

Privatizationthesis reconsidered

The re-entrance of christian religiosity into the Dutch public sphere: a 'new' dividing force in the Netherlands and in Europe?

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Abstract

The secularization paradigm consists of two main theories: the theory of religious decline and the privatizationthesis. The theory of religious decline has been much debated the past two decades, but strangely enough the privatisationthesis has been left uncriticized: 'whilst religion transformed, it must have become more invisible' is the general argument. But is this truly so?

This research argues that while we see a decline of traditional christian religion. This form of religion is still very significant in the public sphere. We measure whether five concepts of religious attitudes and behavior lead to more polarization between Christians and atheists in post-traditional groups in Dutch society. These groups are considered to be most religious declined. Although we did not succeed in finding significant results to support this hypothesis, deprivatization seems to be a possible result of religious decline.

1. Introduction

Secularizationthesis

The secularizationthesis is a central theory within the field of sociology of religion. At the end of the 19th century Weber referred to secularisation as '*Entzauberung der Welt*' (Dassen, 1999: pp. 193). Weber argued that people were behaving more and more based on practical rationality instead of other types of rationality. He considers secularization to be a product of modernization and rationalization. (Demerath, 2000). People are seeing the world as it really is: '*so wie sie wirklich ist*' (Dassen, 1999: pp. 215), the magic worldview disappears and religion is becoming less a motive of social behavior. Since the 19th century the fields of the true (science), the sacred (religion), the beautiful (arts) and the good (ethics) have become autonomous. These fields are not kept together any more by a covering meaningful principle of Christianity, but follow their own values, logic and inner rules. (Dassen, 1999).

Secularization as a multi-dimensional process

In the fifties and sixties of the 20th century, the secularizationthesis has been elaborated. Peter Berger has become an authority in this field. In 'The Sacred Canopy' he describes how religion traditionally covered all societal spheres (Berger, 1967). Christian religion constituted a sacred canopy that covered all domains of society and in doing this it had a large influence in all public domains. With the emergence of modernization and rationalization, the collapse of this canopy was inevitable and religion became a separate social sphere. With his book, Berger showed how secularization is not just enclosed in individual attitudes and behavior.

Karel Dobbelaere (1981) argues that secularization is a multi-dimensional process that occurs on different levels of analysis. Steve Bruce (2002) as well is of the opinion that secularization is not just a single thesis: he speaks of a secularization paradigm. At the long term he identifies a decline in power, popularity and prestige of christian religiosity and rituals. According to Bruce, these processes do not proceed all with the same speed. In the analyses of the multi-dimensionality of secularization by Bruce, Berger and Dobbelaere, we can distinguish two levels on which secularization can take place.

First of all, the individual level which Casanova (1994: pp. 20) describes as the '*theory of religious decline*'. This interpretation of the secularisationthesis postulates that less people practice christian religion and go to church. '*In 1970 41% of the Dutch population went to church every week, in 1998 that was only 14%.*' (Becker en De Hart in Ter Borg, 2006: pp. 10). In the most extreme prognoses, this would eventually lead to the disappearance of religion.

Secondly, secularization can be analysed on the level of society, like Berger (1967) does: religion has become a separate social domain and is therefore forced back into the private sphere. This development instigated a differentiation of religion: the public domains of arts, science and politics are no

longer directed by christian values (Laeyendecker, 1988). This interpretation of the secularizationthesis on a social level is defined as the privatizationthesis.

Does religious decline instantly mean privatization?

Since the 1980s, there has been a growing critique that refutes the presumed secularization processes. Critics argue that no general statement can be made about secularization when secularization consists of multiple processes (Hadden, 1987). The secularizationthesis itself has become sacralized and does not reflect reality any more. Therefore the processes of secularization are not reviewed critical enough. The declining number of christians and the privatization of christian religion are being merged, although we recognize that secularization is a multi-dimensional process. Scientists presume that all processes part of the secularizationparadigm, are heading at the same direction with the same speed.

From that moment on, we can identify particularly a growing critique of the thesis of religious decline: many scientists do not see a decline, but rather a transformation in religiosity. In 'The Invisible Religion' (1967), Luckmann already stated that religion did not disappear but only became more privatised. The declining church attendance does not mean a decline of religion. Ter Borg states it in a metaphore as following: *'The decline of official marriages and weddings in the Netherlands in the 1970s was never conceived as the disappearance of love and sex'* (2004: pp. 112). Ter Borg identifies new, unofficial forms of spirituality that he calls *'wild religion'* (2004: pp. 108). Luckmann speaks of a religious transformation by which religion becomes socially invisible, but does not disappear. In the current cultural state, he argues, the sacred is encapsulated in values of rationality and the souverain individual. Tradition christian religion is practiced in the private sphere. Hence Luckmann rejects the first interpretation of the secularizationthesis, but keeps supporting the privatizationthesis.

In 1999, Peter Berger declared that the secularizationthesis is incorrect, although he was one of the most important advocates of the theory: *'The world today (...) is as furiously religious as it ever was, and in some places more so than ever. This means that a whole body of literature by historians and social scientists (...) is essentially mistaken'*(Berger 1999: pp. 2).

Instead of the secularizationthesis, Berger introduced the theory of desecularization, that he called neosecularization (Berger, 2001). Berger recognizes that not a decline of religion is taking place, but a decline of religious authority. This way Berger, too, is holding on to the privatizationthesis while rejecting the thesis of religious decline: religion still exists in the private sphere, but loses authority in the public sphere.

Scientists agree that what is meant by religious decline, does not exist in western countries. *'Christianity makes way for post-traditional types of religion such as New Age'* Houtman en Mascini conclude (2002: pp. 459). The privatization thesis, though, is considered to be *'the still defensible core of the theory of secularization'* (Casanova, 1994: pp. 7). The differentiation of religion out of other social domains and by that, the loss of social influence of religion, is confirmed by many. This is seen as a consequence of the decline of religion. The Dutch scientific council for government policy (WRR) states: *'We can presume that in the religious declined Netherlands, religion is no longer interconnected with specific attitudes and behavior in the public sphere. The privatization thesis states that the impact of one's religious background stays limited to the sphere of family, upbringing, personal ethics and sexuality and does not influence the choices of people in the public sphere of social participation, politics and economics any more.* (Van den Donk et al., 2006).

