollack 2009).

Figure 6 Centrality of religion by age groups (percentage values)



Centrality index of religion by three age groups.

“High consistency of religiosity in Israel”

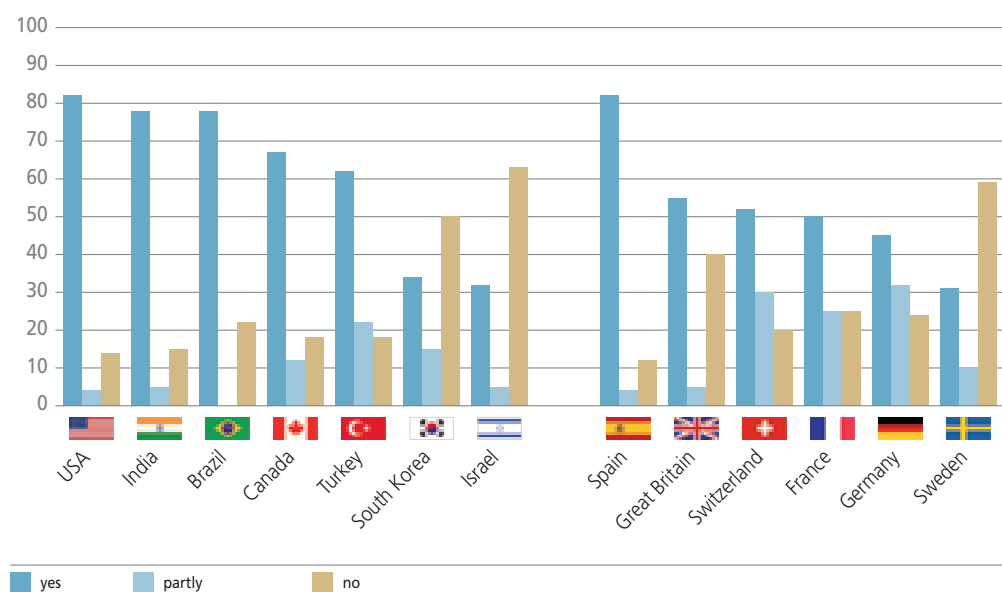
Israel is the exception to this rule, exhibiting a high consistency of religiosity across generations. This consistency may be a reflection of the polarisation of Israeli society, which we identified above, in which highly religious groups in all generations are confronted with highly secular groups. Here, too, one would expect socialisation to play a significant role, but figure 7 shows that this is not the case in Israel. Thus only 30 % of respondents stated that they had been raised in a religion, while a significantly larger proportion denies having received religious socialisation. Only in Sweden is there a lower number of people who report having received religious socialisation. Either this result once again reflects the religious polarisation that appears to be dominant in Israel, or the attitude of Israelis to religion is predominantly situational and influenced by the specific political conditions in the country.

The relationship between politics and religion

The relationship between politics and religion is an issue of special interest for any discussion of secularisation (Gorski 2000). The modern age is characterised by the “functional differentiation” between the spheres of religion and politics (see, for example, Casanova 1994, 1996). At all events, it is legitimate to assume that the two spheres of influence are relatively autonomous. The findings of the 2013 Religion Monitor point towards a greater degree of secularism in this field than in the case of personal religiosity. In all the countries in the survey, the overwhelmingly dominant view is that religious leaders should not exercise influence on government decisions.

“The political sector is widely regarded as the domain of the secular”

Figure 7 Religious socialisation (percentage values)

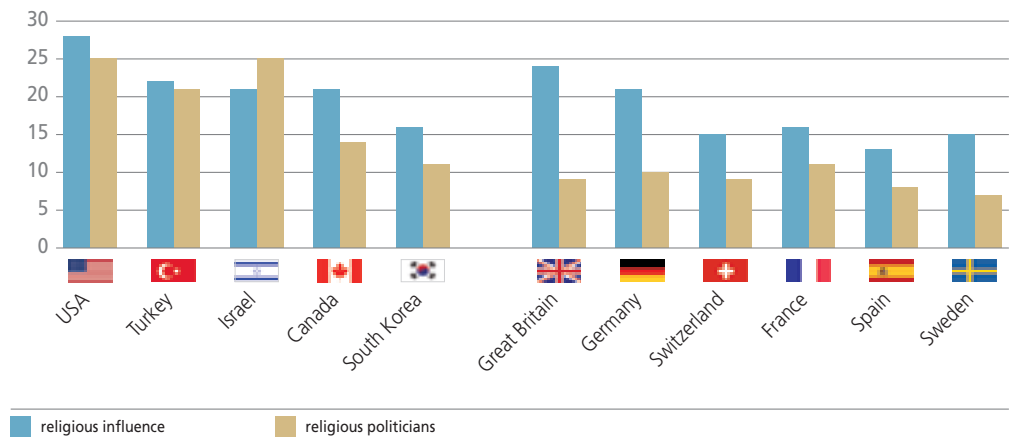


Answers to the question: “Were you raised in a religious tradition?”

The political sector is widely regarded as the domain of the secular. Even in the USA, Turkey, and Israel, where significant proportions of the population are still prepared to accept a greater degree of religious influence on politics, such groups are clearly in the minority (figure 8). A comparison between the findings on the subjective importance of religion and personal religiosity with these

results reveals a correlation: those countries that most frequently call for the separation of politics and religion generally also exhibit the lowest levels of personal religiosity. There are, however, considerable differences between levels of personal religiosity and expectations about the relationship between politics and religion. Once again, Israel is the exception here.

Figure 8 Functional differentiation of politics and religion (percentage values)



Agreement (“strongly agree”/“tend to agree”) with the statements: “Only politicians who believe in God are suitable for public office” and “Leading religious figures should exercise an influence on government decisions”.

3. Religions and feelings of threat

In recent decades, the notion of a “clash of cultures” has frequently been invoked to describe threatening scenarios in which Islam in particular is often regarded as a menace and sometimes as an outright danger. In these scenarios, international Islamist terrorism is often intermingled with real integration problems on the domestic front. The resultant stereotypes have penetrated the internal political and social discourse in Europe and their effects can be seen in the debates about the integration of Muslim citizens and about the banning of minarets and hijabs. But what is the real picture that presents itself when one looks beyond the borders of a few individual states – are people really afraid of the adherents of other faiths?

Interfaith relations: Relaxed coexistence

Most people have a relatively calm and relaxed attitude towards most religions, especially when they have no direct contact with adherents of the faiths in question. In particular, most people in the countries studied for the Religion Monitor regard Hinduism and Buddhism as benign and do not view them as a source of threat, although they rarely

believe that these religions enrich their own cultures. An attitude of fairly relaxed coexistence seems to be taking root here that can largely be explained by the lack of direct contact with practitioners of these faiths.

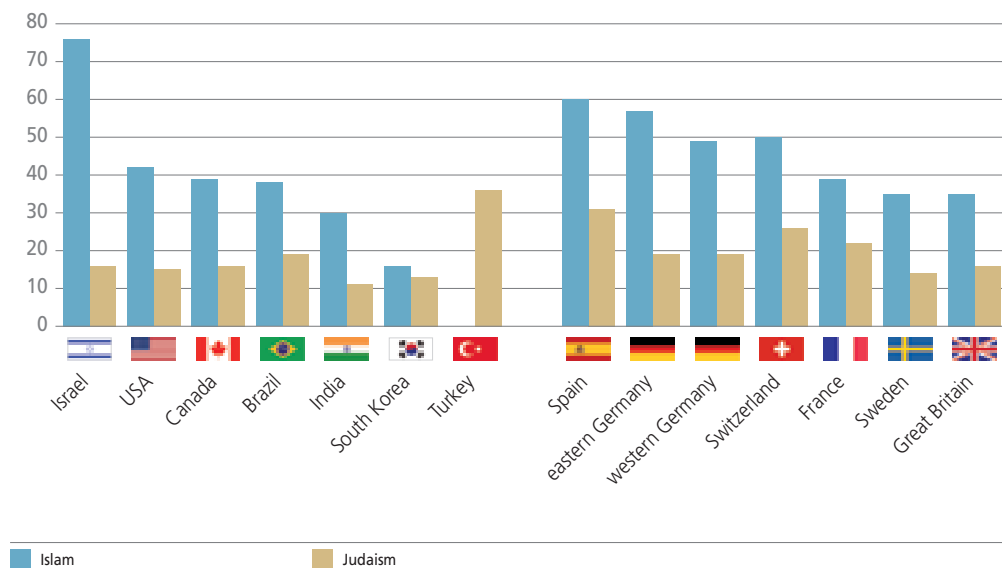
Islam represents the major exception here. The comprehensive media reporting and its overwhelmingly negative connotations have created a fairly broad base of mistrust for Islam among European citizens. While the high threat perception in Israel is understandable in view of the country’s political situation, the relatively high levels of mistrust in Spain, Switzerland, the USA, and Germany can be explained only by a combination of experiences of terrorism, media reporting, and domestic integration problems. Eastern Germany in particular has an extremely small proportion of Muslim residents, but holds strongly stereotypical perceptions of Islam.

