

Erika Willander

The Religious Landscape of Sweden

– Affinity, Affiliation and Diversity
in the 21st Century



A report from Swedish Agency
for Support to Faith Communities



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Swedish Agency for Support to Faith Communities
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The Swedish Agency for Support to Faith Communities

The Agency's task is to promote dialogue between the state and faith communities as well as to contribute to knowledge about religion and faith community life in Sweden. The agency is further assigned the duty of distributing financial grants and other forms of support to faith communities. The purpose of the state grant is to assist the faith communities in their work with a long-term focus on worship, education and spiritual care and chaplaincy. The Agency's work can be described with the following headlines:

DIALOGUE Continuous dialogue enables discussions on issues that affect conditions that are of concern to faith communities and religious minorities as well as their status in Sweden. This dialogue may involve central values such as religious freedom, tolerance, democracy and human rights, as well as practical issues of different kinds.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLANNING AND SOCIAL COHESION In the event of large scale emergencies and drastic crises, faith communities have an important task in civil society. In recent years many state and municipal institutions have had their attention drawn to the importance of contacts with civil society and in particular with faith communities that have unique experience of helping people during crises and catastrophes. These contacts can be strengthened at an early stage through dialogues with the faith communities. In several parts of Sweden this cooperation is arranged today through interfaith councils.

ALLOCATING FUNDING PROVIDED BY THE STATE Each year the Agency allocates state funding to the faith communities. Most of this takes the form of general organisational grants that are intended to support local religious activities. The Church of Sweden does also receive state funding – but not through the Agency for Support to Faith Communities.

OTHER FORM OF SUPPORT: EDUCATION AND PROJECT ACTIVITIES Other forms of support take the shape of education or project activities that are intended to enhance the capacity of the faith communities. For instance the Agency arranges continual professional development for religious leaders who have received their training outside Sweden. Supporting the administrative capacity of the faith communities is another aspect of this task, which is particularly important for newly established faith communities that need to acquaint themselves with Swedish society.

EXPERT ORGAN ON ISSUES RELATING TO FAITH COMMUNITIES AND RELIGION The Agency regularly produces reports, articles and material that deal with current issues relating to faith communities and religion in Sweden. In addition to this, the Agency takes part in a number of groups and contexts in which knowledge about this field is sought for and also responds to official consultation documents and other requests.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

ORGANISATIONAL GRANTS account for the bulk of the financial support to the faith communities and are allocated mainly to support local religious activities. Allocation is based mainly on the number of members and other regular participants reported by a faith community.

OPERATIONAL GRANTS are provided in the form of support for spiritual care in the health services and is intended to enable the employment of individuals working in this capacity in the health services. Today there are about 70 individuals working with spiritual care with financial support from the state. Minor amounts are also granted to theological colleges and seminaries.

PROJECT GRANTS are mainly offered to support the building, refurbishment and purchase of places of worship as well as for their adaptation for the impaired and disabled. A small proportion is also granted to students from faith communities with no educational institutions of their own in Sweden for theological training abroad.

SUPPORT FOR HOSPITAL CHAPLAINCY

Chaplaincy describes the work undertaken by the faith communities in hospitals in the form of counselling, religious rites and spiritual care. The Agency has the task of supporting the development of these activities by allocating state funding for the employment and training of staff for pastoral care. As Sweden is changing and has a greater diversity of faiths, pastoral care needs to include representatives from a wider spectrum of religious traditions and the Agency provides support to the faith communities in this process.

SPECIFIC GOVERNMENT ASSIGNMENTS

The Agency works with a number of specific assignments from the Government that focus on the faith communities in Sweden. One example involves the in-depth dialogue on democracy and democratic values that has taken place between 2012 and 2018.



*The Swedish Agency for support to Faith Communities
is a Government Agency under the Ministry of Culture in Sweden.*

Author's preface

THIS REPORT IS ABOUT RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY IN SWEDEN. It is a description of how many people that are affiliated with different religions in the Swedish society, it deepens the knowledge of what it means to be affiliated with a religion in this country and it touches on questions regarding religion, social cohesion and views on citizenship.

The report was written because questions and ideas regarding religious diversity engage a lot of people. This interest is not limited to people of any specific religious traditions. Instead – and this is novel in the Swedish context – religious as well as non-religious people tend to discuss and talk extensively about religious diversity.

The Swedish Agency for Support to Faith Communities (SST) has noticed an increasing interest in questions regarding religious diversity in a particular way. Each year, the agency compiles statistics regarding organizations eligible for governmental grants and their active members. The SST noticed an increase in the number of individuals and organizations that use these statistics as evidence that can describe the size of various religions groups in Sweden. Although SSTs statistics provides a detailed description of certain parts of the religious landscape, specifically those that are eligible for government grants, it is not comprehensive. For example, it excludes people that belong to religions ineligible for government grants and people that belong to the Church of Sweden (which has its own system for collecting membership fees), along with those not affiliated with any religion. Moreover, official statistics regarding the size of the various groups that receive grants do not contain information on the recipients' gender, age, income or other socio-economically relevant variables. Nor does it contain information regarding attitudes to religion.

SST took the initiative to make this report and the idea behind it is to expound upon and bring nuance to facts regarding religious diversity. People at the SST have actively contributed to help deepen understanding based on their respective areas of expertise. Particularly, I would like to thank Max Stockman at the SST for all his work and engagement. To enhance the flow of language and argumentation, Max Stockman edited the text and spearheaded the work on imagery and fact boxes. Notwithstanding this valuable support, this report was written as an independent research report in affiliation with Uppsala University.

The report's independence is visible in the choice of information the analysis is based on.¹ In detail, the results are based on survey data collected by the *SOM-institute* at the *University of Gothenburg* (SOM stands for Society, Opinion and Media). The SOM-institute data was graciously made available by Associate Professor Johan Martinsson, the head of the institute and by his predecessor, Professor Henrik Ekengren Oscarsson.

The data and analyses presented in the report were undertaken in accordance with social sci-

entific research standards. Following these, the SOM-surveys were sent out to a representative sample of individuals living in Sweden. Representativeness is achieved in the way that prospective respondents are chosen randomly (i.e., through a lottery system). It is thus more important who replies to a survey than that a very large number of respondents are selected or reply. This is how a population of ten million people can be represented by a selection of less than 1,500 respondents.

The individuals selected to be respondents of the survey were informed that their participation is voluntary. Upon agreeing to participating in the survey, the respondent consented to the fact that the responses would be used for further analysis and publication, as long as the analysis and publication were done in accordance with the principles of research ethics. One such research principle is that no one individual should be able to be identified. For the researcher, this means analyzing survey responses that have been de-identified so that no information regarding social security numbers, names, or addresses are included in the analyzed material. The analyses were thus not performed on register data, but on survey responses given by anonymous individuals.

When publishing analyses, demands on ensuring that no individual identities are revealed are heightened. A tried and established way of achieving anonymity upon publication is to not present results where responses from only a handful of individuals are available. In the present report, a lower bound of at least ten individuals was applied. Because the relationship between minority and majority religions is relevant for the analysis, these limits made it necessary to in some cases having to add up the survey responses into block periods of five years. A religion that encompasses one percent of the population (15 replies out of a total of 1,500 responses for one single year) is in this way represented by 15 replies times five years = 75 responses rather than 15.

Summing up responses in five-year blocks was possible because SOM-surveys have been undertaken every year since 1988. The analysis is based on data from 1988 to 2016, with an enhanced focus on the last ten years (2007-2016).

Analyses that comply with social scientific standards should be replicable and, if done again, show the same results. For this to be possible, any further changes or calculation of survey results needs to be clearly described. The data files should also be made available for replication, or for further analysis. The survey material used in this survey are available for research purposes in an anonymous format, thanks to the *Swedish National Data Service* (University of Gothenburg).

Social scientific research standards also suggest that to make analyses available for review an important part of ascertaining the validity of the research results. The analyses and lines of reasoning in this report were also reviewed by Professor Lennart Weibull (University of Gothenburg)

and Professor David Thurffjell (Södertörn University). In conjunction with bringing attention to the reviewers, I'd like to thank them for their work. It greatly improved the quality of analysis and lines of argument.

I have chosen to bring up how I have accounted for the consequences of social scientific research standards in this preface, because I often encounter a sort of hate/love attitude toward social scientific statistics regarding religion. The love side expresses itself in that all analyses – no matter how they are undertaken – are regarded as true and correct, as they represent tangible numbers. Those that uncritically like statistics are however often confused over how different figures can contradict each other. Consideration is not always given to the fact that statistics and statistical analysis may vary in quality. The less appreciative side, by contrast, tends to lump all statistics together. It is not unusual that those with a negative attitude to statistics claim that no relevant knowledge regarding religion can be based on numbers. By being clear regarding the considerations I have made, I hope that it is obvious that statistical analyses are neither inherently good nor bad, but a result of a specific kind of craftsmanship.

To illustrate the figures and the lines of argumentation in the report, responses from religious representatives of various faiths were used to answer questions like: what are the greatest challenges to being religiously active in Sweden? What changes have happened during the last decade? The replies were gathered by posing a handful of open questions to representatives of communities that receive SST grants, or that are interested in the work of the SST. In total, some thirty communities chose to answer the questions. Ten of those answers were selected for publication in this report, as they highlight or help bring nuance to the statistical results.

Finally, I would like to emphasize that the report was written with a sociological perspective. In this context, this means that what people generally associate with religiousness is described and analyzed without evaluating the inherent theological convictions of the religions themselves.

*Erika Willander,
PhD, Researcher in Sociology, Uppsala University, October 2019*

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The Map and the Landscape

The first chapter introduces both the main content of the report and why it has come to be. The main objective of the report is to sketch an up-to-date and relevant map of religion in Sweden. The chapter also gives a short historical background.

GENERAL ASSUMPTION REGARDING religious diversity is at the center of many current conversations about religion. One example is the hypothesis that religion has become more visible in Europe now than it was before. The idea of religion gaining a new sort of visibility is popular among researchers and philosophers. This popularity can be traced back to the turn of the millennium, when religion became a topic of political conflict.

For some researchers and philosophers, the visibility of religion came as a surprise. They had assumed that societal influence of religions was a trait of the past, not of the present.

The debate on the new visibility of religions has continued as it in part is caused by the very principles European countries use to regulate religion and not by how many people that identify as religious. The debate lays bare that those who shape these principles cannot presuppose that the role of religions is decreasing. Doing so would risk ignoring or belittling issues concerning the accommodation of human rights, such as the freedom of religion.²

Another reason why questions regarding religious diversity seems to concern so many is the fact that the term religious diversity is multifaceted. Its meanings can be likened to a landscape. The religious landscape has a certain distribution (how many people that belong to a certain religious affiliation), terrain (premises, regulations and terms for religious affiliations) and borders (different religious communities and affiliations). In addition, a landscape can contain certain usable resources. The religious landscape contains values that can boost social cohesion, but which can also increase polarization between those that belong to a certain religion and those that do not.