The rejection of the theory of religious decline is considered to be sufficient evidence of the validity of the privatization thesis. Therefore Bruce argues that where a decline of traditional Christian religiosity takes place: *'Religion diminishes in social significance, becomes increasingly privatized, and loses personal salience'* (2002: pp. 30).

Deprivatization as a possible consequence of religious decline

Is it truly so that privatization logically derives from a decline of traditional religiosity? Is christian religion indeed differentiated from the other public domains, and does this originate from religious decline? Dekker (2007) found that the number of people that states that their religion is of 'significant or 'very significant' value for them, has increased from 33 percent in 1979 up to 42 percent in 2006. Religion plays a role in the lives of a declining number of people, but becomes more significant for those who still practice christianity. Particularly in a religious declined context, the rapture by which it is practiced, is enormous. Do those christians only practice their religion in the private sphere or does this also has consequences for the public sphere?

An other group of scientists describe a trend of deprivatization since the 1980s. *'Religious organizations and groups bring the status-quo and existing hierarchies with renewed diligence up for discussion, pose questions about public morality and collaborate with many initiatives that are developed within local civil society.'* (Juergensmeyer, 1993; Casanova, 1994; Kurtz, 1995 & Wuthnow, 1996, in Donk et al., 2006: pp. 142). The social identity of groups is wrapped up in their religion. In a context of religious decline, this identity becomes threatened. *'Culture, identity and sense of worth are challenged by a source promoting either an alien religion or rampant secularism and that source is negatively valued'* argues Bruce (2002: pp.31).

Williams (1996) sees deprivatization as a logical reaction to the decline of religion. In a traditional religious context, christianity is an implicit culture, but in a religious declined context it is an explicit

ideology that causes polarization in the public domain (Williams, 1996). Religion as a culture gives shape to a symbolic society by means of implicit ordering principles. People use religion as a culture by which they build up and express their identity and social world. In times of social change this culture and social group-identity is threatened, and religion is assigned the function of ideology. Religious attitudes and behavior are defended, promoted and legitimized in the public sphere, with considerable polarization and conflict between religious and secular people as a result. This may have consequences for societies on the level of nations but may also be a problem for alliances between nations like the European Union.

Lechner (1991), too, recognizes this polarization: a division between traditional christians and atheists could instigate fundamentalism: *'Even in the early period of secularization in Europe, defensive reactions occurred (for example, by the Catholic church). Such reactions, like modern manifestations of fundamentalism, presuppose that some kind of secularization is in progress - no fundamentalism without (prior) secularization.'* (1991: pp. 1114). This argument does not come down to privatization, but deprivatization as a consequence of religious decline, causing polarization. This requires a closer contemplation of the privatizationthesis and leads us to the following question: *Is the influence of christian religion on expressing religious attitudes and behavior in the public sphere bigger within post-traditional groups than traditional groups in Dutch society?*

2. Beyond theory

The central question we posed to study the contradictory theories, distinguishes two groups: a traditional and a post-traditional group. The denominations of the groups refer to the level of religious decline that – according to the secularization thesis – has taken place in the groups. Whether the social context of the respondents is traditional religious or a-religious, will – in accordance with the theory – be of importance of the wish of Christians within the groups to express their religious identity in the public sphere. Religious attitudes and behavior in the public sphere are dependent of the social context: The extent to which respondents want to express their religious identity, is influenced by their social context.

Achterberg, et al. (2008) already conducted a longitudinal analysis in several European countries. They concluded that the decline of religion goes along with deprivatization and not privatization of religion. Our research partly adds up to Achterberg's research, but wants to take it a step further: First of all, by comparing groups within the Dutch society in a cross-sectional way. The Netherlands is pre-eminently the case to do this research, given that The Netherlands in 1991 was one of the most secularized nations of Europe (Becker en de Hart, 2006). Hence, privatization is most developed in the Netherlands, according to the secularization paradigm. When this is the case, polarization between religious and a-religious people must be most present in The Netherlands. A second aspect this research wants to take a step further than Achterberg et al., is by studying not only religious attitudes but also the wish to practice religious behavior in the public sphere.

We presume in connection with the research of Achterberg et al. (2008), that in an a-religious context, where the Christian identity is most threatened, there will be more polarization between Christians and atheists as a result of the rapture by which Christianity is expressed in the public sphere. The central hypothesis we will apply in this research is as following: *The influence of Christian religiosity on the expression of religious attitudes and behavior into the public sphere will be more considerable in post-traditional than in traditional groups.* From this central hypothesis we derive five tangible hypotheses (a, b, c, d and e) that each refer to another religious attitude or behavior that may be expressed in the public sphere.

The distinction between traditional and post-traditional groups in the Netherlands is based on the assumption of the secularization thesis that secularization derives from and goes along with rationalization and modernization: *'Secularization is essentially a nineteenth-century notion according to which modernity adversely affects religion by taking the wonder and mystery out of the universe'* (Lechner, 1991:pp. 1106). About rationalization Lechner states: *'Rationalization produces a pattern of cultural pluralization, social differentiation, and organizational specialization in societies with originally influential,*

if not dominant, religious cultures and institutions, such as Western societies prior to the Great Transformation' (1991: pp. 1104).

Based on this assumption, our post-traditional group, that is presumed to be most secularized, consists first of all of respondents from urban areas. In cities modernization will be developed further than in areas with a lower population density. Level of education is an indicator of rationalization that the group has gone through. We presume that higher educated people behave more practical rational. They base their behavior more on rational than traditional motives (Dassen, 1999). A younger age of a respondent gives evidence of both modernization and rationalization. We distinguish traditional respondents as older people, living in less urbanized areas and having experienced a lower education. The post-traditional group – according to the secularizationthesis – would be the most secularized in which christians would be mixed with most a-religious people. Within the traditional group, christians will live in still a more religious social context. Christians in both groups are distinguished according to their own notion of their religion.