“Islamophobia is a phenomenon of the Western world”

The low values recorded in South Korea and India suggest that this is a phenomenon of the Western world. In most Western countries, respondents were largely in agreement that Islam is incompatible with the Western



Figure 9 Threat perception with respect to Islam and Judaism (percentage values)



Answers (“very threatening”/“fairly threatening”) to the question: “Think about the different religions in the world. How threatening or how enriching would you say the following religions are?”

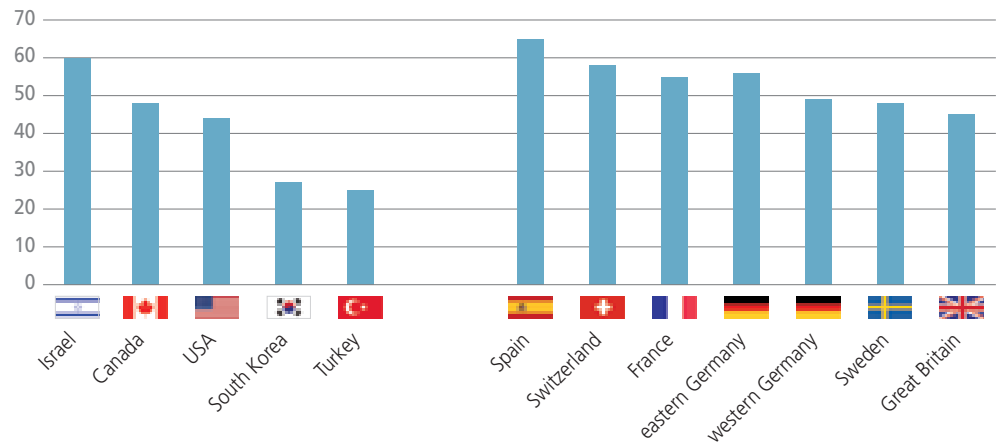
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world (figure 10), which suggests that, although there are also sizeable groups that regard Islam as enriching their own culture, the stereotypical concept of the “clash of cultures” does appear to be an accurate description of the situation. Once again the differences between western and eastern Germany and the sceptical attitude in Spain are noteworthy here.

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Other religions, especially Islam, are frequently subject to stereotypes which give rise to subliminal feelings of threat. More frequent contact with members of other religious communities can help to dispel stereotypes and reduce the diffuse sense of threat from other religions.

Figure 10 Perception of Islam (percentage values)



■ Islam is not compatible with the Western world

Disagreement ("disagree"/"strongly disagree") with the statement: "Islam is certainly compatible with the Western world".

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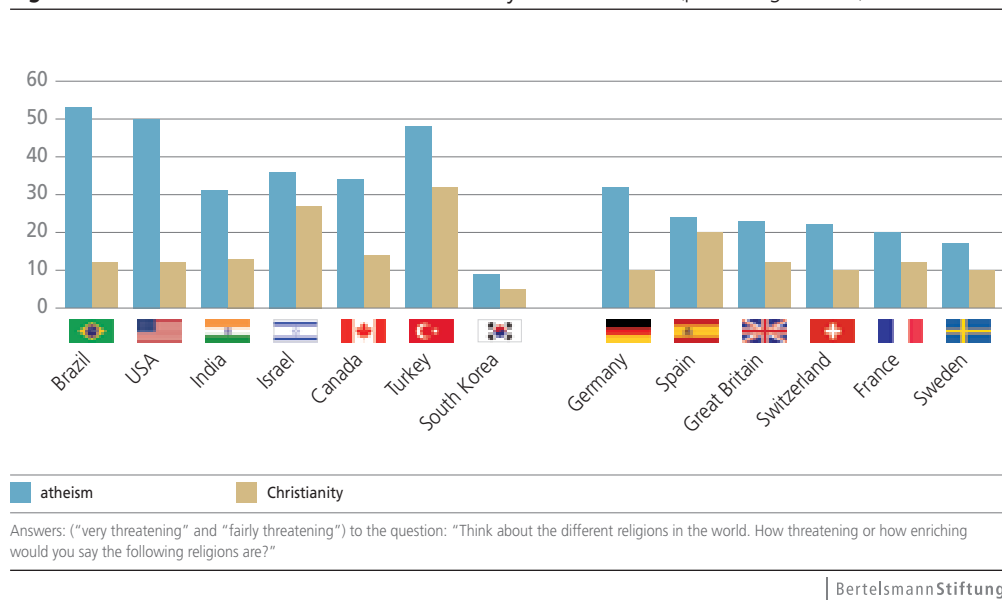
Islam and Christianity: Reciprocal stereotypes

However, other religions too are regarded with a certain degree of scepticism, and there are significant groups in Turkey (32 %) and Israel (27 %) that regard Christianity as a threat. Thus there is a certain reciprocity in the stereotypes, and members of the Muslim faith traditions are not alone in being viewed with misgivings. What becomes evident here is an alarming spread of stereotypes which subliminally reinforce feelings of threat when there is insufficient knowledge about the religion in question. Modern societies, therefore, face the challenge of fostering understanding of other religions and promoting contact between their adherents.

Analyses of Religion Monitor data about people's relations with their social surroundings show that intense or frequent contact with members of other faith groups in the immediate or extended family, the neighbourhood, during recreational activities and at the workplace help to counteract stereotypes and reduce perceptions of threat. These findings correlate with the "contact hypothesis" (Allport 1954), which postulates the positive effect of contact between heterogeneous population groups. In general, this effect is stronger when contact takes place voluntarily and is reinforced by positive encounters. This issue cannot be discussed in any detail here, but it appears to be the case that more frequent contact with members of other religions helps to reduce perceptions of threat.

"Contact with members of other religious groups reduces threat perception"

Figure 11 Perceived threat from Christianity and atheism (percentage values)



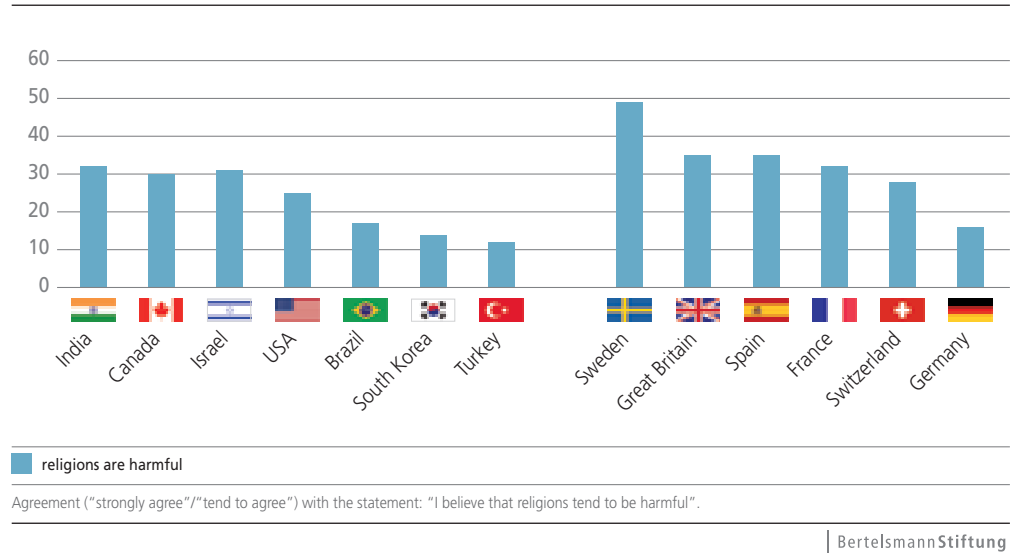
Perceived threat from atheism

Of equal interest is the finding that atheists too elicit a certain feeling of threat in many parts of the world. This is less true of Europe, which in many respects has developed a secular identity, but can be observed very clearly in the highly religious countries of Brazil, India, and Turkey. Over half of the Brazilian population considers atheists to be a threat. The situation is similar in the USA, while Canada too exhibits relatively high levels of mistrust for atheists. One of the main reasons for this phenomenon is probably the heated media discourse about the “new atheists” that was conducted in both countries in recent decades. Additionally, the widespread centrality of religion in the USA means that this country

fits the pattern of other highly religious societies. In any case, the public and highly emotional confrontation appears to have resulted in a certain degree of polarisation between religious people and atheists.