The Aim of the Report

The overarching goal of this report is to sketch a contemporary, relevant map of the religious landscape of Sweden. The goal is a map because it simplifies the landscape it describes. The simplifications are made to make the landscape easier to see. In this report, distribution, terrain and borders is drawn based on information concerning the religious affiliations of individuals. This information was collected with the help of surveys. Survey data provides us with information regarding the largest religious groupings but it does not enable identification of separate churches, organizations, communities, or traditions.

Encompassing the past few decades of religious change in Sweden, the five largest affiliations were summarized into:

- Affiliated with the Church of Sweden
- Affiliated with a church that is a minority in Sweden (Free churches, Roman Catholics, etc)
- People with a Muslim affiliation
- People that are affiliated with a religion that is neither Christian or Muslim
- People that claim no religious affiliation ³

At the same time as these five religious affiliations represent a simplification of the multi-faceted religious landscape, the groups enable us to find nuances and explore aspects of the religious landscape that would not be possible if the focus had been on single churches, organizations, or communities. The five religious affiliations are utilized to demonstrate differences and similarities in religious practices, who actually belongs to the various religions (as in women or men, older or younger, higher or lower educated, people with high or low income) and to what extent the affiliation promotes values supporting processes of social cohesion.

This means that the map contains information relevant for a broader set of questions and assumptions. These include the experience of religion becoming less and less relevant in today's society. In Sweden, this can be seen in that a lot of people know someone who has left the Church of Sweden. Or, people have heard stories from older generations about how it used to be in the past, when Christianity was a mandatory subject in school and everyone was obliged to memorize prayers and psalms by heart. From that perspective, a general secularization of Swedish society appears to be continuing.⁴

At the same time, the assumptions include experiences of religion becoming more

relevant. In the case of Sweden, immigration has increased during the past decades. Today, close to 20 percent of the people that live in Sweden were born abroad. Because of this, the number of religious traditions are growing in Sweden and new groups are continuously being established. In addition, many groups are growing.⁵ From this perspective, it may seem as religions' roles in society is renewed.

This report seeks to explain if these two developments are happening in parallel: are some groups decreasing while others are increasing? Or is one development more dominant than the other, as in a decrease not counterweighted by the establishment or growth of others?

The reports makes a basic distinction between the premises of religious diversity on the one hand and the scope of religious diversity on the other hand. This is done because in debates concerning the new visibility of religions, questions regarding the premises of religions are often intermingled with assumptions about increased diversity. This intermingling can be illustrated by debates regarding the role of religions in the public space. For example, when a local Muslim community applied for permission to have public calls to prayer, this was discussed both in terms of how this practice sits with Swedish regulations in principle and against assumptions concerning the numbers of Muslims in the country. In general, arguments for and against allowing religious practices in public spaces tend to be based on beliefs about how common the practice in question might be. But while arguments regarding fundamental premises may overlap, they are not identical to spread or scope of religious affiliation.

This is because the history of the decreasing forms of religion differs from those believed to be increasing from those believed to be increasing (in terms of membership and participation). The major decreasing church, the Church of Sweden, formerly held the status of state church. It was a church in which all Swedish citizens were presumed to be members. The religions that are increasing in size tend to be more recently established and have the status of minority religion. As a consequence, these premises in terms of policies, laws and regulations differ between majority and minority forms of religion. To achieve clarity between premises and scope, this chapter has been divided into two sections. The first section summarizes the history that has led up to today's freedom of religion. It also deals with public attitudes to freedom of religion and to religious diversity. The second section describes the main results from previous surveys of the distribution of religions and paints a picture of what the religious landscape has been supposed to look like up till now.

Church and State: The Background of the Premises

State powers regulate religions through various laws and policies. The regulations that characterizes the Swedish system has roots dating back to the 16th century. In this era king Gustav Vasa I declared in a royal decree that the Swedish people would leave the Christian Catholic tradition behind and transfer to the Christian Lutheran tradition. The king's decision declared that the people residing in Sweden had to belong to the same religion as the king. This principle is a part of the fundamental laws passed in the *Instrument of Government* of 1634.

The Church laws from the same era began with the words:

”Uti vårt Konungarike och dess underliggande länder, skola alle bekänna sig, endast och allena, til den Christeliga Lära och Troo”⁶

Which loosely translated to modern English reads, “In our kingdom and its underlying countries, all and sundry shall confess to the Christian teachings and faith”.

The Church law from 1634 stated that those who living in Sweden are obliged to confess to the same religion as the king. This mean that the Church of the king's choice was an integrated part of the state. The phrasing “shall confess” is noteworthy because the church law was implemented during what in Sweden is known as the Swedish era of great power. In addition to the areas that now constitute Sweden, the kingdom held parts of today's Norway, Germany, the Baltic states and Russia. In addition, the entire Finland was a part of Sweden. In several of these countries, many church traditions existed side by side, such as Orthodox and Catholic church traditions. Thus, the church law was not imposed upon a religiously homogenous kingdom. Despite this, as church historian Anders Jerkert states concludes, it can be argued that:

”The multicultural Swedish society [...] was not held together by a uniform language, or even a uniform civil legislation, but instead by faith in the regent and the common religion.”⁷

This emphasis on religion's cohesive role in the Church law illustrates how religion was assumed to be central for social cohesion.

The phrasing of the Church law regarding unity of religion is also interesting as this law came to be valid in Sweden for 300 years (1686-1993). During this time span, regulations regarding the need for everyone to confess to (the evangelical-Lutheran version of) Christianity was reinterpreted and loosened. In the beginning, the words were interpreted in the strictest sense. Deviation from the Christian teachings were punis-

hed by prison and in some cases exile. This also occurred during the 18th and 19th centuries. One example of how deviation still was regarded as a serious crime during the 18th and 19th centuries can be seen in how it was prohibited to meet and read the bible outside the presence of a priest. A special law forbade such gatherings until the year 1858.⁸

The State Church and the Religious Minorities

From the time of the implementation of the church law in the 17th century, certain exceptions from the demands of universal confession to the Christian faith were enacted. Exceptions were allowed for powerful people residing in Sweden that belonged to other nations. These people could practice their religion in their homes together with the members of their households. These exceptions were expanded at the end of the 18th century by king Gustav III, who took a first step towards allowing Jewish and Catholic religious practices.

During the 19th century a cautious expansion of freedom of religion was supported by new laws. One example of this is the *Instrument of Government* from 1809 where the paragraph 16 stated that:

“The King should no one’s conscience force or have force, yet instead protect each and everyone their free practice of their Religion, in so far as he through this does not disturb the peace of society or cause general anger”⁹

The *Instrument of Government* stated that exceptions could be made for anyone that resides in Sweden and it gave people the right to decide for themselves on matters of the conscience. In this way, the instrument of government can be viewed as a first sign that exceptions were not exclusive to people with ties to other nations.

Later during the 19th century, these rights were strengthened thanks to the instatement of the so-called *dissenter laws* of 1860 and 1873. These laws allowed those that belonged to the Church of Sweden to leave it. In order to leave the church, however, people were required to join one of the Christian faith communities acknowledged by the state power. These acknowledged communities largely consisted of the Free churches that grew out of the spiritual awakening movement that began to flourish during the 19th century.

Even though gradual changes in the interpretation of the laws did occur and more people became exempt from the principle that all Swedish citizens confess to the reli-

gion chosen by the king, the first law granting true freedom of religion was not implemented until 1951. This law made it allowable to exercise religion, or to abstain from practicing religion. In other words, both positive freedom of religion and negative freedom of religion (the freedom to not be religious). The law did not apply to particular individuals or groups. Instead, there was absolute freedom of belief at the same time as religious practices could be limited if it broke other laws, or if the practice was deemed to be illegitimate.

These changes overruled the church law and the reform of the Church law in 1993 did not attract much attention. Instead, change of a rule internal to the Church of Sweden came to have a large impact on religious change in Sweden. In the middle of the 1990s, the rule that automatically enrolled children where least one parent was a member of the Church of Sweden, was changed. This change meant that baptism became the basis of membership in the state church and that only children that are baptized under the forms of the Church of Sweden are considered members.¹⁰ Another reason for the relative invisibility of the new church law could be that it was overshadowed by the reformed relationship between the Church of Sweden and the government, an overarching body of legislation introduced at the turn of the millennium. Since the year 2000 and onward, the Church of Sweden has been considered a free people's church subject to special legislation. At that time, laws specific to other faith communities were also introduced.

The new law establishes that the Church of Sweden shall maintain the evangelical-Lutheran tradition and practice throughout Sweden with the help of a democratically elected organization. The church is not to be primarily present where many members live, but instead work throughout the entire country. It is based on the principle of land based parishes, not congregations.

The law defining other faith communities stress that all other faith communities are to be "communities for religious practice, of which one part is to celebrate religious services."¹¹ Communities that meet these criteria can apply to be registered with the Legal, Financial and Administrative Service Agency of Sweden. This registration is voluntary, but it allows the faith community to "gain rights and accept duties and plead in courts and other authorities."¹² The laws applicable to faith communities do not mention anything about where the communities should be active, or what specific traditions the communities should maintain.

The Development of the Premises of Religious Diversity

17th century: demands on unity in religion – without exceptions

The church was incorporated into the Swedish government apparatus and deviation from the correct religious teachings (Lutheran Christianity) were not tolerated. Religious conformity was controlled by government and Church – and those who had other views were punished in various ways.

18th century: demands on unity – with some controlled exceptions

The official state religion was maintained and the religious conformity continued. By the end of the century, exceptions were made for certain groups, enabling the settlement of certain foreign professionals. Ideas regarding freedom of religion stemming from the European Enlightenment movement began to find their way to Sweden.

19th century: Increased tolerance for religious diversity – but slowly

The church continued to be a part of the government, but the demands of uniformity of religion was challenged and gradually removed. The Christian Revival Movement (Väckelserörelsen), coupled with other popular movements, were central actors in this process.

20th Century: Freedom to (and from) religion encoded into law

Demands on religious conformity were more clearly becoming obsolete, as liberal democracy took shape in Sweden during the 20th century. The freedom of religion acts of 1951 ensured that all Swedish citizens had freedom of religion. A plethora of churches and other faith communities were established when Sweden went from being an emigrant country to an immigrant country.

21st century – Separation of the church of and state

Demands for affiliation with Lutheran Christianity completely disappeared and the relationship between church and state was re-defined – the Church of Sweden became a nationwide free people's church that operates under similar terms as other faith communities. The church does maintain a unique distinction, for example as the designated religion of the head of state and as overseeing certain funeral activities within Sweden.