'Moral traditionalism' potentially is a broad concept that we apply to a few social issues that cover the influence of conservative attitudes on attitudes about society. The expression of those attitudes in the public sphere, shows that someone not only wants to keep them as personal guidelines but also wants to oblige others to them.

In the United States the Culture Wars-debate has been going on since the 1960s. Issues that at first sight seem private, like the choice to abortion, euthanasia, sexual preference and sex before marriage, are discussed in the public sphere and cause polarisation (Hunter, 1991). Certain groups in American society would like to make those private values, that originate from christian religion, central values in society. Other groups plead that everyone should remain the freedom to choose for themselves.

From this debate arises how in the United States religion takes in an important place in the public sphere, and how this leads up to polarization. We expect to find this polarization based on moral traditional attitudes more sharp within post-traditional groups in which christian identity is most threatened. Our first hypothesis is: a. *The influence of christian religion on rendering personal moral conservative values into the public sphere is more considerable within post-traditional than traditional groups.*

Secondly, we will study the influence of religion on religious political aspirations. This comprises the question to what extent politics should derive from religious origins. This is a more fundamental question than studying voting, which we also include in our research. Religious political aspirations cover a fundamental question about governance and arranging society and the role religion should take on in this. We expect that: b. *The influence of christian religion on christian political attitudes in the public sphere is stronger within post-traditional than traditional groups.*

In addition to Achterberg et al. (2008) we will also include three concepts that cover behavior in the public sphere, that could be motivated by religion next to concepts that define religious attitudes. This way we take a step further in the debate about secularization. By also looking at behavior, we can determine whether christians consider their religious behavior just private, or want to make it part of the public sphere, too.

Membership or a christian trade union, for example, is an indicator of the expression of religious behavior in public sphere. Trade union membership is a type of social engagement. The choice for a particular christian trade union can be explained by the wish to introduce private religious values in society. The membership of a christian trade union can be seen a direct influence in the public sphere. We presume that post-traditional christians will deliberately join a christian trade union to influence society and that polarization between christians and atheists will be the sharpest in this group. This leads us to the following hypothesis: c. *The influence of christian religion on membership of a christian trade union will be stronger in post-traditional than in traditional groups.*

Voting preference as well, is a religious motivated action in the public sphere. Voting can be based on many motives, including cultural and economic motives. We distinguish voting behavior for parties based on christian principles. By voting for a party that is based on christian principles, one supports the aim for a society based on christian values. Therefore voting behavior is a clear indicator of expressing christian religiosity in public sphere. Our hypothesis is: d. *The influence of christian religion on christian voting behavior is stronger within post-traditional than traditional groups.*

Finally we want to study the preference for a primary school that teaches christian norms and values, like Achterberg et al. (2008) suggested in their article. Parents choose a primary school for their children based on their confidence that this school will support their children's upbringing in educating them with the values that they want to teach their children. We can explain the preference for a christian primary school by the wish of parents to raise their children in a christian environment. They spread their religious identity into society as a whole, given that the school has a direct influence on the socialization of the child. (Bourdieu, 1990). These assumptions result in our final hypothesis: e. *The influence of christian religion on letting children attend christian education, is stronger within post-traditional than traditional groups.*

3. Data and measurement

All data are derived from the project 'Cultural Change in The Netherlands', a research that has been conducted since 1975 by the Dutch institute for public opinion (NIPO), by order of the Social and Cultural Planning Office of The Netherlands (SCP). The cultural values of a sample taken at random, based on the population density of Dutch districts and communities, are compared with those of earlier samples. In this study, Dutch-speaking respondents in the age of 16 years and up are interviewed. Every sample needs to consist of 2000 interviews. The interviews consist of a large number of items reflecting several aspects of Dutch culture like political and religious issues.

In purpose of our study, we have chosen to use the data derived from the survey of 1992, since Becker en de Hart (1996) considered The Netherlands to be the most secularized nation in Europe in 1991. In this datafile, all variables we need are present. The fact that the data are not very recent, does not matter for the relevance of our study, given that the decline of religion and privatization are long-term processes that in 1992 did not differ from the present situation significantly. In 1992 a total of 2146 valid interviews have taken place. The percentage of response is unknown, but is usually about 60%.

Operationalization

Our central question and hypothesis is testable by translating the concepts it consists of to variables that are composed of items from the 1992 Cultural Change survey. This survey enables us to test our hypotheses, but also has its restrictions. We can not instantly find perfectly fitting variables for all concepts, so we had to compose scales of a couple of items. All variables are recoded in some way to make them suitable for our purposes. A list of all the used variables and the way they are coded, can be found in appendix A.

The concept of *christian religiosity* we measure by the question to which religious group someone considers oneself a member. This variable is recoded to denominate atheists as 'not christian' and the various christian groups as 'christian'. Other religions are recoded as missing. This variable of christian religiosity is the independent variable in our empirical model.

We measure *religious political aspirations* according to Achterberg et al. (2008), using a scale consisting of five items that relate to the role of religion in politics and society. This questions the respondent's ideal of the relation between politics and religion and the importance of religious principles for broadcasting companies, sports clubs, trade unions and youth clubs. All items are recoded in order that a higher score

reflects more religious political aspirations. The results are standardized and a scale is established based on factor loadings. For both groups in our analysis, the scale is sufficiently valid and reliable¹.

We also construct a scale of *moral traditionalism* in accordance to Achterberg et al. (2008). First we made three subscales that each cover one aspect of moral traditionalism: traditional attitudes about family, tolerance of homosexuals and gender perception. A higher score reflects a more traditional attitude towards those moral issues. All items are standardized after which we composed a scale to measure moral traditionalism based on the factor loadings of those three subscales².

In addition to Achterberg et al. (2008), we also study three behaviors based on religious opinions, that are relevant for society. Those are: voting behavior, trade union membership and the choice for a primary school based on religious motives. Since it is not our goal to explain those phenomena, but just to describe to what extent religion plays a role in these choices, we code each variable in the way that only the distinction between 'christian' and 'not christian' is made³.