Religions as such are generally not seen as fundamentally harmful, but there are exceptions that can be explained by current events. For example, the belief that religions can be harmful can be observed in countries like Spain and Israel, where specific contexts and events (such as terrorist attacks in Madrid) lend the relationship between conflict and religion a greater immediacy than in other countries. Even in France and Great Britain, over 30 % of the respondents regard religions as harmful.

Figure 12 The conviction that religions tend to be harmful (percentage values)



Acceptance of religious pluralism

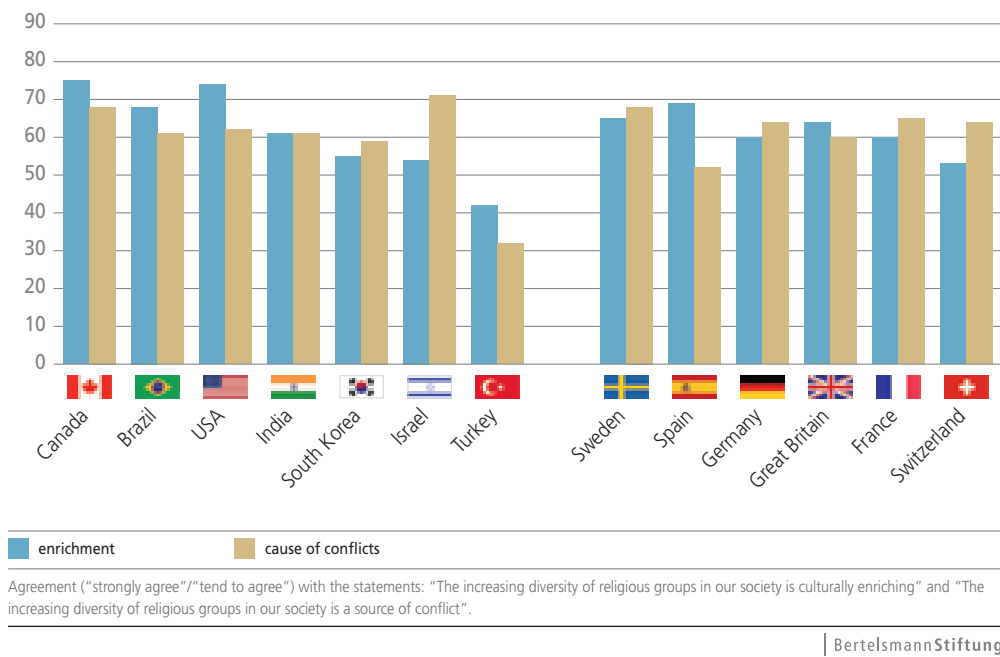
What do these results say about the acceptance of and the methods for dealing with religious pluralism? This is a phenomenon which, in the past few decades, has gained increasing significance primarily in Europe, but also in other parts of the world. Overall, almost all the countries in the study exhibit a very balanced attitude that typically regards other religions both as culturally enriching and as a source of conflict. In Israel and, interestingly enough, in Switzerland, the growing religious diversity is more frequently seen as a source of conflict and less as a cultural asset. This ratio is inverted in Spain and Turkey, where the dominant attitude to religious diversity is a positive one. All the other countries in the study exhibit a balance of both views, in which religious pluralism is seen both as possibly enriching and as a potential source of conflict.

In a sense, this is a pragmatic attitude characterised by a high degree of realism. Its holders do not assume that religion is exclusively good or bad, nor do they assume that

“A pragmatic and realistic attitude towards religious pluralism”

the only impact of religions is to enrich the culture or to provide conflict potential. The two sides of the balance are thus in a state of equilibrium that is fine-tuned to social and political influences, so that terrorist attacks and even negative media coverage can very quickly cause other religions to be seen as sources of conflict. At the same time, however, information about other religions and, in particular, personal contact with their members can give rise to a more positive attitude to other faiths.

Figure 13 Religious pluralisation – enrichment or conflict potential? (percentage values)



Religious tolerance

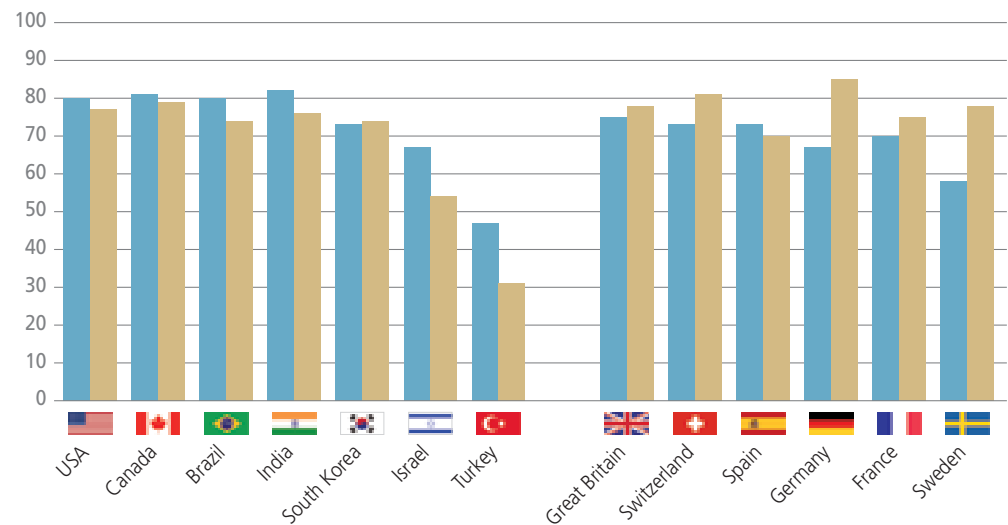
Thus it comes as no surprise that most citizens of the countries in the study also believe that every religion contains a core of truth and that one should be open-minded about all faiths. The responses given by respondents suggest an attitude of explicit religious tolerance, with very religious, religious, and religiously indifferent respondents displaying almost equal levels of approval for the idea of openness towards all religions (figure 14). The same is not true, however, when it comes to the question whether every religion has a core of truth. Christians are willing to concede this about Christians of other denominations, but the statement that "all religions have a core of truth" is rejected by significant groups within the Islamic faith (32 %), evangelicals and Pentecostals (30 %), and especially the non-religious and professing atheists (37 %). Where non-religious people tend to believe all religions are unnecessary, adherents of

evangelical groups and Islam profess the exclusivity of their own religion, believing that their faith is the only true one.

Religious dogmatism

Given these results, it is natural to ask whether dogmatic or even fundamentalist attitudes occur more frequently in countries where such religious communities are dominant. As the term "fundamentalism" is a highly charged normative term and is difficult to identify accurately using survey data, we will speak of "dogmatism" as a more objective concept. It must be said, however, that dogmatists hold some of the same beliefs as fundamentalists. Two questions can shed light on this matter. For one thing, the survey asked about the strength of respondents' conviction that only their own religion is right while other religions are wrong. For another, respondents were asked

Figure 14 Religious tolerance and openness (percentage values)



■ all religions have a core of truth ■ religious open-mindedness

Agreement (“strongly agree”/“tend to agree”) with the statements: “In my opinion, every religion has a core of truth” and “One should have an open mind about all religions”.