Government Grants for Faith Communities

The new relationship between faith communities and the government introduced at the turn of the millennium came to be after several decades of inquiries, debates and reform work.

One reform dates back to the 1970s. Then faith communities became eligible for government grants. The grants were introduced to decrease the differences between for Christian churches in Sweden. Because the Church of Sweden had the right to tax their members, politicians argued that other communities ought to receive the same rights, or be eligible for grants. The faith communities also ought to be offered help from the tax authorities when it came to administrating their membership fees.

At first, only the free Christian communities (the Free churches) were incorporated into the subsidy system. After a few years, Orthodox and Catholic communities and

Emanuel Poli

Administrator for the Syrian-Orthodox archdiocese of Sweden and Scandinavia

Who is your faith community for?

For people that are affiliated with the Syrian-Orthodox faith and who are baptized in accordance with the Orthodox faith and traditions.

What do you see as the greatest challenge today?

A lack of educated priests and lack of adaptation to Swedish society. The ongoing immigration places great demands upon our church and we continuously have to improve our organization across all areas.

What changes do you see among the members in the past few years?

Newly arrived immigrants to Sweden are looking for a sense of community in our parishes, while the younger generation is losing touch with the church. The parishes must be able to offer better knowledge that will attract the younger generations.



Sofia Camnerin

Vice president of the Uniting Church in Sweden

Who is your faith community for?

For everyone - as a Church we were sent to the world and we exist through our congregations throughout Sweden and globally together with churches we cooperate with. We want to be an open church that is generous and welcoming.

What do you see as the greatest challenge today?

Old traditions – that we in many ways are a traditional Swedish Free church that still rely too much on an organizational structure/structures – which still appeal to some – but definitely does not suit all congregations today. How we should combine hospitality with devotion and opportunities for faith, context, meaning, prayer. We must get much better at inter-religious cooperation and forge ahead in an increasingly racist society. We should show that we wish to cooperate with others than ourselves.

Have the conditions for organizing activities in Sweden changed during the last ten years?

Society has become tougher. Our youth organization, Equmenia, is struggling with tougher rules for government grants – it's like you're not supposed to be religious anymore. It's harder to be a church at the center of the village in a lot of places, because we are regarded as something apart and we're not allowed to be religious if we are to cooperate and do useful things.



also Jewish congregations were added. Later, Muslim organizations were added and in later years, Buddhist communities.

Since 1999, the following set of rules apply. To become a faith community with the right to receive grants, the community should be registered or organized as a non-profit organization. The faith community is also required to “contribute to maintaining and strengthening the fundamental values of society”.¹³ In addition, the community should be of a certain size (one benchmark is 3,000 people) and be primarily led and financed by people residing in Sweden.

The most common type of subsidy is calculated based on the number of people that associate with the community. Association, in this case, means that a person is a member of the community or regularly participates in the activities of the community. Becoming eligible for grants as a faith community can be described as a two-step process: first, the community needs to be registered or organized in accordance with the rules for a non-profit organization. Second, the community needs to demonstrate that they fulfill demands on value-building efforts, size and membership count.

In the context of this report, it is relevant to highlight that differences remain regarding how the government defines the Church of Sweden contra other faith communities. The criteria for receiving grants specifies that faith communities should “maintain and strengthen the fundamental values of society”, but that this can be done based on several belief traditions, Christian and non-Christian. In addition, other faith communities are expected to be of a certain size, but they do not need to practice throughout the entire country.

Attitudes to Religion and Freedom of Religion

The premises of diversity are not only shaped by laws and government rules. Also important are unwritten rules, norms and social codes, meaning what people that live in Sweden feel is right and wrong when it comes to religion. Research based on the SOM-surveys (used in this report as primary data) have shown that people living in Sweden are more positive toward Christianity and Buddhism than they are toward Islam. The fraction of the population that expresses negative views of Islam has not increased during the last decade, but negativity toward Islam has achieved a more marked political entrenchment.¹⁴ The same surveys also formed the basis for the conclusion that approximately one fourth of the population believe that immigrants should be able to freely practice their religion in Sweden and another third believe that immigrants at least

in part should be able to practice their religion. Generously assessed, this means that more than half (57 percent) of the population are positive toward the religious practice of immigrants, while shy of half are negative. In-depth analyses have shown that skeptical attitudes toward immigrants practicing their religion in Sweden are based on a negative attitude toward immigration in general. Behind results, there appears to be a concern that increased religious diversity may lead to restrictions on what is perceived as the normal ways to express religiousness. In the Swedish case meaning to believe in “something” and to be affiliated with the Church of Sweden without participating in regular services.¹⁵

The fact that a relatively prevalent skepticism exists concerning religion in general and toward certain religions is visible in the replies given by various faith community spokespeople in the survey included in this report (see boxes on pages 16, 33, 43, 53, 67 and 82). Like the answer to the question, “What do you see as the greatest challenge today?”, where several spokespeople, particularly the Muslim representatives, note that this skepticism is a problem.

The faith community representatives mention the widespread conviction that Sweden is a very secularized society as a challenge. There is no comprehensive evidences in research literature regarding how widespread the idea that Sweden is a non-religious country is. But surveys, such as the World Value Survey, have shown that most people in Sweden regard religion as not important in their lives and that most believe that political leaders should not be religious.¹⁶

To sum up, it is evident that regulations used by the government to define freedom of religion do not necessarily overlap with attitudes among the Swedish population when it comes to religion and notions about the place of religions in society.

Regarding the Scope of Diversity

As mentioned earlier, Sweden has for a long time been a country where most people are affiliated with the Church of Sweden. In historical times, it was legally difficult to belong to any other religious organization or faith. In later years, it has become easier to legally affiliate with other organizations, or to be affiliation free. Because the Swedish population tends to believe that it is without religion, many questions remain unanswered when it comes to identifying which religious affiliations are socially accepted.

The fact that everyone in Sweden once were presumed to belong to the state church is visible in the research regarding the religious habits of Swedes. It has been common

1930: The Last Government Religion Census

Regular censuses have been held in Sweden since the middle of the 18th century and are historically speaking tightly bound together with surveying the religious affiliations of the population. The idea behind the church registers was to serve the Swedish priests as they did house calls around the nation in order to check if people had absorbed the Lutheran teachings. In 1858, Statistics Sweden (SCB) was created, with the aim to create oversight of population statistics and several censuses posed questions regarding people's religious affiliation, under the headline, "creed".

The SCB censuses included two groups which at that point remained outside the Church of Sweden: on the one hand the dissenters, by which they meant the faith communities that had positioned themselves under a special law dating to 1878 (the dissenter act) and on the other hand foreign faith communities. The last census that included questions regarding religious affiliation (1930) noted that 95.8% of the population "hath other religious practices than the state church". A great portion of those still belonged to the Church of Sweden in a judicial sense - meaning that they were both affiliated with a minority community and the Church of Sweden. Judicially speaking, 99.7% of the population were members of the state church at that time.



Trossamfund	Personer ej tillhörande svenska kyrkan				1930			
	M.	Kv.	S:a	I %	M.	Kv.	S:a	I %
Mosaiska trosbekännare	3 390	3 079	6 469	27.5	3 396	3 257	6 653	37.3
Romerska katoliker	1 661	1 764	3 425	14.5	2 185	2 578	4 763	26.7
Metodister	2 535	2 917	5 452	23.2	1 664	2 317	3 981	22.4
Baptister	3 447	3 818	7 265	30.3	305	500 ¹⁾	805	4.5
Grekiska ortodoxa	125	156	281	1.2	216	288	504	2.8
Övriga	291	365	656	2.8	463	656	1 119	6.3
	Summa 11 449	12 099	23 548	100.0	8 229	9 594	17 825	100.0

¹⁾ Inräknat fribaptister.

to describe religious diversity from the perspective of what individuals do in terms of Christian practices. This has resulted in a neglect of acquiring knowledge regarding how many people belong to various groups or traditions.

The first inventory of the number of people that participated in religious services were undertaken at the end of the 19th century. At that point, the surveys were motivated by fears regarding ideas about separation of church and state reaching Sweden. The assumption was that if ideas about a secular state manifested themselves among the populace, it would weaken the position of religion itself. This could in its turn lead to fewer people attending Sunday mass.¹⁷

The consequences of the Swedish population becoming less religious were seen as problematic. At the beginning of the 20th century, the issue was discussed both in

terms of the possibilities of people reaching salvation and a loss of the cohesive powers of religion.¹⁸ Religion was seen as a fundamental element to a harmonious society, because it contributed a set of common values at the same time as it provided a medium where those very values could be taught.

The first inventory showed that 17 percent of the population participated in mass during a normal Sunday during the 1880s, a figure that later historical research has pointed out likely was too high. Possibly, no more than 10 percent of the population actively participated. Even though the number appears low, the author of the study concluded that mass participation levels had been stable for a long time. The very moderate levels of regular participation was confirmed at the beginning of the 20th century. These surveys concluded that the participant levels had dropped somewhat and that in 1927, just over 5 percent of Sweden's population participated in religious services on an ordinary Sunday.¹⁹

At the beginning of the 20th century, several censuses seeking to assess religious affiliations were undertaken. These censuses represent the first and only public data sets specifying the religious affiliation of individuals in Sweden. According to the population statistics from 1910, almost the entire population belonged to the Church of Sweden. In addition, 6,211 citizens were Methodists, 8,504 Baptists, 3,070 Roman-Catholics and 6,112 were registered as belonging to the Jewish community.²⁰ The last time this type of data was collected was in 1930. At that point, the census was more specific. Among other findings, 15 people were noted to belong to Muslim congregations and they were described as being Mohammedans.

The state authorities hand in regulating diversity is evident in these data points. People not affiliated with the Church of Sweden were called *dissenters* and *believers in foreign faiths*. These terms were in line with the regulations that during the first half of the 20th century prohibited Swedish citizens from leaving the Church of Sweden without entering another Christian faith community.

The first figures detailing how many people believe in God in Sweden come from the 1930s. They show that it was common to believe in a divine principle, but not necessarily in a personal God. Later data – gathered during the 1940s – show that 80 percent believed in God, but that a far lower percentage believed in heaven and hell. The people of Sweden could be said to be accepting of certain Christian beliefs, but not everyone believed in everything the church taught.

If the data regarding participation in mass, religious affiliation and beliefs are added

up, it is evident that for a long time it was common to belong to the Church of Sweden but to not regularly participate in religious services. It is also likely that those that belonged to the state religion but not regularly participated described their beliefs in terms of something divine rather than a belief in God.