We define *traditional* and *post-traditional* respondents based on three characteristics: age, education and population density. We have chosen those characteristics according to the assumption of the secularization thesis that modernization and rationalization – that are presumed to go along with secularization – mainly occur within groups of younger, higher educated respondents in a more urbanized environment. To keep our methodology clear and to prevent ambiguous results, we have chosen not to combine those characteristics in our analysis, but to keep them separate.

To distinguish a group based on *age* we have chosen to compare a group of 'young people' with a group of 'elderly' and to omit the group in between. We define the younger people as the group up to 25 years of age. The older group in our analysis are the respondents from 65 years of age and older. This way we receive the biggest contrast in ages while we maintain the usual definition of young and old. Moreover: the groups that we distinguish this way have approximately an equal size of 329 and 330 respondents.

To determine the *population density* we used the item that measured the population of the area in numbers of inhabitants. We distinguish people from the countryside and living in villages up to 20.000 inhabitants, and people living in cities of more than a 100.000 inhabitants. By this distinction, the groups consist of respectively 609 and 592 respondents.

We determine the *level of education* by looking at the respondent's last schooling. We distinguish lower and higher educated people with the most possible contrast between those groups. This

¹ Appendix B: table 9

² Appendix B: table 13

³ Appendix A: tables 1-8.

results in one group of respondents that only finished primary school and a group of respondents that finished the Dutch type of 'Hbo'-education or an academic study. Our data include more lower than higher educated people, but based on this item of the survey we can not make a more accurate distinction. The groups consist of respectively 791 and 216 respondents.

As test variables for our analyses, we use the variables of *gender* [male-female] and *marital status* [wed-not wed]. We test for *economic conservatism* as well. To do this, we use a five-item scale that asks the respondent about his opinion of taxes, levelling and the desirability of differences in income. The items are standardized and combined into a scale, based on their factor loadings. The resulting scale is sufficiently valid and reliable⁴. By testing the correlations we found for these variables, we prevent to misinterpret any results that would be caused or suppressed by these variables. Gender might be of influence for any of the five hypotheses. For example, moral traditionalism. Marital status could play a role in moral traditionalism, too, and particularly conceptions of genderroles and family ideals. Economic conservatism could explain a part of the motivation for voting.

⁴ Appendix C: table 14

4. Traditional versus post-traditional groups

In each analysis, we distinguish the traditional and post-traditional group of respondents. By measuring the interaction-effect, we determine whether the differences in results of both groups are large enough to be significant. Based on theoretical and practical arguments, we distinguish both groups based on age, education and population density. First we analyse the attitudes of the respondents by the scales of moral traditionalism and religious political aspirations. Next we analyse some ways in which these attitudes could be expressed in religious behavior in the public sphere. All our analyses are tested for economic conservatism, gender and marital status.

For both the traditional and the post-traditional group we conducted a regression analysis in which christian religiosity is the independent variable. For each item we registered the standardized coefficient (beta) and the significance. The significance of the differences we found, is based on the interaction-effect and our filter traditional/post-traditional. The interaction-effect shows whether correlations found in both groups differ significantly.

To keep our analysis transparent, we present our analysis in three parts, based on the three concepts we filter our data-file with: education, population density and age. Analyses that did not provide any significant results are left out of the next paragraph, but are included in appendix C. Hence all analyses with choice for a primary school of trade union membership as the dependent variable, are missing. In those analyses no significant results were found.

Analyses by education

When we split the file into a traditional group with lower educated respondents and a post-traditional group with higher educated respondents, we found a significant difference in *religious political aspirations*. Religion is of larger influence on political aspirations within the traditional group. In this group we see the largest polarization. This result is contrary to our hypothesis. None of the test variables turned out to be of significant result.

Table 1: Religious political aspirations – linear regression analysis		
<i>Variables</i>	<i>Traditional group</i>	<i>Post-traditional group</i>

Table 1: Religious political aspirations – linear regression analysis		
Religiosity	.402 ***	.404 ***
Interaction-effect religiosity and post-traditionalism	-.205 (0.057 ⁵)	
Adjusted R ²	.160	.158
df	533	174

There is a clear difference between the traditional and post-traditional group with regard to *voting behavior*. This difference is even larger than expected, based on previous found differences in attitudes. The group that includes the most polarization between Christians and atheists, is again the traditional group, in discrepancy with our hypothesis. The analyses were tested for economic conservatism, gender and marital status, because economic and cultural motives could be of influence. Economic conservatism turned out to be the only significant test variable. The other test variables are left out of this report.

Table 2: Voting behavior – Logistic regression analysis		
<i>Variables</i>	<i>Traditional group</i>	<i>Post-traditional group</i>
Religiosity	3.091 ***	1.844 ***
Test variable: Economic Conservatism	.437 **	.398 (0,078)
Interaction-effect Religio and Post-Traditionalism	-1.290 ***	
Nagelkerke R ²	.449	.209
-2 Log likelihood	342.973	120.639
N	383	149

Analyses by population density

⁵ Throughout this article we use the standard report of levels of significance: 0.1% (***), 1% (**) and 5%(*). In some borderline-cases we use a one-sided tested significance level of 10*. In those cases the level of significance is mentioned.

None of the analyses produced a significant difference in attitudes or behaviors between people living in areas with up to 20 000 inhabitants and people living in cities with more than 100 000 inhabitants.

Analyses by age

When we distinguish the respondents by age – a traditional group consistent of people over 65 years of age and a post-traditional group with younger people up to 25 years old – we see large differences between the influence of religion on the expression of the christian identity in the public sphere.

The influence of religion on the expression of religious political thoughts, *religious political aspirations*, is larger in the traditional group than in the post-traditional group. This analysis is tested for marital status, economic traditionalism and gender. Those test variables have no significant influence on the results.