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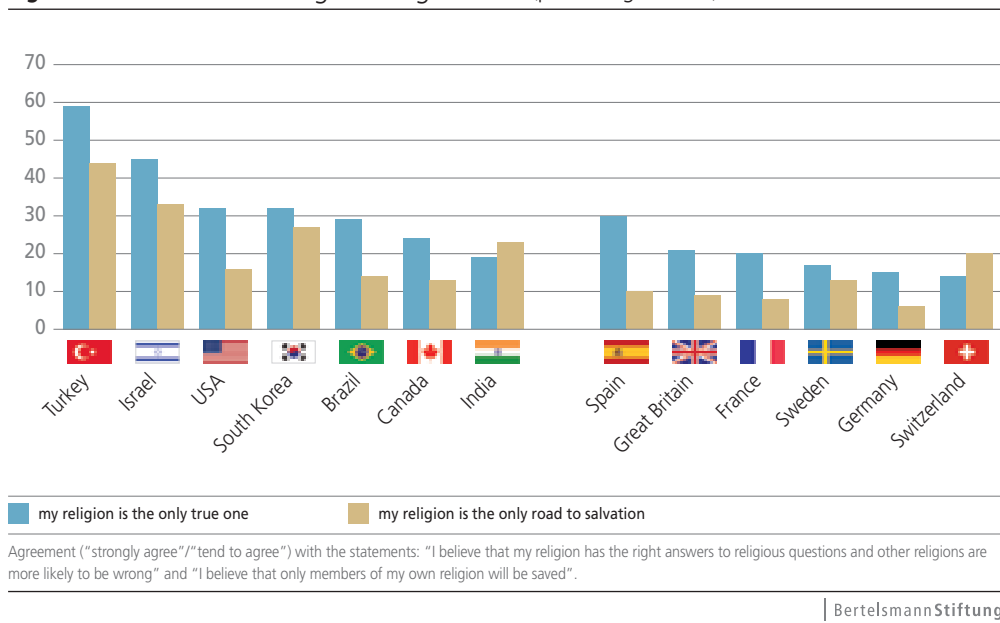
whether they believed that only members of their own faith would attain salvation. The latter question in particular is of considerable importance for all religions. Do respondents, then, endorse these statements very frequently, and should they be taken to indicate radical leanings? This is only true to a limited extent. However, adherents of certain faiths do have a greater tendency to make exclusive (i.e. dogmatic) claims for their faith than other religious communities.

“Dogmatic tendencies among Muslims and evangelical Protestants”

It is primarily Muslims and members of evangelical groups who tend to agree with the predefined statements. This result corresponds roughly to the distribution of the centrality index across religious communities. However, it must be noted that the overall frequency of dogmatic answers is fairly moderate.

In Europe in particular, the people who agree with dogmatic statements are confined to minorities comprising between 10 % and 20 % of the population. It is slightly surprising that even Brazil does not feature among the countries with a larger proportion of dogmatists (figure 15); the reason may be that religious groups with dogmatic leanings, while gaining ground in Brazil, nevertheless have a minority status there. In Turkey, however, between 44 % and 59 % of citizens take a more exclusivist view of their religion, and the situation is similar in Israel and South Korea, with between 33 % and 45 % of Israeli citizens and approximately 30 % of South Koreans holding that their faith has an exclusive character. Thus Turkey, Israel, and South Korea exhibit the highest prevalence of dogmatic leanings, and fundamentalist groups too are presumably more likely to be found in these countries. Given the findings for South Korea and Israel, it becomes clear that society in these countries is deeply divided on the issue of religiosity and the function of religious beliefs.

Figure 15 Indicators of religious dogmatism (percentage values)



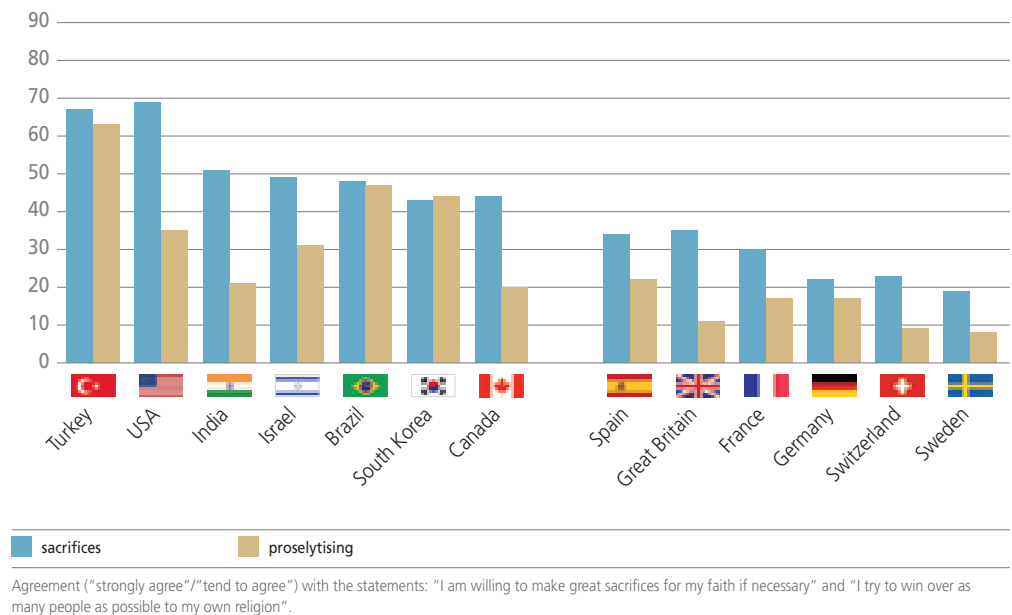
Here Israel appears as a special case, since, unlike Turkey, it does not have a significant number of highly religious people and most Israelis do not identify as either religious or spiritual. However, one-third of Israelis exhibit strong dogmatic leanings. This extreme polarisation goes hand in hand with the fact that religion is accorded great significance although individual Israelis are not particularly religious. Political conditions appear to be exercising a decisive influence on the perception and significance of religion in Israel. This would also explain why just under 50 % of Israelis are willing to make great sacrifices for their religion, a figure that is exceeded only in the USA, India, and Turkey.

South Korea and Brazil record a similarly high willingness to make sacrifices for the sake of faith. While it is impossible to predict the way this attitude would manifest itself in actual practice, a willingness to make sacrifices does point to a certain centrality of religion in the lives of individuals that appears to have largely disappeared in Europe.

Proselytising spirit in social minorities

Figure 16 appears to point in this direction. Readiness to proselytise for one’s faith – in other words, the aim of converting other people to one’s religion – is generally found only among clear social minorities and correlates strongly with the degree of religiosity displayed by these minorities. Highly developed missionary attitudes can be found only in predominantly Muslim Turkey (63 %), the USA (35 %), Brazil (47 %), and, finally, South Korea (44 %), which has seen strong Christian missionary activity in the past few decades. Other contexts also show that this missionary spirit is rather low in Europe, where many people go as far as to hold that religion is a private matter and one should avoid speaking about it in public life. This might be described as a “secular spiral of silence” (Pickel 2011b, 2012) which reinforces the effects of a secular environment and makes religion appear all the more as a private matter. The question whether this is a specifically European phenomenon (Berger et al. 2008; Casanova 2009; Davie 2002) or

Figure 16 Willingness to proselytise and make sacrifices (percentage values)



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whether it is an integral process of secularisation and modernisation in general must be left unanswered here.

In summary, two results are especially noteworthy here: for one thing, other religions appear to be regarded with a certain equanimity and pragmatism that takes into account both the good and the dangerous effects that religions may exhibit. At the same time, a fairly large number of people, especially in Europe, claim to be open-minded towards other religions, so that this attitude may be regarded as a positive

phenomenon. However, an essentially open-minded attitude does not mean that people are immune to threat perceptions or naively regard religions as purely good. Rather, the dominant and widespread feeling is one of threat. While people do weigh up the effects of religion without immediately suspecting that a fundamental "clash of cultures" is at hand, they are also prepared to change their minds (for better or for worse). This state might be described as a relatively precarious equilibrium that could easily lead to unstable conditions in the wake of political events.