Second Half of the 20th Century until Today: New Religions – but Fewer People Regard Themselves as Religious

Concurrent with the adaption of laws regarding freedom of religion during the middle of the 20th century, the premises of diversity themselves changed and it became possible to leave the Church of Sweden without joining other faith community. A secular option became available. In addition, it became easier to convert from one religion to another. That these options existed in theory did not however mean that they were widely used. Membership statistics of the Church of Sweden, which in its current forms stretch back to the 1970s, show that 95% of the Swedish population still belonged to the church 20 years after the Religious Freedom Act (of 1951) was introduced.²¹

The mid part of the 20th century was also a time when Sweden went from an emigrant nation to an immigrant nation. After the Second World War, migration to Sweden was characterized by labor immigration from Finland, Greece and the Balkans. From the 1990s and onward, refugee immigration has increased and today the most common birth countries for Swedish citizens born abroad are Syria, Finland and Iraq. Almost one out of five people that reside in Sweden (18 percent) were born abroad and the fraction that either were born abroad or have at least one parent born abroad is 24 percent.²² Finland, similarly to Sweden, is a nation where most people have a relationship to an Evangelical-Lutheran state church. Meanwhile, Orthodox Christianity and Islam are the dominant traditions in Syria and Iraq. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that the religious diversity has increased in the past handful of decades.

The international and comparative surveys undertaken during the second part of the 20th century and up until today have not focused on how many people belong to different religions, but instead on how many people regularly attend mass (each week) and who are accepting of various religious tenets. From the 1980s and onward, these surveys have consistently shown that people that participate in mass every week represent approximately five percent of the population.²³ This is comparable to the data gathered at the beginning of the 20th century. The new data regarding participation in religious services were not limited to the Church of Sweden. With this change in mind,

Faith Communities and Religious Groups in Sweden – An Overview

Organized Buddhism has its roots in the 1970s, originally mostly through Swedish converts. In later years, community life has been expanded through immigration from Thailand, Sri Lanka and Vietnam. These days, most buddhist traditions are present in the country and it is estimated that regular religious practices take place at more than a hundred sites across the country.

A number of Hindu temples are, since the 1970s, performing regular religious practices in Sweden, mostly in the big city regions around Stockholm and Gothenburg. The number of larger temples today are estimated to be between 10 and 15. Sikh groupings, through several religious centers (gurdwaras), are also established in Sweden, also predominantly in the big city regions.

The Jewish minority traces its roots back to the end of the 18th century. Today, religious practices are centered around the congregations in Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmo. The congregations cooperate through the Official Council of Swedish Jewish Communities, which works to enable Jewish life within the local areas and at the same time initiates, pursues and monitors issues on a national level on behalf of the Jewish minority in Sweden.

The Christian Churches in Sweden today consist of four main groupings: Free churches, Lutheran, Orthodox and Eastern and Roman-Catholic. The Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Sweden – the state church up till the year 2000 – remains the largest belief organization in Sweden, being an open people's church with congregations throughout Sweden. In addition, there are a number of smaller Lutheran minority organizations. The Free church protestant Christian movement history dates to the 19th century, when the Christian revival movement reached Sweden, creating Baptist, Methodist and New Evangelical currents. Today some ten national belief organizations belong to this group, across local congregations in most population centers in Sweden. The Eastern and Oriental Orthodox churches are organizations with root in eastern and southern Europe, the Middle-east and Africa. These churches were established in Sweden beginning in the 1960s and onward. Today there are some twenty different national churches presiding over more than two hundred congregations. Within this group there is on the one hand the Eastern Orthodox family of churches (such as the Greek-orthodox) and on the other hand the Oriental Orthodox churches, (like the Syrian-orthodox). The Catholic church in Sweden celebrates their services in around 130 places in the country and there are more than 40 congregations. A special group within the church is the Oriental Catholics, divided between some twenty different rites, with roots mostly in the Middle East.

The Muslim minority is today the largest non-Christian religious group in Sweden. Ever since the middle of the 20th century, the group has grown mainly through immigration. Among the most important regions of origin for people with Muslim backgrounds are south-east Europe, the Middle-east, North Africa and the Horn of Africa. Today, some ten different Islamic faith organizations exist on a national level, along with several hundred local congregations throughout Sweden. A wealth of different confessional and theological branches are represented among these (for example Shia, Sunni, Ahmadiyya and various Sufi branches).

Several religious minorities from the Middle-east have active operations in Sweden. The most obviously religious of these is likely the Mandaean group, originating in southern Iraq. In addition to the Mandaeans, Alevi, Yezidi and Druze faith communities are also represented – as is Bahai. Alongside the religious traditions listed above, there are also activities happening in a lot of locations throughout Sweden which can be termed as belonging to the new religious movements. Among these are the Church of Scientology, the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Unification Church (Moon). In addition, many people today encounter religious practices through spiritual yoga or meditation techniques.



PHOTO: BERTIL ADANIA

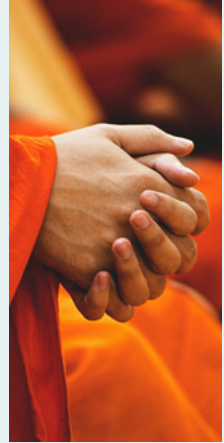


PHOTO: BERTIL ADANIA



PHOTO: BERTIL ADANIA



it is possible to regard those that practice religion by participating in mass and services as a stable minority of five percent.

The same surveys point to partly contradictory tendencies when it comes to religious faith. Close to 50 percent of the participants of surveys undertaken from the 1980s to the 2000s stated that they believe in some form of divine power or force. At the same time, those that reply that they believe in a personal God have become fewer (down from 20 percent in 1980 to 15 percent in 2010) and those to claim to not be believers at all represent approximately 20 percent. The remaining have given replies that can be interpreted as being unsure, or as having an agnostic attitude of religious faith. The results make it seem that those that live in Sweden have the same belief patterns today as they did 40 years ago.

However, the share of the population that say they believe in God is decreasing. Results from short survey questions (i.e., Do you believe in God? With the answers: yes or no) gathered in the year 2000, showed that 47 percent believed in God, 41 percent did not and 12 percent were unsure.²⁴ If questions about belief in God are posed that way, it seems as if considerably fewer people claim a religious belief in Sweden.

There is still little data collected regarding religious affiliations in Sweden and that which exists do not cover the entire population. Instead they cover individual churches and congregations that receive grants from the government. A handful of samplings from these statistics show that, at the end of 2017, 59 percent of the population were members of the Church of Sweden. At the same time, statistics from the Swedish Agency for Support to Faith Communities show that approximately 8 percent of the population belonged to faith communities that, aside from the Church of Sweden, receive grants from the government.²⁵ The strengths and weaknesses of these data sets will be discussed further in chapter 3.

Based on previous descriptions of religious diversity, the current situation can be sketched in this way: the part of the population that regularly participates in mass or services encompass a minority of the population (approximately five percent). The share of the population that embraces a faith that may be religious, but that also may be defined in other ways, vary depending on how questions about religious beliefs are posed. A stable and relatively large portion of the population appears to believe in “something”. Many have elected to leave the Church of Sweden, at the same time as there is limited knowledge regarding whether or not the individuals leaving eventually entered another faith community.

The Report Layout

In addition to this introductory chapter, this report contains six chapters that in various ways are designed to shed light on religious diversity in today's Sweden:

- Chapter 2 was written with the goal of complementing the image of how religion is practiced. Previous findings stating that about five percent of the population attend religious services on a regular Sunday have been confirmed up until 2010, but not after this point. The chapter contributes with a full picture of participation in religious services or religious meetings (such as mass and prayer organized by religious organizations). It also adds to previous studies by extending existing time series and introducing new ones.
- The goal of chapter 3 is to deepen the knowledge of religious affiliations in Sweden. The main focus is on the religious affiliations that likely gathers the most people in Sweden: Christianity and Islam. In addition, the survey responders were given the option to answer that they belong to a religion that is neither Christian or Muslim.
- Chapter 4 probes religious practices and faith within the various religious affiliations. Are the number of people that pray regularly different in Christian minority churches than among the members of the Church of Sweden? What religious affiliations can be associated with belief in God? These are examples of questions answered in this chapter.
- Chapter 5 describes religious diversity from a perspective that takes gender, age, education and financial situation into account. Analyses of how many men versus women that belong to the reviewed religions are presented. The analyses also cover differences and similarities in age representation, educational levels and income levels between the various religious affiliations.
- Chapter 6 analyses the connection between religious affiliation and social cohesion. This is done in two ways: first, the chapter explores whether or not religious affiliation contributes to feelings of inter-personal trust. Then, it investigates if religious affiliation contributes to a concept of inclusive citizenship. In this context, inclusive citizenship is understood to mean feelings of affinity with others that are regarded as different from themselves.
- The report concludes in chapter 7 with a summarizing argument regarding religious diversity and wider questions that the results of the report may pose.

All chapters are based on survey results gathered by the SOM-institute at the University of Gothenburg. The strengths and weaknesses of these surveys are presented in a separate methodology appendix.

2 How is Religion Practiced?

This chapter presents overarching trends of religious practices. Religious practice can take place in communal forms, such as religious services, mass, Friday prayer, but also in private settings. The chapter describes and discusses shares of people in Sweden that claimed a religious belief during the time between 1988 and 2016.

MANY PRESUME THAT SWEDES during older times uniformly left their homes on Sundays to go to church. But studies from the 19th century and onwards indicate that a relatively low percentage of the population regularly participated in religious services. This is also a pattern that can be discerned in other Nordic countries.²⁶

The new analyses that were undertaken for this report shows that this trend is continuing into our times. A low percentage (approximately five percent) of the population state that they participate in religious services every week (see figure 1). When the focus is on the most active group of religious participants, it is in other words not meaningful to talk about change, but rather about continuity. There has been no dramatic increase or decrease.

In contrast to these findings, larger changes appear to have taken place when it comes to the habit of participating in religious services once or a handful of times per year. During the 1980s it was just as common to participate in religious services a few or a handful of times per year, as it was to not participate at all. In 1997, about 50 percent stated that they never participated. In 2016, two thirds of the population stated that they never participate in religious services. The number that sometimes participate has continued to decline and has sunk below 30 percent for the year 2016.