Table 3: Religious political aspirations – Linear regression analysis		
<i>Variables</i>	<i>Traditional group</i>	<i>Post-Traditional group</i>
Religiosity	.532 ***	.328 ***
Interaction-effect Religiosity and Post-Traditionalism	-.575 ***	
Adjusted R ²	.167	.063
df	153	219

For *moral traditionalism* as well, religion is of significantly larger influence on the attitudes of traditional than post-traditional people. Gender significantly influences this analysis: Women are more moral traditional than men. This effect is the largest in the post-traditional group.

Table 4: Moral traditionalism – Linear regression analysis		
<i>Variables</i>	<i>Traditional group</i>	<i>Post-Traditional group</i>
Religiosity	.394 ***	.227 ***
Test variabele: Gender	-.160 *	-.173 **
Interaction-effect Religiosity and Post-Traditionalism	-.404 **	
Adjusted R ²	.167	.063
df	151	217

Concerning the expression of religious behavior in the public sphere, only the analysis of voting behavior led to a significant difference between the traditional and post-traditional group. The traditional group is more influenced by religiosity for voting on christian parties than the post-traditional group. Notable is that economic conservatism was a significant test variable in the analysis by level of education but is no longer a significant test variable in this model.

Table 5: Voting behavior - Logistic regression analysis		
<i>Variables</i>	<i>Traditional group</i>	<i>Post-Traditional group</i>
Religiosity	3.356 ***	2.066 ***
Test variable: Gender	- 1.097 ***	.275 n.s.
Testvariable: Marital status	-. 697 *	-.737 n.s.
Interaction-effect Religiosity and Post-Traditionalism	-.720 *	
Nagelkerke R ²	.449	.237
-2 Log likelihood	234.299	156.881
N	245	162

Most results show no significant interaction-effect and therefore no significant difference between the traditional and post-traditional group. This indicates that there is no progressive privatization or deprivatization as rationalization and modernization continue.

In the other analyses, religion is of a larger influence in the traditional group. This is in flat contradiction with our hypothesis. Expressing religious attitudes and behavior in the public sphere is particularly more important among the elderly than in the younger group.

5. Privatization or deprivatization?

Our results do not show a significant difference between traditional and post-traditional people in Dutch society, in polarization concerning religious expression of attitudes and behavior in the public sphere. The significant results we did find, show that there is more polarization in the traditional than the post-traditional group. Most significant results were derived by separating both groups based on age.

However, the social significance of religion – according to our results – has not (yet) disappeared. We can not conclude that this plays a bigger role for post-traditional than traditional christians. We did not find stronger polarization between christians and atheists over the expression of religion in the public sphere in the post-traditional group than in the traditional group. Based on our results we can not be conclude whether christian religion privatizes or deprivatizes as religion declines.

Striking is that in almost all analyses, religion still is of influence on behavior and attitudes in the public sphere, although the Netherlands is considered to be the most secularized nation of Europe. This influence of christian religion appears most in voting behavior and attitudes about the desirability of the influence of religion on politics. In view of the fact that the majority of the Dutch voters that vote for a christian party, vote for the CDA-party, the large and broad party in the middle of the political spectrum, it is remarkable that religious attitudes still play such a large role in this voting behavior.

Our research demonstrates that religion is still very much present in attitudes and behavior in the public sphere, but is not able to criticize the presumption that religious decline and privatization progress in the same direction and speed. On the other hand, we can criticize the privatizationthesis, given that the influence of religion turns out to be still significant. We can not identify a progression of deprivatization, because we find equal results in both groups. The results of the research of Achterberg et al. (2008) did show progressive deprivatization over time in several countries that are considered to be secular. Within the scope of the secularizationthesis our results means that the polarization Achterberg et al. (2008) predict, does not occur between groups within Dutch society.

We can explain the not-significant correlation between christian religiosity and religious motivated attitudes and behavior in different ways. In the analyses we encountered several problems that originate from our specific use of a generic dataset, by which we are limited by the formulation and coding of the available items. Secondly, many other motives besides religiosity play a role in expressing certain attitudes in public sphere. Attitudes and behavior we consider christian, can also be motivated by secular conservatism or a tendency towards authenticity in norms and values, by which people go back to the traditional christian norms and values.

Behavior such as choice for a primary school, will be motivated by the quality of education, location and the type of school the parents themselves attended, too. The analysis of trade union membership did not include a sufficient number of respondents making it statistically significant. There

are just not enough people member of a trade union. At last, in the case of voting behavior, our results are distorted by the fact that the largest christian party in the Netherlands is also the largest party in the middle of the political spectrum. Hence, in almost all cases it is problematic to distinguish christian and non-christian motives clearly.

With the used dataset we can not distinguish between christian and secular motives for the expression of attitudes and behavior in the public sphere, because we lacked the items for this purpose. We tested our analyses for gender, marital status and economic conservatism. In analyses where the traditional and post-traditional groups were distinguished by educational level, we find that economic conservatism explains the correlation.

Concluding, we can say that, despite the not-significant results, scientists should look critically at the presumed privatization in researching secularization. They should not just dispute the decline of religion, but also look at possible deprivatization and polarization as a consequence.

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7. Appendix

A. Variables

A list of the used items recodings in Dutch. The translated and summarized items can be found in the scales- and results tables.