4. Religion and social cohesion

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“Social cohesion is defined as an attribute of societies that has three dimensions. Firstly, people must feel emotionally connected to the community (connectedness). Secondly, the members of a functioning community must interact with one another and participate in political and social processes; in other words, there must be stable and trustful social relationships. Thirdly, people must take responsibility for one another and for the community as a whole (orientation towards the common good). Speaking of social cohesion always implies speaking of connectedness, social relationships, and orientation towards the common good” (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2012).

The Religion Monitor places particular emphasis on examining social relationships and, especially, social capital as a core component of social relationships.

Against this background, what can religion contribute towards social cohesion? Sociology of religion has long been aware of the integrative power of religion (Durkheim 1981) and views religious values and norms as fundamental elements in social cohesion. As shared ideals to strive for or as a yardstick for the behaviour of the individual, values and norms serve to foster collective cohesion. However, shared norms are becoming progressively rarer in modern societies characterised by the process of social individualisation. The plurality of value systems that results from individualisation lends greater urgency to the question of how modern societies can maintain cohesion in the face of the growing divergence of values and of increasing diversity and heterogeneity. The core question of political cultural research (Pickel/Pickel 2006), that of the correspondence between social structure and culture (values), must be re-examined in the face of changing structural conditions.

Social relationships and their effects on attitudes and values are thus especially important in modern societies. It is assumed that social relationships build trust and improve the coexistence of members of heterogeneous groups (Wuthnow 1996). This “social capital” (to use a term popularised by the American researcher Robert Putnam in 2000) serves as an important resource for social cohesion. It consists of two main components: social

“Shared norms
are becoming
progressively rarer
in modern societies”

networks with personal contacts, and the resultant trust in one’s fellow people.

All this is contingent on voluntary involvement, which represents the basis for the development of social trust. Volunteer networks facilitate communication, getting to know other people, and transferring the newly acquired in-group trust to other members of society as well. In this way, volunteer networks (Putnam 2000; see also Smidt 2003 and Traunmüller 2009) serve as “social cement” and – thanks to the communication that takes place in the course of discursive interaction with other people – as a “school for democracy”. Thus researchers assume that volunteer networks help people to learn not only how to interact with others, but also to articulate and discuss their own interests (Traunmüller 2009).

An international comparison of volunteer involvement

Volunteer involvement varies considerably from country to country, as figure 17 shows. Whereas almost half of the citizens of

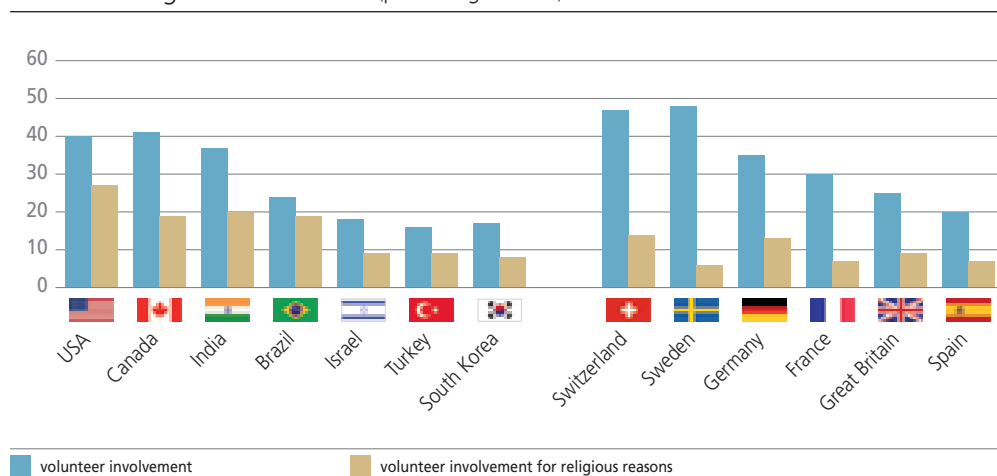


Sweden and Switzerland and just over 40 % of the citizens of the USA and Canada claim to be involved in social groups, the figure for Israel, South Korea, and Turkey is less than one-fifth. The interviewees' responses suggest that only a limited number of those involved in volunteer activities – less than 10 % in many of the countries in the study – are religious. In contrast, the figures for Brazil, Canada, India, and especially in the USA are close to 20 %; religious motivations account for the overwhelming majority of volunteer involvement in all these countries

except Canada. The USA in particular stands out for its focus on civil religion (Bellah 1967). In this country, religious motivations seem to be strongly conducive to social commitment.

It may be assumed that modernisation, with its by-product of increased leisure time, generally has a favourable effect on volunteer citizen involvement even if special conditions may apply in the case of some countries such as South Korea. Additional studies would be required to analyse this.

Figure 17 Volunteer involvement and proportion of volunteer involvement with religious motivations (percentage values)



Agreement ("Yes") with the questions: "Now we would like to know whether you are involved in volunteer activities outside the workplace and the family. This is about volunteering in some capacity or capacities that you perform regularly in return for little or no compensation. 'Are you currently involved in any volunteer activities of this kind?' and 'Do you do this primarily for non-religious reasons or for religious reasons, or equally for both religious and non-religious reasons?'" The figures for "volunteer involvement for religious reasons" are calculated from "religious reasons" and "religious and non-religious reasons".

“Volunteer groups seem to spring up around socially aware churches”

There is considerable overall potential for the future of societies that are undergoing modernisation, and religious networks also stand to benefit. For example, volunteer groups seem to spring up around churches, which display rising levels of social awareness. However, participation in such networks need not be driven by religious motives, and thus many of these groups are regarded as “secular” by their members. As a result, the proportion of faith-based networks may be even higher than the results shown in figure 17 suggest (Roßteutscher 2009; Pickel/Gladkich 2012).

Churches and social responsibility

But the religious factor too plays a significant role alongside the “infrastructural” services that churches perform for the creation and development of civil societies and social capital. This becomes clear when one examines the question on social help, which was also included in the Schwartz Value Scale for the 2013 Religion Monitor. Correlation analyses show relatively clearly that religious people are more likely than non-religious people to help and care for others in their environment (figure 18).

At the same time, the results show that value patterns such as hedonism or self-development (adventure, exciting life) are found somewhat rarely in religious people. They also reveal the first discernible difference between people who self-evaluate as spiritual and as religious, in that spiritual people are more open to new ideas and creativity. Groups of limited size with a more individualist character may have at least slightly different ideas on this score.

Who trusts religious people?

It appears that these volunteer networks have a positive, confidence-building effect on people. Before we discuss this, however, we will take a general look at the findings on trust values.