The decrease in participation in religious services may mean that fewer people celebrate religious holidays by taking part in services or ceremonies coordinated by religious organizations. One explanation for this change might be that these celebrations take place in more private settings. It is, however, more likely that the celebrations do

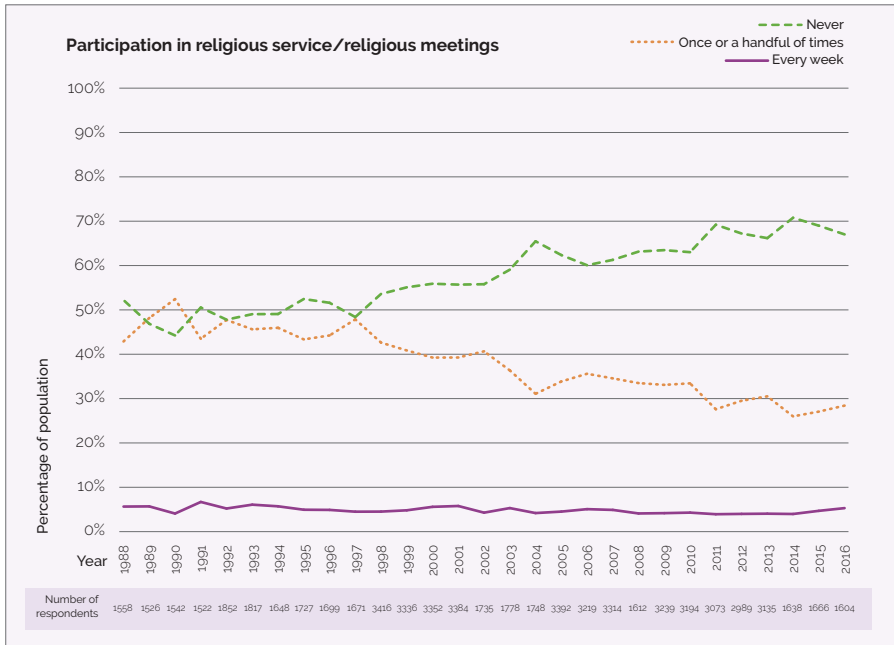


FIGURE 1. Regular participation in religious service/religious meetings 1988-2016. Percent of the population.

Comment: The survey question is: "Have you during the previous 12 months attended a religious service or religious meeting? The replies "once per week" and "several times per week" have been compounded to the category "every week". The replies for "a handful of times per month", "once per quarter", "once per six months" and "once the past 12 months" have been compounded till "once or a handful of times". Lastly, the reply "never" is presented as "never".

Source: Super-Riks-SOM 1986-2015 and the national SOM-survey 2016.

not take place at all. This means that a majority of people now living in Sweden lack personal experiences of religious services.

The term 'religious service' in the context of the survey can be regarded as a broadening of the concept of organized religiousness beyond Christian religious services. And perhaps this broadening explains the fact that participation in religious services does not drop below five percent? The stability could be explained by the fact that a larger part of those in the five percent bracket of regular participants in religious services attend religious meetings rather than Church services and celebration. To exemplify what this might mean, a list of common regular religious gatherings and celebrations among the religions established in Sweden are listed in this chapter.

What are the Regular Gatherings of the Various Faith Communities?

The Friday prayer is the main religious service in Islam. The gathering is similar to the morning prayer proscribed for Muslims every day of the week, but it also contains a handful of additional moments such as a sermon. Alongside the Friday prayer, gatherings are held for regular prayer 3-5 times per day during the other weekdays.

The Jewish Sabbath is celebrated from Friday evening to Saturday evening. During this time, people gather in the Jewish congregations for Sabbath service on Friday evening or Saturday morning. In addition to the Sabbath, other services are held regularly, also on weekdays.

The main Christian service is most often held on Sunday morning and in the Protestant and Catholic traditions this is called mass or Sunday service. The Free churches call this service only Sunday service and the Orthodox tradition call it liturgy. In addition to the Sunday service, several other services are held throughout the week. Regular gatherings for prayer, meditation, education and ceremonies are also held by various other religious traditions in Sweden. In the Buddhist traditions, gatherings are often held in connection with full moons.

Important Religious Celebrations 2019 – a Selection

January

Guru Gobind Singh's Birthday (Sikh)
Theofania/Ephiphany (Christian)
Makar Sankranti (Hindu)

February

Nirvana Day (Buddhist)
Vasant Panchami (Hindu)
Valentin's Day (Catholic, Protestant)

March

Fast begins (Christian-Orthodox)
Imam Ali's Birthday (Shia Muslim)
Purim (Jewish)

April

Prophet's Ascension (Islamic)
Rama Navami (Hindu)
Easter (Christian)

May

Ramadan begins (Islamic)
Vesak (Buddhist)
Ascension Day (Christian)

June

Eid al-Fitr (Islamic)
Pentecost (Christian)
Shavuot (Jewish)

July

Asalha Puja - Dharma Day (Buddhist)
Guru Purnima (Hindu)

August

Feast of the Transfiguration (Christian)
Eid al-Adha (Islamic)
Dormition of the Mother of God (Christian)
Ghost Day (Buddhist)
Krishna Janmashtami (Hindu)

September

Ashura (Islamic)
Feast of the Cross (Christian)
Yom Kippur (Jewish)
Rosh Hashana (Jewish)

October

Kathina (Buddhist)
Sukkot (Jewish)
Arbaeen (Shia Muslim)

November

Birthday of the Prophet Mohammed (Islamic)
Guru Nanak's Birthday (Sikh)
Loi Krathong (Buddhist)

December

Advent Sunday (Christian)
Bodhi Day (Buddhist)
Christmas Eve and Christmas Day (Christian)

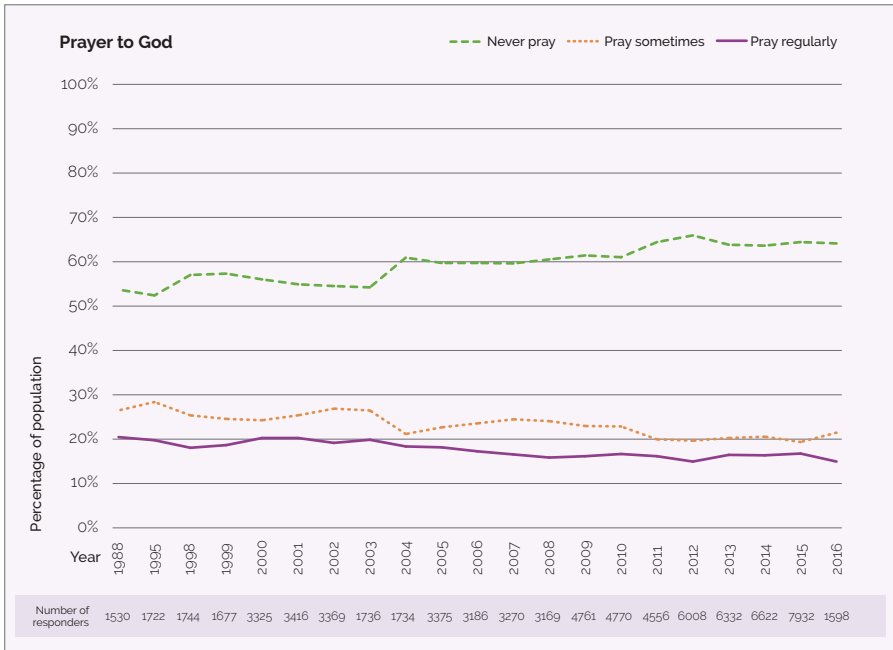


FIGURE 2. Prayer to God. 1988-2016. Percent of the population.

Comment: The survey question is, "Have you prayed to God during the past 12 months?" The response alternative "No time" has been coded as the category "Never pray". The reply options "a few times during the past 12 months", "a few times per six months", "a few times per quarter" and "a few times per month" have been combined into the category "pray sometimes". The replies "a few times per week" and "several times per week" are combined into the category "pray regularly (every week)". Since no fixed standard exists for individual prayer as for participation in religious service (where regular participation is equated to participation every week), the religious service standard has been adhered to with the aim of creating comparable results.

Source: Super-Riks-SOM 1986-2015 and the national SOM-survey of 2016.

Prayer to God

Aside from participation in communal religious services, religiousness may be practiced through the act of praying. The percentage of people that claim to have "prayed to God" regularly every week is 15% for the year 2016. Accordingly, the habit of regular prayer has become less common. In 1988, when the survey question regarding prayer was first introduced, 20 percent stated that they pray to God every week.

Also, the share of people that pray sometimes (ranging from a few times per month to a few times per year) has dropped between the years 1988 and 2016. Aside from small peaks and valleys, the number of people that pray have dropped from 26 per-

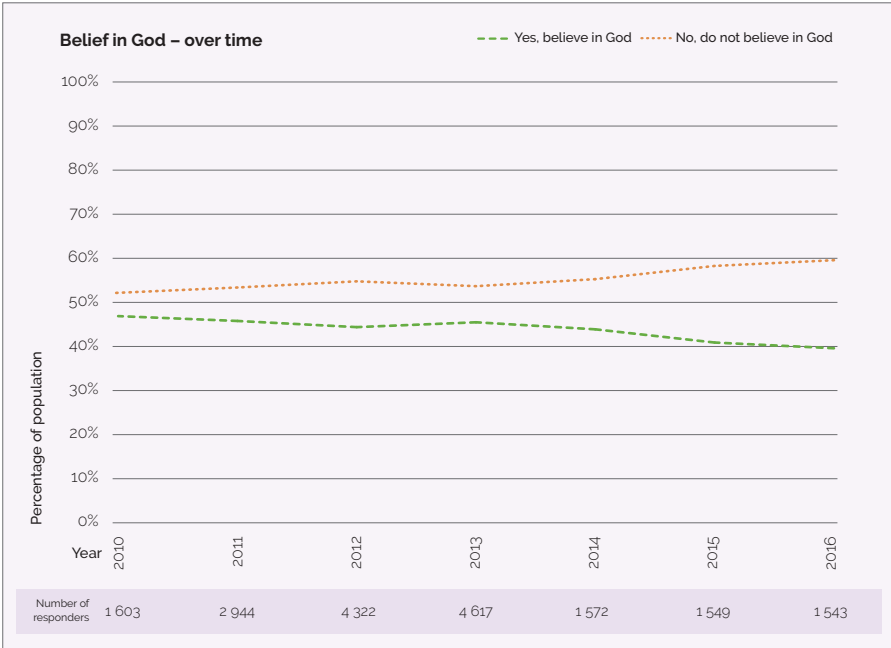


FIGURE 3. Belief in God. 2010-2016. Percentage of the population.

Comment: The survey question is: "Do you believe in God?" and the reply alternatives are "Yes" and "No".

Source: The SOM-surveys for 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016.

cent of the population in 1988, to 21 percent in 2016. This group has decreased by five percentage points, which in the context of today's population size represents a drop of some 500,000 people.

This means that those who do not pray at all are a larger part of the population in 2016 than in 1988. More exactly, 54 percent did not pray in 1988, while the corresponding number for 2016 was 64 percent. This means that the percentage that state that they never pray also represent the biggest change during the time period.