Table 1: Religiosity - variable and recoding		
<i>Variable</i>	<i>Original coding</i>	<i>Recoding</i>
Var 201 – Beschouwt u zichzelf als behorend tot een kerkgenootschap? Welk kerkgenootschap is dat?	1 = neen 2 = Rooms-Katholiek (RK) 3 = Nederlands Hervormd (NH) 4 = Gereformeerd 5 = Islamitisch 6 = Ander kerkgenootschap, nl.	0 = Niet behorend tot enig kerkgenootschap 1 = Behorend tot een christelijk kerkgenootschap

Table 2: Traditionalism/Post-traditionalism – Items and recoding		
<i>Items</i>	<i>Original coding</i>	<i>Recoding</i>
Var 002 – Leeftijd	16 tot 91	Originele codering behouden
Var 630 – Gemeentegrootte	1 = meer dan 400 000 inwoners 2 = 100 000 tot 400 000 inwoners 3 = 50 000 tot 100 000 inwoners 4 = 20 000 tot 50 000 inwoners 5 = 10 000 tot 20 000 inwoners 6 = 5 000 tot 10 000 inwoners 7 = minder dan 5 000 inwoners	1 = minder dan 5000 inwoners 2 = 5 000 tot 10 000 inwoners 3 = 10 000 tot 20 000 inwoners 4 = 20 000 tot 50 000 inwoners 5 = 50 000 tot 100 000 inwoners 6 = 100 000 tot 400 000 inwoners 7 = meer dan 400 000 inwoners

Table 2: Traditionalism/Post-traditionalism – Items and recoding		
Var 006 – Welke opleiding heeft u het laatst gevolgd?	1 = Lagere school 2 = Lagere school plus vakschool, avondschoon of huishoudschool 3 = MULO, 3-jarige HBS, MAVO, handelsschool 4 = MULO, 3-jarige HBS, MAVO, handelsschool plus vak- of avondopleiding 5 = 5-jarige HBS, HAVO, VWO, Lyceum, Gymnasium, kweekschool, Atheneum 6 = 5-jarige HBS, HAVO, VWO, Lyceum, Gymnasium, kweekschool, Atheneum plus vak- of avondopleiding 7 = Universiteit, Technische hogeschool, notariaat, accountancy, etc.	1 = Lager onderwijs en evt. vak- of avondopleiding 2 = MULO, 3-jarige HBS, MAVO, handelsschool en evt. vak- of avondopleiding 3 = 5-jarige HBS, HAVO, VWO, Lyceum, Gymnasium, kweekschool, Atheneum en evt. vak- of avondopleiding 4 = Universiteit, Technische hogeschool, notariaat, accountancy, etc.

Table 3: Religious political aspirations - items and recoding		
<i>Items</i>	<i>Original coding</i>	<i>Recoding</i>
Var 223 – Sommige mensen vinden dat politiek en godsdienst los van elkaar moeten staan, anderen vinden van niet. Hoe denkt u hierover?	1 = Los van elkaar 2 = Hangt ervan af 3 = Niet los van elkaar 4 = Weet niet	
Var 224 – Vindt u dat een omroepvereniging moet uitgaan van een godsdienstig beginsel of niet?	1= Moet uitgaan van godsdienstige principes 2 = Hoeft niet uit te gaan van godsdienstige principes	0 = Hoeft niet uit te gaan van godsdienstige principes 1 = Moet uitgaan van godsdienstige principes
Var 225 – Vindt u dat een sportvereniging moet uitgaan van een godsdienstig beginsel of niet?	1= Moet uitgaan van godsdienstige principes 2 = Hoeft niet uit te gaan van godsdienstige principes	0 = Hoeft niet uit te gaan van godsdienstige principes 1 = Moet uitgaan van godsdienstige principes

Table 3: Religious political aspirations - items and recoding		
Var 226 - Vindt u dat een vakvereniging moet uitgaan van een godsdienstig beginsel of niet?	1= Moet uitgaan van godsdienstige principes 2 = Hoeft niet uit te gaan van godsdienstige principes	0 = Hoeft niet uit te gaan van godsdienstige principes 1 = Moet uitgaan van godsdienstige principes
Var 227 - Vindt u dat een jeugdvereniging moet uitgaan van een godsdienstig beginsel of niet?	1= Moet uitgaan van godsdienstige principes 2 = Hoeft niet uit te gaan van godsdienstige principes	0 = Hoeft niet uit te gaan van godsdienstige principes 1 = Moet uitgaan van godsdienstige principes
Var 228 – Vindt u dat een politieke partij moet uitgaan van een godsdienstig beginsel of niet	1= Moet uitgaan van godsdienstige principes 2 = Hoeft niet uit te gaan van godsdienstige principes	0 = Hoeft niet uit te gaan van godsdienstige principes 1 = Moet uitgaan van godsdienstige principes

Table 4: Moral traditionalism - items and recoding		
<i>Items</i>	<i>Original coding</i>	<i>Recoding</i>
Var 543 - Zijn er volgens u omstandigheden waaronder abortus zou moeten worden toegestaan?	1 = Wel omstandigheden 2 = Geen omstandigheden 3 = Geen mening	
Var 544 – Stel dat een dokter iemand op diens eigen verzoek uit zijn lijden kan helpen door het geven van een spuitje, wat moet hij dan volgens u doen?	1 = Wel geven 2 = Hangt er van af 3 = Niet geven 4 = Weet niet	
Var 519 – Een echtpaar wil bewust geen kinderen terwijl er medisch geen enkel bezwaar is. Kunt u een dergelijk standpunt billijken of vindt u het onaanvaardbaar?	1 = Kan billijken 2 = Hangt er van af 3 = Onaanvaardbaar 4 = Weet niet	1 = Kan billijken 2 = Hangt er van af 3 = Onaanvaardbaar

Table 4: Moral traditionalism - items and recoding		
Var 537 – Homoseksuelen moeten eens flink worden aangepakt	1 = Volkomen mee eens 2 = In grote lijnen mee eens 3 = Geen mening 4 = Eigenlijk niet mee eens 5 = Helemaal niet mee eens	
Var 538 – Homoseksuelen moeten uit de maatschappij verwijderd worden	1 = Volkomen mee eens 2 = In grote lijnen mee eens 3 = Geen mening 4 = Eigenlijk niet mee eens 5 = Helemaal niet mee eens	
Var 545 – Vindt u dat men mensen die homoseksueel zijn zoveel mogelijk moet vrijlaten om te leven op hun eigen manier of bent u van mening dat dit zoveel mogelijk moet worden tegengegaan?	1 = Zoveel mogelijk vrijlaten 2 = Zoveel mogelijk tegengaan 3 = Geen mening	
Var 358 – Het is onnatuurlijk als vrouwen in een bedrijf leiding uitoefenen over mannen.	1 = Sterk mee eens 2 = Mee eens 3 = Noch mee eens, noch mee oneens 4 = Mee oneens 5 = Sterk mee oneens	
Var 359 – Voor een meisje is het eigenlijk toch niet zo belangrijk als voor een jongen om een goede schoolopleiding te krijgen.	1 = Sterk mee eens 2 = Mee eens 3 = Noch mee eens, noch mee oneens 4 = Mee oneens 5 = Sterk mee oneens	
Var 360 – Jongens kun je nu eenmaal in het algemeen wat vrijer opvoeden dan meisjes	1 = Sterk mee eens 2 = Mee eens 3 = Noch mee eens, noch mee oneens 4 = Mee oneens 5 = Sterk mee oneens	
Var 357 – Een vrouw is geschikter om kleine kinderen op te voeden dan een man	1 = Sterk mee eens 2 = Mee eens 3 = Noch mee eens, noch mee oneens 4 = Mee oneens 5 = Sterk mee oneens	