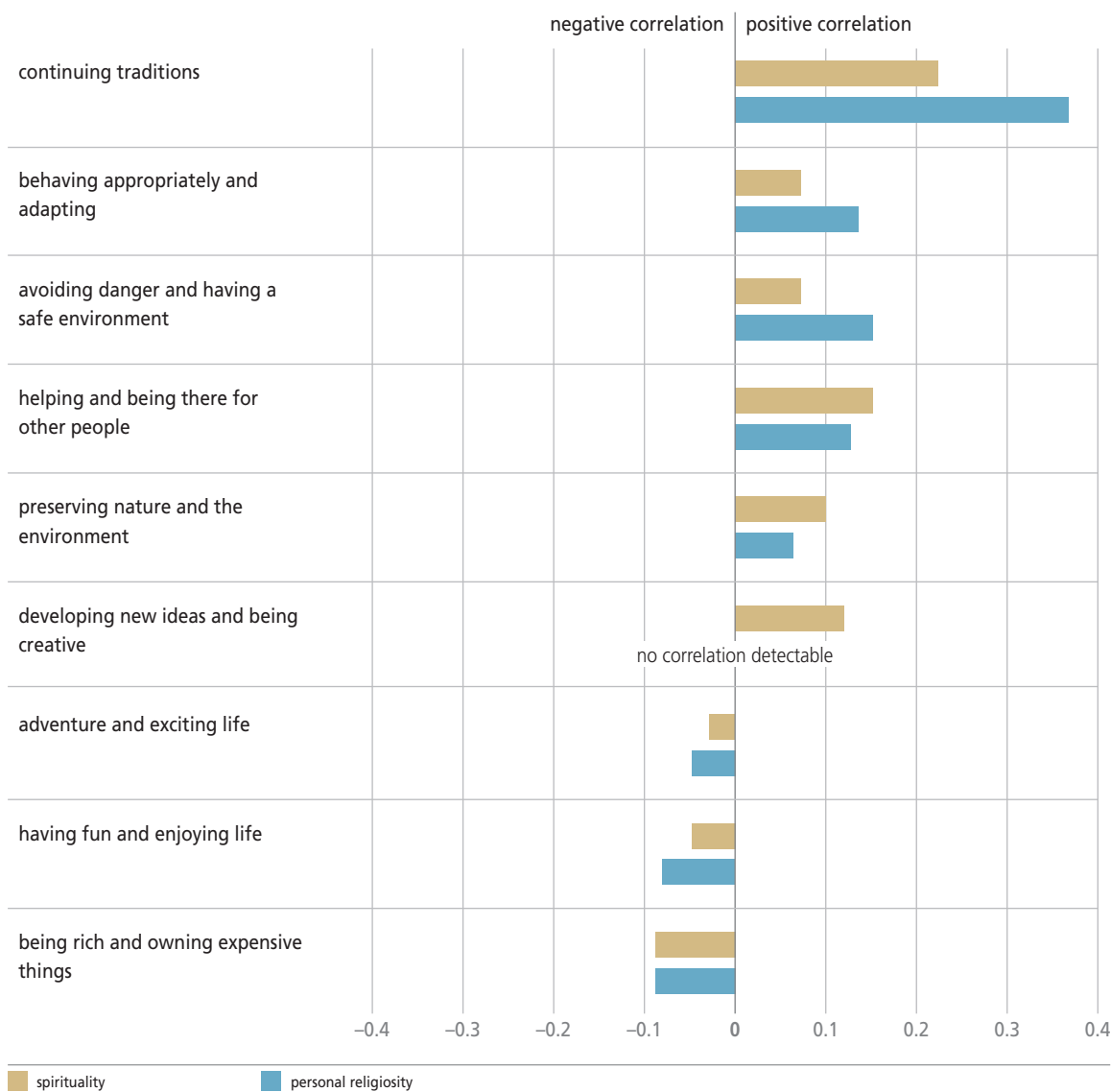
Trust in religious people, regardless of whether they are members of one’s own or other religions, is fairly high all over the world (figure 20). A comparison of the countries in the study reveals that the general level of trust is remarkably high everywhere (figure 19). Countries are either characterised by general social trust that is largely extended to other groups as well, or else they exhibit deficits in general trust. Such a deficit can be observed in Turkey, where less than half the respondents stated that they trusted the members of their own faith. In particular, Turkey, Germany, and Spain are among the countries where trust in the members of any religion at all is lowest.

The fundamental social trust shown by the answers correlates with respondents’ contentment with life and their assessment of the economic situation. Socio-economic modernisation appears to generate trust. This is corroborated by significant correlation coefficients of $r=.17$ for the correlation between assessment of one’s personal economic situation and social trust, and $r=.15$ for the correlation between contentment with life and social trust in all countries (and at similar levels in all countries). These findings are not entirely new, since the correlations also reduce threat perception.

“Socio-economic modernisation appears to generate trust”

At the same time, there is a correlation between modernisation and social involvement, since a certain socio-economic security is a prerequisite for active social or political

Figure 18 Correlations between moral values and religiosity



The bars show positive and negative correlations of religiosity or spirituality with certain values (Pearson product-moment correlation, variation between 1.00 and -1.00; significant values only). Positive means that higher religiosity correlates with more frequent agreement with the value in question. Negative means that people with stronger religious belief agree less frequently with the value. The same applies by analogy in the case of spirituality.

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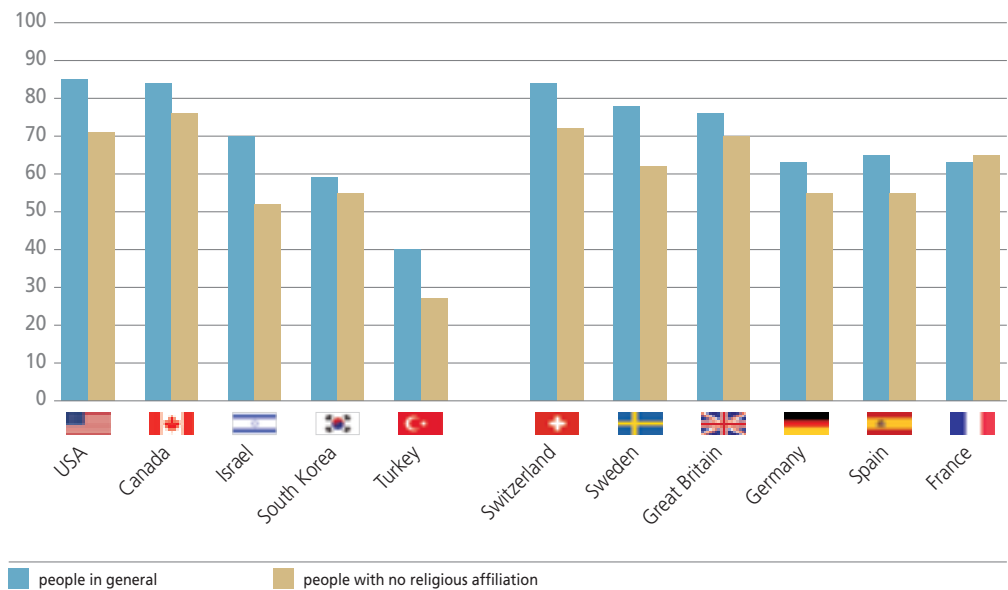
involvement. The development or consolidation of social trust appears to manifest itself within the social networks as well, with clear correlations between participation in a volunteer network and the levels of trust extended to other people in general. People with no religious affiliation are not excluded from this trust.

The “clash of cultures” hypothesis postulates the mutual disassociation of religious groups

from one another and from the adherents of other religions. By this hypothesis, trust may be extended to members of one’s own culture and social group, but people and social groups perceived as “not belonging” tend to be rejected. This state of affairs is described as “bonding social capital” in social capital research. Positive relationships are only formed when trust is extended to members of the overall society, regardless of how heterogeneous this may be (“bridging social

Figure 19 Trust in other people and in people unaffiliated to a religion

(percentage values)



Answer ("completely"/"fairly strongly") to the question: "I'm going to name various groups now. Please tell me how much you trust the groups – not at all, not much, fairly strongly, or completely".

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capital"). But does the status of interpersonal trust really present as much cause for concern as the responses to questions about feelings of threat may suggest? The responses to questions that specifically address trust in other people – especially religious people – are significantly more positive than one might expect, and a majority of respondents believe that other religious people are trustworthy on the interpersonal level. Thus there is a clear distinction between "religion" and "Islam" on the one hand and religious people on the other, and religiosity does not inevitably lead to disassociation.