It is more common to pray to God than to participate in religious services. At the same time, the number of people that reply that they never pray to God is increasing. It is a pattern that is strikingly similar to the development in participation rates in religious services.

Belief in God

A third way of expressing religiousness is to believe. The SOM-surveys introduced questions regarding faith in God considerably later than survey questions about participation in religious services and prayer. The first time the question was asked was in 2010 (see figure 3).

The development regarding religious faith in the time frame from 2010 to 2016 (figure 3) shows that the share of the population that believe in God is decreasing. In 2016, 40 percent of the population stated that they believe in God. This can be compared to 47 percent in 2010. Faith in God has thus dropped by 7 percentage points.

What does these number tell us?

Statistics regarding participation in religious services, mass, organized prayer, individual prayer and faith, could show that the role of religion is weakening in Sweden. From such a perspective, the increases in the number of people that state that they never participate, pray by themselves, or believe in God, is both interesting and relevant. This increase represents the greatest change between 1988 and 2016. At a first glance, this appears to mean that the religious landscape has not changed much by the fact that new religious groups have established themselves in Sweden.²⁷

Viewing these long time-sequences one at a time must not, however, lead us to jump in to simplified conclusions. When religiousness is studied one aspect at a time, knowledge about whether it is the same individuals that never participate, pray, or not believe, are missing. If this is the case will be clarified in the next chapter.

Another conclusion that cannot be drawn from looking at the time sequences one at a time concerns attitudes toward the individuals that practice religion. In this context, it is relevant to look at the results from the time sequence that details participation in religious services, mass and organized prayer (figure 1). The time sequence shows that those that participate each week consists of a stable minority of approximately five percent of the population. Thirty years ago, they were a minority in a context where it was just as common to have your own experience of participating in religious services as to not have that experience.

Today, the context has changed. The majority of people in Sweden – two thirds of the population – say that they have no experiences of participating in religious services during the past year. To not have experienced religious services yourself contributes to the perception that participation in religious services is something that other people

Kerstin Oderhem

Church leader of the Swedish Evangelical Mission

Who is your faith community for?

For everyone: we are a missionary organization active in Sweden and in other countries. We share the gospel, by word and actions. We organize ourselves into societies for those who wish to be a part of that, but strive to have a broader outreach.

Which activities are most important to you?

Church services, social work, activities for children and youth groups, missionary projects.

What changes do you see among the members in the past few years?

We have lost several members. We have been a rural type of organization and we need to make a shift and pour resources toward the cities. We also see that people are very mobile and are less keen on having their “haven” in one church, people want to be a part of many different things where ever it happens to suit them. Many have kept their faith but chosen not to belong to a congregation. The question is why? And what does it do to the church over time, the fact that we’re missing a lot of people we call young adults?



Ulf Jonsson

Priest in the Roman Catholic Church in Sweden

Who is your faith community for?

First and foremost, for the Catholics in Sweden. But also for others that are interested in the Catholic faith.

Which activities are most important to you?

Primarily the religious services among our congregations. Also, pastoral care at the end of life, youth activities, activities for the elderly, language cafés for new arrivals to Sweden and other social-charitable activities.

What changes do you see among the members in the past few years?

New groups of Catholic immigrants from the Middle-east have contributed to a change in the proportions between different languages and rites among Swedish Catholics. The number of people that participate in our services continues to increase and a few new Church buildings are built and bought each year, while other congregations are expanding their existing churches.



Methodology in Focus:

Could the results be bias because of a lack of responses from certain groups?

The quality of a survey is often judged on the size of the share of respondents that actually reply. There exist normative thresholds as to what constitute reliable response rates. The share that chose to reply to the SOM-surveys used in this report is over 50 percent for all the years included in this report. In today's research situation, this can be regarded as above the threshold for assuming representativity.

Methodological studies have also shown that how potential respondents are reminded to reply impacts the overall quality of survey results. Participation in surveys such as the SOM-surveys are voluntary and those that are asked to reply do not have to state a reason for not participating. They have not been given gifts or money as a token of appreciation for participation, as this may cause bias in answers.

Nevertheless, the question about bias is relevant because groups central to the analysis may have chosen not to answer the survey. The analysis so far shows large changes among those who participate occasionally in religious services or prayer in the past. Many of these no longer pray or participate at all. In contrast, small but stable shares of respondents state that they are regular participants (2016 has in total 1604 replies and of those 82 people have replied that they participate every week). For the smaller data segments, it only takes that a handful of respondents abstain from answering for it to have visible impact in the statistics.

The methodology reports that accompany the SOM-surveys show that more women than men reply to the surveys. In a similar way, the elderly tends to have a higher reply frequency than younger people. There are also discernible tendencies that more people living in rural areas reply than those that live in cities and city-near areas. All these parameters can impact the result. The fewer replies a result are based upon, the more impact each individual reply carries. Because of this, acts performed by a minority (such as participating in religious services) are particularly sensitive to these types of patterns among those that choose not to reply to the survey. In addition, it should be mentioned that the surveys can only be answered in Swedish, which may result in people that live in Sweden but cannot read Swedish disregarding the survey.

Thus, even though the SOM survey is an example of state of the art research practice, it is not possible to disregard the fact that small groups relevant to the analysis may be missing and that this impacts the end result.

do. Descriptions of what happens during a service or organized prayer meeting becomes something that one can be told about, or something that is read about in the paper or on social media. This may spur a division of "us" and "them". If religion primarily is something that unites or divides us, is discussed in chapter 5.

A final conclusion one should be careful of adopting concerns what it means when fewer people reply that they believe in God. A commonly occurring wording differentiates between believing in a "personal God" or an "impersonal power or force". When questions regarding faith in God are formulated in this way, 15 percent of the Swedish population answer that they believe in a "personal God" while a considerably higher share (46 percent) reply that they believe in an "impersonal power or force". The survey formulation have been used since the beginning of the 1980s and ever since, the reply frequency for these options has been relatively stable. Earlier research has shown that it is more common to believe in God or some power or force, than to be uncertain or to not believe. The same surveys have also shown that approximately a fifth of the population do not believe in any God, power, or force. Yet another fifth are uncertain, doubting, or agnostic in their attitude toward the divine.

Instead of phrasing the survey question so that it separates a "personal God" from an "impersonal power or force", a more straight survey question was used in this report: "Do you believe in God?" The reply alternatives were "yes" and "no". Because the survey question was phrased in this more straightforward way, it was possible to avoid some of the criticism directed toward the phrasing generally used in previous surveys. The same theological knowledge is not as necessary in order to answer the short question about belief in God, as in the question about a belief in a personal God. At the same time, it is necessary to acknowledge that people can reply that they do not believe in "God", at the same time as they do embrace a religious faith. This is because the sacred is understood differently in different religious traditions. For example, believing in God may be characteristic for the Christian, Jewish and Islamic traditions but not necessarily so for the Buddhist traditions.

Finally, it can be noted that the number who accept religious beliefs sometimes is neglected in discussions of religious diversity. A reason for this is that religiosity is understood as a package including the parts affiliation, beliefs and practices. The package logic implies that those who, for example, believe but do not practice, are not religious. Consequently, they should not be mentioned as a part of the religious diversity.

3

How Many People Are Affiliated with Various Religions?

This chapter describes the number of people that belong to different religions in Sweden. It is based on comparisons between data from the Swedish Agency for Support to Faith Communities and data from the SOM-surveys. The chapter discusses the fact that one individual may have several religious affiliations. It concludes that the number of people without a religious affiliation can only be estimated after accounting for the overlap between religious affiliations.

RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY IN SWEDEN is today often described with the aid of yearly membership statistics gathered by the *Swedish Agency for Support to Faith Communities* (SST). These statistics are calculated for the financial support that the government pays to the faith communities. Grants are distributed on the basis of an organization's number of members. The size of the grant is dependent on the total sum of grants that is set by the government each year.

Using the statistics made available by SSTs administration to describe the general religious diversity of Sweden can thus be said to carry certain limitations. Moreover not all faith communities report membership statistics to the SST. This is only done by those that are approved by the government²⁸ and have applied for support for faith communities. Multiple faith communities in Sweden have never applied for these grants and some have applied but have failed to meet the criteria for receiving such support from the government. In addition to this, there are also many people who practice, believe and feel affiliated with religions, but who are not organized in a faith community. A third limitation with the membership statistics is that communities only may account for people that are registered members or regular visitors. Several communities reporting to the SST welcome people who participate and regard themselves as affiliated, but is not registred as members.

Statistics of members and registered participants in faith communities entitled for government support 1976-1986-1996²⁹

Community	1976	1986	1996
Free churches	277 522	269 291	450 355
Uniting Church (formed in 2011 by the 3 churches below)			
Baptist Union of Sweden	22 890	19 754	36 915
Mission Covenant Church of Sweden	85 226	81 063	152 260
United Methodist Church of Sweden	6 546	4 735	9 138
Evangelic Free Church (formed in 1997 by the 3 churches below)			46 393
Swedish Holiness Union and Prayer League	4 920	5 073	
Free Baptist Union	1 150	1 086	
The Örebro Mission	19 836	20 242	
Salvation Army	25 170	19 881	26 089
Pentecostal Movement	94 700	100 674	150 371
Seventh Day Adventist Church	3 325	3 312	5 561
Swedish Alliance Mission	13 759	13 471	23 628
Islamic Faith Communities	12 000	32 000	85 000
United Islamic Association			
Union of Islamic Cultural Centers			
Swedish Muslim Federation			
Lutheran Churches	56 170	51 932	65 705
Evangelic Lutheran Mission	6 000	5 584	4 313
Estonian Evangelical Lutheran	16 979	16 120	12 740
Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church	1 905	2 224	2 005
Swedish Evangelical Mission	26 109	23 405	41 231
Hungarian Protestant Church in Sweden	5 177	4 599	5 416
Orthodox and Eastern Churches	50 000	84 336	95 640
Greek Orthodox Church of Antioch			2 500
Armenian Apostolic Church		1 028	
Bulgarian Orthodox Church		500	700
Estonian Orthodox Church		1 015	1 060
Ethiopian Orthodox Church			2 400
Finnish Orthodox Church		3 868	2 500
Greek Orthodox Metropolis Of Sweden		17 200	17 500
Coptic Orthodox Church		500	1 052
Macedonian Orthodox Church		7 420	6 000
Romanian Orthodox Church		3 632	5 500
Russian Orthodox Church		1 100	2 500
Serbian Orthodox Church		21 301	23 000
Swedish Orthodox Church		5 644	
Swedish Orthodox Deanery		1 783	2 005
Syrian Orthodox Church		18 500	26 000
Assyrian Church of the East		845	2 923
Other Faith Communities	83 116	135 867	177 302
Anglican Church		7 000	3 000
Official Council of Swedish Jewish Communities	8 999	8 682	10 287
Roman-Catholic Church	74 117	120 185	164 015
Total	478 808	573 426	874 002