Table 5: Trade union membership - variable and recoding		
<i>Variable</i>	<i>Original coding</i>	<i>Recoding</i>
Var499 – Bent u lid van een vakbond (incl. beroepsverenigingen)? Zo ja, nl. van/aangesloten bij:	1 = neen 2 = NVV 3 = NKV 4 = CNV 5 = FNV 6 = MHP 7 = Unie BLHP 8 = Andere 9 = Weet niet 0 = Wil niet zeggen	0 = Lid niet-christelijke vakbond 1 = Lid christelijke vakbond (CNV)

Table 6: Voting behavior - variable and recoding		
<i>Variable</i>	<i>Original coding</i>	<i>Recoding</i>
Var 275 – Als er nu verkiezingen zouden zijn voor de Tweede Kamer, op welke partij zou u dan waarschijnlijk stemmen?	1 = CDA 2 = PvdA 3 = VVD 4 = D'66 5 = Groen Links 6 = SGP 7 = RPF 8 = GPV 9 = Centrum Partij 0 = Blanco stemmen 11 = Niet stemgerechtigd 12 = Andere partij 13 = Weet nog niet 14 = Wil niet zeggen	0 = Niet-Christelijke partij 1 = Christelijke partij

Table 7: Choice for primary school - variable and recoding		
<i>Variable</i>	<i>Original coding</i>	<i>Recoding</i>
Var222 – Stel dat u een kind hebt dat naar de lagere school gaat, wat zou u dan kiezen: een openbare school, een school op godsdienstige grondslag of maakt het volgens u niet veel uit?	1 = Openbare school 2 = School op godsdienstige grondslag 3 = Maakt niet veel uit 4 = Weet niet	0 = Openbare school 1 = School op godsdienstige grondslag

Table 8: Test variables - items and recoding		
<i>Items</i>	<i>Original coding</i>	<i>Recoding</i>
Var001 – Geslacht	1 = man/jongen 2 = vrouw/meisje	0 = man 1 = vrouw
Var 003 - Wat is zijn/haar burgerlijke staat? (formeel)	1= Gehuwd 2 = Gescheiden van tafel en bed 3 = Gescheiden van echt 4 = Weduwstaat 5 = Ongehuwd, nimmer gehuwd geweest	0 = Ongehuwd 1 = Gehuwd
Var 098 - Bent u ervoor of er tegen dat de overheid ingrijpende maatregelen neemt om de verschillen in inkomens te verkleinen?	1 = Sterk voor 2 = Voor 3 = Niet voor, niet tegen 4 = Tegen 5 = Sterk tegen 6 = Geen mening	1 = Sterk voor 2 = Voor 3 = Niet voor, niet tegen 4 = Tegen 5 = Sterk tegen
Var 099 - Bent u ervoor of er tegen dat de overheid ingrijpende maatregelen neemt om de verschillen in bezit te verkleinen?	1 = Sterk voor 2 = Voor 3 = Niet voor, niet tegen 4 = Tegen 5 = Sterk tegen 6 = Geen mening	1 = Sterk voor 2 = Voor 3 = Niet voor, niet tegen 4 = Tegen 5 = Sterk tegen
Var 110 - De overheid moet de belasting op hogere inkomens:	1 = Sterk verhogen 2 = Een beetje verhogen 3 = Laten zoals het nu is 4 = Een beetje verlagen 5 = Sterk verlagen	1 = Sterk verhogen 2 = Een beetje verhogen 3 = Laten zoals het nu is 4 = Een beetje verlagen 5 = Sterk verlagen
Var 114 - De overheid moet de belasting op lagere inkomens:	1 = Sterk verhogen 2 = Een beetje verhogen 3 = Laten zoals het nu is 4 = Een beetje verlagen 5 = Sterk verlagen	1 = Sterk verlagen 2 = Een beetje verlagen 3 = Laten zoals het nu is 4 = Een beetje verhogen 5 = Sterk verhogen

Table 8: Test variables - items and recoding		
Var 164 – Vindt u dat in ons land de verschillen tussen de inkomens te groot zijn? Of ongeveer juist zijn? Of dat de verschillen tussen de inkomens te klein zijn?	1 = Te groot 2 = Ongeveer juist 3 = Te klein 4 = Geen mening	1 = Te groot 2 = Ongeveer juist 3 = Te klein

B. Scales

A list of the used scales. These are constructed based on the factor loadings of the standardized items. The scale of moral traditionalism is composed out of three scales.