The potentials of confidence-building measures

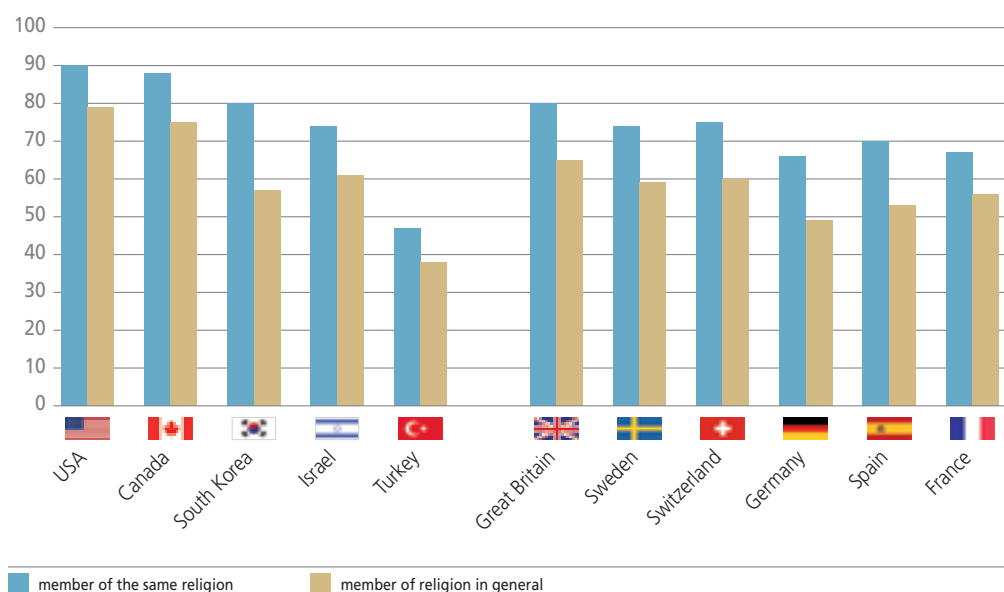
While these results do not mean there is no cause for concern, they do put a different perspective on the somewhat worrying responses to questions about the perceived

threat from other religions, and they echo the positive findings about openness towards other religions. Confidence-building measures and promoting cooperation between people from different backgrounds appear to be worthwhile, since they foster trust in one's fellow people. This trust is beneficial for democracy, and positive attitudes to democracy increase along with trust in one's fellow people. Except in Israel, South Korea, and Turkey, the number of people favouring democracy is greater among those with social trust than among those without social trust (figure 21a).

How do religious and non-religious people feel about democracy?

Almost all the countries in the study exhibit an overwhelming support for democratic principles. Certain reservations can be found only in Israel and somewhat more explicitly in South Korea, where more time may be

Figure 20 Trust in members of the same religion and in members of any religion
(percentage values)



Answer ("completely"/"fairly strongly") to the question: "I'm going to name various groups now. Please tell me how much you trust the groups – not at all, not much, fairly strongly, or completely".

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needed for a democratic political culture to become entrenched in the population as a whole. The foundations for this development have been laid, however. In both countries, over 80 % of respondents registered complete or at least partial agreement with the statement "Democracy is a good form of government".

It must be pointed out that the question about democracy as a good form of government is a variation on other questions that explore the legitimacy of democracy in the populations. A distinction must be drawn between these results and those about satisfaction with the current democratic system, which is affected partly by the effectiveness of that system (Pickel/Pickel 2006). In gen-

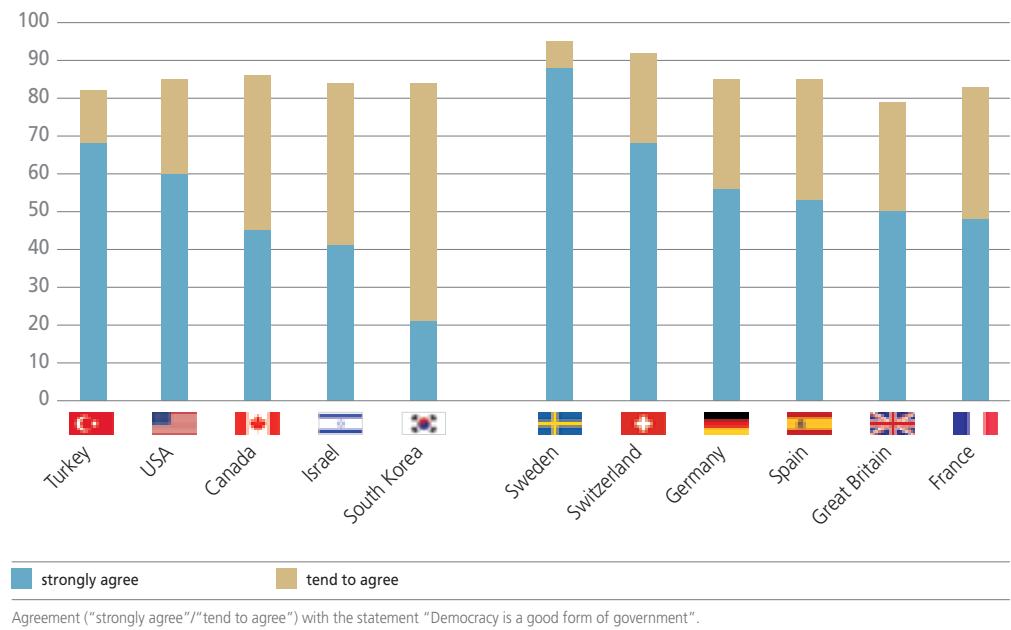
eral, it is safe to assume that answers to this question yield information about the stability of democracies even in times of crisis.

As the phrase "a good form of government" is less clear-cut than the more frequently used term "the best form of government", we are here reporting only the proportion of respondents who answered "strongly agree" (figure 21).

The results are slightly less consistent when one compares the attitude to democracy of non-religious people with that of religious people (figure 21b). In some countries (Turkey, France, Spain), the attitude of non-religious citizens is slightly more positive than in other countries (Germany, Switzerland, USA). On the whole, however, there is a broad-based support for democracy that is hardly affected at all by religious ideas. It appears that democracy and religion have come to coexist in the minds of the people.

"Almost all the countries in the study exhibit an overwhelming support for democratic principles"

Figure 21 Democracy is a good form of government (percentage values)



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Turkey: Strong support for democracy

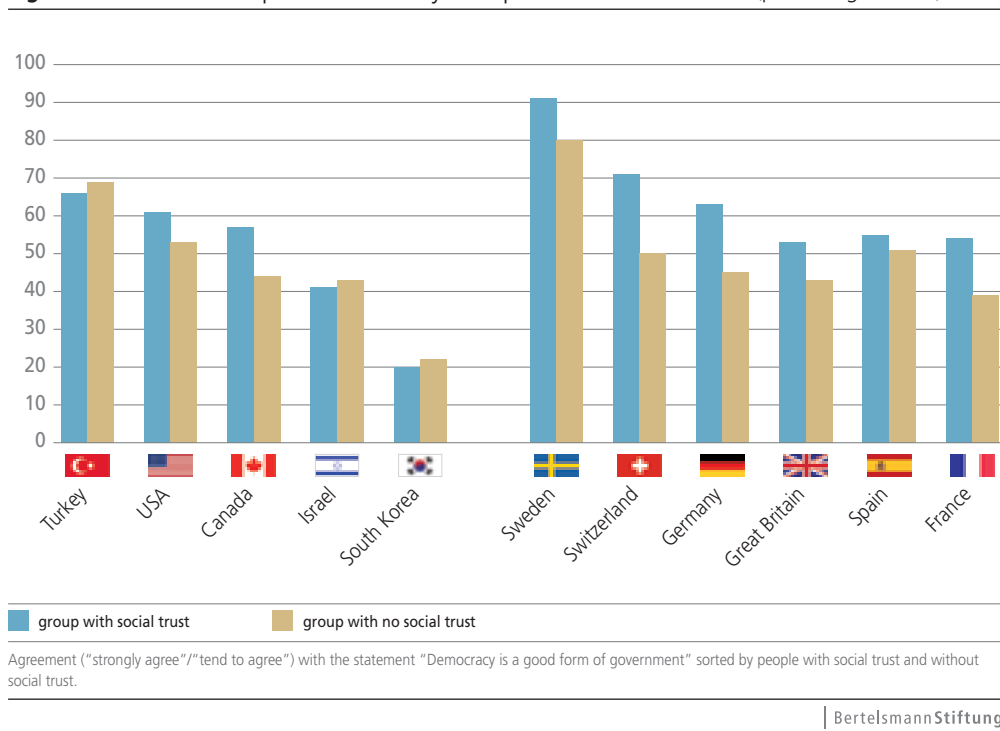
Against the background of these findings, the results of the survey in Turkey are worthy of note. Here there is an extremely high rate of approval for democracy as a form of government, and irrespective of the precise definitions of democracy that may be at work behind this approval, it appears that highly religious groups and even a Muslim majority society do not inevitably have a hostile or sceptical attitude to democracy. A breakdown of the results for each country by religious affiliation, which generally reveals high rates of approval, points to the same conclusion. It must be pointed out that the number of people who “strongly agree” is seven to eight percentage points lower among Islamic communities in European countries than among members of Christian denominations. However, while this is a significant discrepancy, it should not be overemphasised given the high rate of approval for democracy among Muslims. Once again Israel is conspicuously different, with approval for democracy con-

siderably more widespread among Muslims than among the Jewish portions of the population. Given the precarious political situation of the Muslim population, this may be an expression of their hope of attaining better protection on the grounds of their minority status.