Statistics of members and registered participants in faith communities entitled for government support 2007-2011-2016³⁰

Community	2007	2011	2016
Free churches	370 835	340 376	321 829
Uniting Church (formed in 2011 by the 3 churches below)			123 747
Baptist Union of Sweden	28 170	27 372	
Mission Covenant Church of Sweden	118 397	108 713	
United Methodist Church of Sweden	6 875	5 436	
Evangelic Free Church	49 079	48 461	50 748
Salvtion Army	19 492	14 187	9 032
Pentecostal Movement	122 184	111 120	114 140
Seventh Day Adventist Church	4 107	3 712	3 689
Swedish Alliance Mission	22 531	21 375	20 473
Islamic Faith Communities	106 327	110 000	154 140
Bosniak Islamic Community			11 202
United Islamic Association			30 747
Islamic Fatwa Association			7 378
Union of Islamic Cultural Centers			17 311
Shia Muslim Alliance			31 329
Swedish Islamic Communities			20 431
Swedish Muslim Federation			35 742
Lutheran Churches	59 126	59 380	50 228
Church of Denmark in Sweden			329
Evangelic Lutheran Mission	3 207	2 840	
Estonian Evangelical Lutheran	4 950	4 719	4 506
Church of Iceland in Sweden			262
Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church	1 940	1 916	1 289
Swedish Evangelical Mission	43 602	44 486	36 711
Church of Norway in Sweden			2 103
Hungarian Protestant Church in Sweden	5 427	5 419	5 028
Orthodox and Easten Churches	113 144	130 763	145 279
Greek Orthodox Church of Antioch			747
Armenian Apostolic Church	2 000	2 375	4 414
Bulgarian Orthodox Church	800	800	846
Eritrean Orthodox Church	2 359	2 666	8 603
Ethiopian Orthodox Church	3 100	2 870	4 300
Finnish Orthodox Church	1 500	1 500	664
Georgian Orthodox Church			270
Greek Orthodox Metropolis Of Sweden	17 500	17 500	22 275
Coptic Orthodox Church	1 620	2 915	4 750
Macedonian Orthodox Church	6 000	6 000	6 797
Romanian Orthodox Church	6 111	6 100	7 092
Russian Orthodox Church	1 500	1 500	3 390
Serbian Orthodox Church	25 800	27 855	23 535
Swedish Orthodox Deanery	2 100	2 174	2 143
Syrian Orthodox Church	37 179	50 396	47 589
Assyrian Church of the East	5 575	6 112	7 864
Other Faith Communities	104 520	117 312	148 237
Alevi Federation in Sweden			4 545
Anglican Church	3 000	3 516	2 600
Official Council of Swedish Jewish Communities	9 368	8 462	8 316
Mandaean Sabaeen Community			7 690
Roman-Catholic Church	86 785	100 522	116 031
Swedish Buddhist Union	5 367	4 812	9 055
Total	753 952	757 831	819 713

Because the individuals that take part in faith community activities are not limited to only their members but also many others, the communities have the option to count non-members that are regularly registered participants in their subsidy founding statistics. Together, the SST labels these two categories "served".

There are also religious organizations that do not recognize that they have members in a way that resembles Christian congregations and the understanding of membership in the Swedish association culture.

This being said, it is arguably possible to hold that SST's figures provide a viable and in large parts relevant description of parts of the religious diversity in Sweden. Based on SSTs qualitative mapping of religious groups in Sweden, it is plausible that the figures covers major portions of the Christian minorities (the Free churches, the Catholic church, Lutheran minorities, Orthodox and Eastern churches), most larger Muslim faith communities, along with the Jewish and Buddhist organizations. More recently, a handful of smaller religious traditions from the Middle-east are also represented, such as the Mandaean and Alevi groups. SSTs statistics over these groups over time is presented in a separate table on pages 38-39.

In this table, it is possible to observe that the total share of the population that are affiliated with organizations eligible for government grants has decreased from 10 to 8 percent of the population. This fact stands in contrast to what is popularly believed about the growing number of people with non-Christian faiths in Sweden. The decline in the overall numbers is to a large part related to a decline of the Free churches. These churches were the largest organizations receiving grants during the second half of the 20th century and has since then declined.

The overall decline is to some extent lessened by Catholic and Orthodox Church traditions growing in size together with Muslim communities. New organizations have also been approved for grants. As a result, the share of the population who belong to a religion other than the Church of Sweden has declined at the same time as diversity in terms of traditions and organizations has grown.

Statistics from the Church of Sweden

The largest church, the Church of Sweden, is not part of the data material available to the *Swedish Agency for Support to Faith Communities*. This is because this church has its own system for retrieving members' fees (assisted by the tax agency).

As described in chapter 1, it was legally difficult to leave the Church of Sweden pre-1951. At the same time, it was easy to become a member. Up until the mid-1990s, newborns were automatically assigned to the Church of Sweden if at least one of the newborn's parents was a member of this Church. Due to these circumstances, there was a time when almost everyone that lived in Sweden was affiliated with the Church of Sweden.

Number of members in the Church of Sweden 1976 – 1996 – 2016

	1976	1996	2016
Number of members in the Church of Sweden	7 779 940	7 546 757	6 109 546
Members, % of the population	94,4%	85,3%	61,2%

Source: Church of Sweden's statistic data base

The changes in membership regulation are visible in the membership development for the Church of Sweden (see table above). Since the 1970s, when the Church of Sweden began to keep official membership statistics, the share of the population that were members decreased considerably. In 1972, 95 percent of the population was affiliated with the Church of Sweden. After that, the share slowly decreased until the beginning of the 1990s. At that time, nine out of ten people living in Sweden were still members. During the years when the Church of Sweden gained a more independent relationship with the government (2000 until today), a sharp decline has occurred. Today, six out of ten people are members in the Church of Sweden. Since the 1970s, the share of people that are members in the Church of Sweden has thus declined by 35 percentage points.

Even though more and more people leave the Church of Sweden, a substantial amount of people still belong to this church. The percentage calculations used to find out how many members there are hides that the decline was caused both by fewer members and a larger population. In 1972, almost 7.5 million people were members in the Church of Sweden. The corresponding number for 2017 is 6 million. This means that the membership count has decreased by approximately 1.5 million people.

A Survey Based Description of Religious Affiliations

Given that the official statistics on religious affiliation in Sweden are dependent on administration of governmental grants and membership fees, a survey based description of religious diversity may contribute with nuances and new perspectives. The SOM-surveys used here are representative for the whole population. They are not limited to those eligible for grants. To be included in the survey results, it is enough to live in Sweden and to express that they feel that they are aligned with a religion to be included in the description.

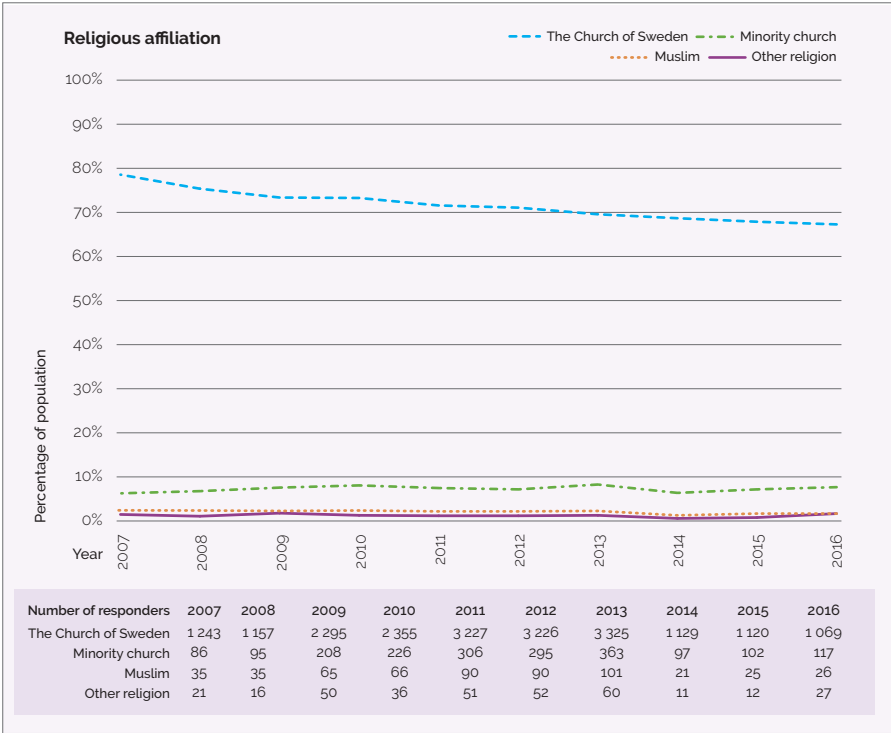


FIGURE 4. Religiously affiliated over time (2007–2016). Percent of the population.

Comment: the survey question is “Are you affiliated with any church, religious community, or religion?” Each response alternative is its own survey question. The response alternatives are, “Church of Sweden”, “Other Christian church/community”, “I am a Muslim” and “I am affiliated with another religion that is neither Christian or Muslim”. For each community, the answers “Yes but I haven’t visited a religious service/meeting during the past 12 months” and “Yes, I have visited a religious service/meeting during the past 12 months” have been summed up to one unit. The response results disregards the fact that individuals may be members in several churches or religious communities (for example both the Church of Sweden and the Uniting Church).

Source: Religion Data 2007-2016 based on the SOM-surveys.

The general trends in religious affiliation over time is presented in figure 4. Here, continuity and change for the Church of Sweden, minority churches (in Sweden), respondents with Muslim affiliation and those affiliated with other religions is depicted. These four categories of religious affiliation were alluded to in the beginning of this report and they represent the most common affiliations in Sweden. Further on, a fifth category will be added, namely the group who claim not to have a religious affiliation. The categories does not compare specific organizations (the Church of Sweden is the only

Lars-Gunnar Jonsson

National Mission Leader, the Swedish Alliance Mission

Who is your faith community for?

Our community seeks to serve the entire Swedish society and internationally through our many social projects and support to our sister churches around the world. The aim of the community is also to support and serve more than 160 local congregations attached to the Swedish Alliance Mission.

Which activities are most important to you?

Primarily, the work that happens locally through our congregations. In addition to a thriving religious service culture, we undertake great social and community-furthering work aimed at people of all ages.

Have the conditions for organizing activities in Sweden changed during the last ten years?

We see a trend where people are having a hard time prioritizing their time to undertake the local work, as they often are involved in many contexts throughout civil society, which is a positive in itself. But still, many people are engaged in our operations and delightfully enough we also see a successful generational shift, which is necessary. And we see a new generation assuming leadership in the local congregations.