Table 9: Scale Religious Political Aspirations	
<i>Items</i>	<i>Factor loadings</i>
Desirability separation religion and state	.590
A broadcasting company should originate from religious principles	.803
A sports club should originate from religious principles	.685
A trade union should originate from religious principles	.847
A youth club should originate from religious principles	.849
A political party should originate from religious principles	.679
Eigen Value	3.364
R ²	.56
Reliability - Cronbach's Alpha	.837
N	1658

Table 10: Scale 1 of moral traditionalism – Family attitudes	
<i>Items</i>	<i>Factor loadings</i>
There are circumstances under which abortion should be permitted	.613
Euthanasia on patients request should be permitted	.735
A married couple can stay deliberately childless	.763
Eigen Value	1.498

Table 10: Scale 1 of moral traditionalism – Family attitudes	
R ²	.50
Reliability - Cronbach's Alpha ⁶	.494
N	1692

Table 11: Scale 2 of moral traditionalism – Tolerance of homosexuals	
<i>Items</i>	<i>Factor loadings</i>
Homosexuals should be given a good talking-to	.807
Homosexuals should be liberated	.924
Homosexuals should be secluded from society	.898
Eigen Value	2.310
R ²	.77
Reliability - Cronbach's Alpha	.843
N	1658

Table 12: Scale 3 of moral traditionalism – Attitudes about gender	
<i>Items</i>	<i>Factor loadings</i>
Women are more fit for raising small children than men	.564
The lead of a woman over a man is unnatural	.802

⁶ We do not consider this low reliability as problematic considering the small number of items, the theoretical similarities between the items and the fact that this scale becomes part of the sufficient reliable scale of moral traditionalism.

Table 12: Scale 3 of moral traditionalism – Attitudes about gender	
Good schooling is less important for girls	.838
Boys can be raised more freely than girls	.771
Eigen Value	2.257
R ²	.56
Reliability - Cronbach's Alpha	.734
N	1784

Table 13: Scale Moral traditionalism	
<i>Items</i>	<i>Factor loadings</i>
Family attitudes	.772
Tolerance of homosexuals	.829
Gender attitudes	.697
Eigen Value	1.771
R ²	.59
Reliability - Cronbach's Alpha	.651
N	1437

Table 14: Scale Economic conservatism	
<i>Items</i>	<i>Factor loadings</i>
Levelling income	.824
Levelling property	.784
Taxes higher incomes	.708
Taxes lower incomes	.463

Table 14: Scale Economic conservatism	
Attitudes about income differences	.718
Eigen Value	2.526
R ²	.51
Reliability - Cronbach's Alpha	.746
N	1745

C. Remaining results of the analyses

In the interest of the clarity of this article, these not-significant results were not presented in the article itself.

Educational level:

Table 15: Religious political aspirations – Linear regression analysis		
<i>Variables</i>	<i>Traditional group</i>	<i>Post-Traditional group</i>
Religiosity	.340 ***	.515 ***
Interaction effect Religiosity and Post-Traditionalism	.229 n.s.	
Adjusted R ²	.114	.254
df	471	421

Table 16: Moral traditionalism – Linear regression analysis		
<i>Variables</i>	<i>Traditional group</i>	<i>Post-Traditional group</i>
Religiosity	.267 ***	.332***
Interaction effect Religiosity and Post-Traditionalism	-.024 n.s.	
Adjusted R ²	.069	.105
df	410	164

Table 17: Trade union membership – Logistic regression -analysis		
<i>Variables</i>	<i>Traditional group</i>	<i>Post-Traditional group</i>
Religiosity	1.664 ***	.999 n.s.
Interaction effect Religiosity and Post-Traditionalism	-.801 n.s.	
Nagelkerke R ²	.128	.039

Table 17: Trade union membership – Logistic regression -analysis		
-2 Log likelihood	102.498	27.938
N	146	56

Table 18: Choice of primary school - Logistic regression analysis		
<i>Variables</i>	<i>Traditional group</i>	<i>Post-Traditional group</i>
Religiosity	.300 n.s.	-
Interaction effect Religiosity and Post-Traditionalism	-	
Nagelkerke R ²	.002	-
-2 Log likelihood	117.985	-
N	615	150*

Population density:

Table 19: Moral traditionalism – Linear regression analysis		
<i>Variables</i>	<i>Traditional group</i>	<i>Post-Traditional group</i>
Religiosity	.311 ***	.324 ***
Test variable: gender	-.154 **	-.187 ***
Interaction effect Religiosity and Post-Traditionalism	.024 n.s.	
Adjusted R ²	.104	.127
df	370	376

Table 20: Trade union membership – Logistic regression analysis		
<i>Variables</i>	<i>Traditional group</i>	<i>Post-Traditional group</i>
Religiosity	.2.166 **	.1.110 *

Table 20: Trade union membership – Logistic regression analysis		
Interaction effect Religiosity and Post-Traditionalism	.280 n.s.	
Nagelkerke R ²	.163	.062
-2 Log likelihood	69.886	83.822
N	130	110

Table 21: Voting behavior - Logistic regression analysis		
<i>Variables</i>	<i>Traditional group</i>	<i>Post-Traditional group</i>
Religiosity	2.299 ***	2.755 ***
Interaction effect Religiosity and Post-Traditionalism	.050 n.s.	
Nagelkerke R ²	.218	.244
-2 Log likelihood	351.151	263.261
N	328	328

Table 22: Choice of primary school - Logistic regression analysis		
<i>Variables</i>	<i>Traditional group</i>	<i>Post-Traditional group</i>
Religiosity	.726 n.s.	.924 n.s.
Interaction effect Religiosity and Post-Traditionalism	-.170 n.s.	
Nagelkerke R ²	.013	.021
-2 Log likelihood	95.786	62,402
N	474	446

Age:

Table 23: Trade union membership – Logistic regression analysis		
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Table 23: Trade union membership – Logistic regression analysis		
<i>Variables</i>	<i>Traditional group</i>	<i>Post-Traditional group</i>
Religiosity	.274 n.s.	19.257 n.s.
Interaction effect Religiosity and Post-Traditionalism	-.611 n.s.	
Nagelkerke R ²	..005	.303
-2 Log likelihood	46.190	6.028
N	48	23

Table 24: Choice of primary school - Logistic regression analysis		
<i>Variables</i>	<i>Traditional group</i>	<i>Post-Traditional group</i>
Religiosity	17.265 n.s.	16.760 n.s.
Interaction effect Religiosity and Post-Traditionalism	-.504 n.s.	
Nagelkerke R ²	.104	.185
-2 Log likelihood	29.688	10.897
N	269	286