Differences in attitudes to immigrants

Attitudes towards immigrants represent another general marker of tolerance that is likewise of interest, with a wide variation of results recorded for the countries in the study (figure 22). Attitudes towards immigrants are moderate in Sweden and the USA and Canada, often seen as traditional immigration nations, but negative in Turkey, South Korea, Great Britain, Germany, and Switzerland. While the answers to the interview question may be taken as a reflection of the prevalent attitude to immigrants in the different countries – specifically, for

Figure 21a Relationship of democracy and politics to social trust (percentage values)



example, in Great Britain – they do also reflect the openness or exclusivity of a society. Germany occupies a midfield position here, with tolerance for immigrants (reflected in agreement with the statement “There are too many immigrants in the country”) being lower in eastern Germany (61 % agreement) than in western Germany (50 % agreement).

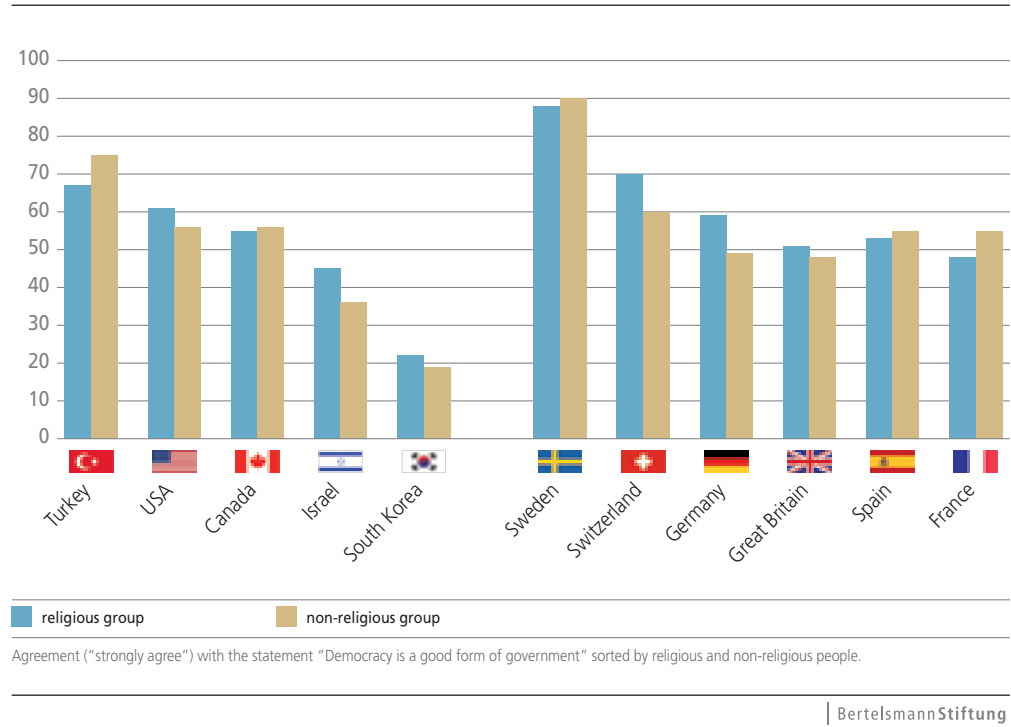
“Religious people are more likely than non-religious people to have exclusionist ideas about society”

It turns out that religiosity appears to have a somewhat negative effect here: religious people are more likely than non-religious people to express exclusionist ideas about society. The results for Spain provide an especially clear illustration of this phenomenon. Once again, this result can be interpreted as a sign of the increasing polarisation of attitudes

towards religion in this country, and it may be assumed that there is a link between religiosity and support for conservative parties and non-republican traditions. However, Israel, the USA, and France also exhibit marked discrepancies between religious and non-religious people’s evaluation of immigration. In contrast, the differences in Germany (both West and East), Switzerland, and South Korea are so low as to be negligible, although the findings must be interpreted within their overall context. Thus it seems likely that the prevalent attitudes to immigration are those of society in general, and its primary constitutive factors are public discourse, political and social experiences, and collective group perceptions. Religiosity is merely another differentiating factor and cannot explain the differences between different countries on its own.

At the same time, these findings are a cause for concern in that culturally motivated rejection can be a powerful motivating force. It appears that scepticism towards people

Figure 21b Relationship of democracy and religiosity (percentage values)

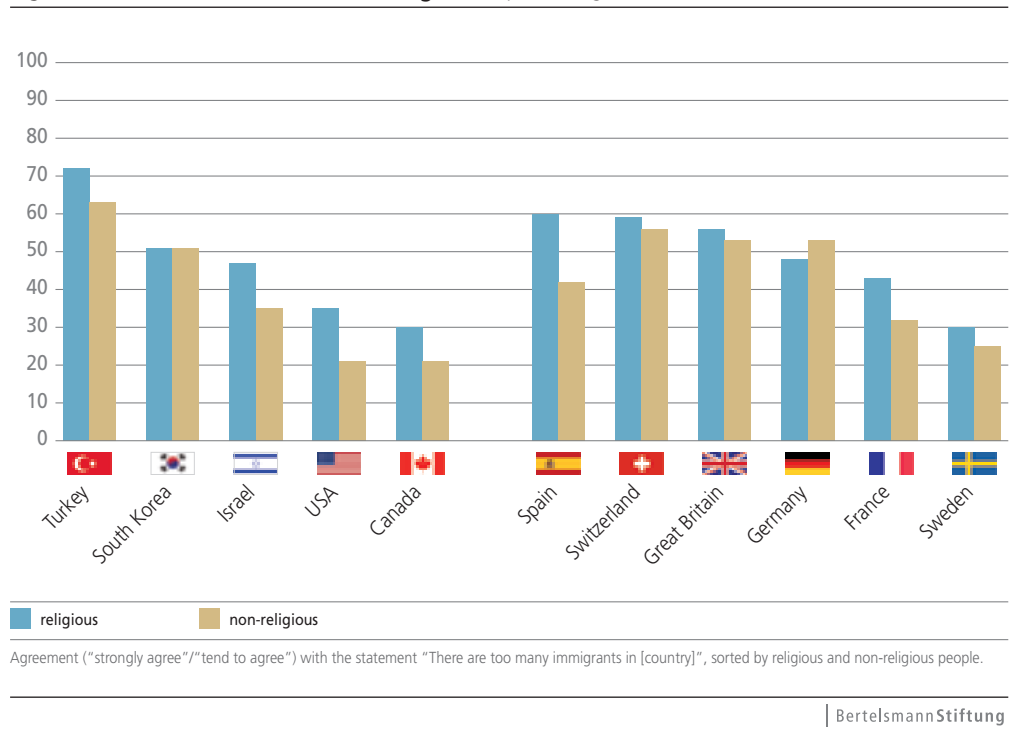


from other cultures is not confined to small minority groups, and that a high legitimacy of democracy is compatible with sceptical attitudes at the level of what political culture research describes as the "political community" (Easton 1975).

Religious social capital and openness towards immigrants

It must be pointed out here that religious social capital, and social capital in general, also has a favourable effect on openness towards immigrants even when both sides are unable to move past the attitudes of society as a whole. Thus the study ultimately yields a contradictory result: on the one hand, the associations and social networks of religious communities provide infrastructure and opportunity structures that foster a positive attitude to democracy and promote tolerance. On the other hand, the immediately personal manifestations of religiosity do not exhibit positive results but may give rise to exclusionist definitions of society.

Figure 22 Adverse attitude to immigrants (percentage values)



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