Yusuf Cesmeli

Vice Chairman, the Islamic Culture Union

Who is your faith community for?

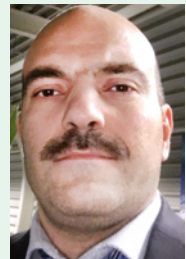
We are here for everyone in society that needs to learn about Islam, but particularly for the Muslim group that needs to educate themselves within Islam. Our congregations hold services for the Muslim group.

Which activities are most important to you?

The child and youth activities and the religious services. To integrate the Muslim group so that they feel that they are Swedish Muslims.

Have the conditions for organizing activities in Sweden changed during the last ten years?

They have developed, both financially and in terms of the increasing numbers of members. But there are still great needs, both for spaces to pray and for congregation administration. Some things have become harder than before: fear has increased among the members because of tougher attitudes in society. Unfortunately, there is a widespread narrow-mindedness regarding Islam in Sweden today and this impacts us and our members.



church possible to identify) but a range of majority and minority affiliations. It is likely that the minority church group includes people that are participants or members in Free churches, Catholics, Eastern/Oriental Orthodox and other Christian churches. In the same way, the group that regard themselves as Muslims have the option to visit and be members in several different Muslim faith communities with local congregations around Sweden. For the group that are affiliated to other religions, there are, such as is illustrated in the overview on pages 20-21, many different orientations and traditions.

An initial observation of the general trends presented in figure 4 is that the religious affiliations are declining or remaining stable between the years 2007 to 2016. The most substantial change is that the Church of Sweden has declined. This church has decreased from close to 80 percent of the population in 2007, to 68 percent in 2016. Even though the SOM-surveys are directed toward the adult population and the membership statistics kept by the Church of Sweden are presented in relation to the entire population (young and old), the decline is arguably in line with the data from the Church of Sweden. In 2007, the Church of Sweden's own data show that 74 percent of the population were members and in 2016, the share was 61 percent. Accordingly, the drop by 12 percentage points visible in figure 4 is equivalent with the drop observable in survey data (i.e. 13 percentage points).³¹ The adult population answering the SOM-surveys generates a higher proportion of members of the population compared to statistics from the Church of Sweden.

The official statistics regarding diversity among Christian minority churches in Sweden laid bare two trends that are not in line with each other. One trend is that increased diversity – manifested in the establishment of new churches and the continuation of holding more than one church membership – is increasing. Another trend is that seen as a whole, the total number of people affiliated with these organizations is decreasing. Reasons for the latter trend is that Free churches like the Swedish Pentecostal Movement and the Salvation Army now have fewer members than before. At the same time, the number of Eastern and Oriental Orthodox churches, like the Eritrean Orthodox Church, have gained members. The combination of some churches losing members while others are gaining members might explain why of the Swedish population that state that they belong to a minority church neither has increased or decreased between 2007 and 2016 (see figure 4). Around 7 percent of the population stated that they have a Christian minority affiliation. This corresponds to approximately 700,000 people, based on today's population numbers.

As expected given the immigration to Sweden during the recent decades, the official statistics show that the number members and participants within Muslim congregations eligible for state grants has increased. The increase goes from 100,000 people at the start of the survey period, to close to 140,000 people at the end of the period. The government statistics may nonetheless have overlooked Muslims affiliated with organizations that are not entitled for support, or that do not belong to any organization. Results from the SOM-survey were expected to complement to this data and reveal the number of unorganized Muslims in Sweden. This was done by asking a survey question regarding Muslim affiliation that makes it possible for a person with Muslim family background that does not practice to give an affirmative answer regarding affiliation. The survey results, nevertheless, did not demonstrate an increase in the share affiliated with Islam. Instead, the share that call themselves Muslim is quite constant over the examined ten-year period. It does fluctuate somewhat and it is even somewhat lower in 2016 (1.8 percent) compared to 2007 (2.6 percent).

Why are the Religious Minorities Stable?

The share of the population that belong to a religious minority is expected to increase due to immigration from the 1990s and onwards. This expectation is not confirmed by the analysis of survey results in this report. The underlying reasons for this could be manifold. The results may be biased because respondents taking part in the SOM-surveys tend to live in smaller towns, municipalities or in the countryside, as opposed to suburbs and cities, places where it is known that many minority affiliations have strong positions. Women and the elderly also reply at a higher rate than men and younger people. Moreover, it was only possible to take the survey in the Swedish language. People who live in Sweden but do not read (or have low understanding of) Swedish may therefore have abstained from participating in the survey. Because a couple of percent of the survey data consists of approximately twenty underlying answers, a handful of missing respondents can greatly affect the result.

Other reasons for the stable results concern how the survey questions were interpreted. When the question "I am a Muslim" is posed in relation to issues regarding affiliation with a church, it is possible that the response alternative for Islam gets interpreted from a membership point of view. The respondents may narrowly interpret the answer in line with a church-like understanding of who constitutes a member.

The third set of reasons for the stable rather than growing minorities concerns at-

Methodology in Focus:

Can 1,500 Survey Replies Provide a Trustworthy Picture of Sweden's Entire Population?

The distribution of religious affiliations in Sweden is possible to describe in a representative way, because the SOM-surveys do fulfill two criteria. The first criteria is that everyone that lives in Sweden have been given the same opportunity to answer the survey.

The second criteria is that the image of religious affiliations does not delve too deep into specific organizations and traditions. In a survey data set based on 1,500 replies, one percent corresponds to 15 replies. To reach a reasonable amount of replies, survey questions regarding religious affiliations are formulated in such a way that the most common alternatives are listed separately. Then, less common alternatives are listed together as "other religions". In the SOM-surveys, the question regarding religious affiliation/identity is formulated like this: "Do you belong to any Church, religious community, or religion?" with the possible replies being "Church of Sweden", "Other Christian Church/community", "I am a Muslim" and "I belong to another religion that is neither Christian or Muslim". In this way, the SOM-surveys capture the most common religious affiliations.

attitudes to religious minorities and particularly Islam in Sweden. Swedish opinion is considerably more negative toward Islam than other world religions. The negativity has not increased, but during the examined time period, it has become more politically charged. Expressing affiliation with a group that many have a negative attitude toward can be experienced as bothersome or even unwanted. Investigations undertaken in countries where religion is perceived as something socially desirable have shown that estimates of how often people participate in religious services are overestimated. In a societal climate where certain religions are portrayed in a negative light, it is reasonable to think that people decline to answer questions regarding religious affiliation. And, as alluded to earlier, it only takes a handful of people to not reply to the survey, or to the question regarding Muslim affiliation, for the consequences to become visible when calculating percentage shares.

Even if there are several plausible reasons for the lower than expected share of people

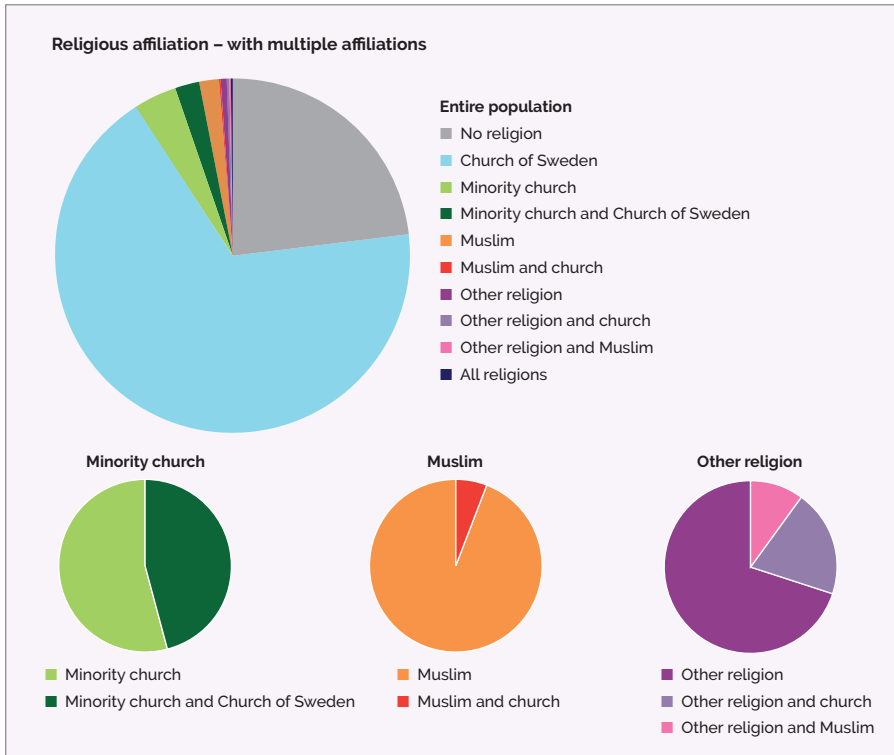


FIGURE 5. Overlap between religious affiliations in Sweden.

Comment: Data regarding multiple religious affiliations is based on the survey question, "Are you affiliated with any church, religious community, or religion?". Each response alternative is its own survey question. The response alternatives are "Church of Sweden," "Other Christian church/organization," "I am a Muslim" and "I am affiliated with another religion which is neither Christian or Muslim". Everyone that replied "Yes", no matter what engagement level they state, are regarded as affiliated with a religion. For this report, all reply combinations have been honored. These are No religion, Church of Sweden, Minority church, Church of Sweden and minority church (dually affiliated), Muslim affiliation, Muslim affiliated and one church, other religious affiliation, other religious affiliation and church affiliation, other religious affiliation and Muslim affiliation and all religions. The three circle diagrams concern (from left to right): comparison between those that have replied minority church (number of respondents, n=1,828), those that have replied Muslim affiliation (number of respondents, n=486) and those that answered other religion (number of respondents is 289).

Source: Religion Data 2007-2016 based on the SOM-surveys

that reply that they have religious minority affiliation in the SOM-data, it is not possible to know the exact reason. It is therefore also impossible to exclude that the surveys reflect real developments. It might be the case that people who migrate to Sweden have a religious family background themselves but not a religious outlook on life. Perhaps

it matters that people that have migrated here perceive that there is a norm that one should be non-religious in order to fit in to Swedish society. Another possibility is that the majority of those that, for example, have Muslim family backgrounds, are not practicing and because of this decide to reply that they do not have a Muslim affiliation. If the response patterns depend on any of these, they would be correct, even though they are not anticipated.

Because the SOM surveys do not allow us to gain further knowledge the reasons for why religious minorities are stable rather than a growing part of the population, the achieved results will be used in this report despite its possible insufficiencies. The results can contribute to painting a more nuanced picture of religious diversity, because they enable us to compare the answers from those with a Muslim affiliation or an affiliation that is neither Muslim or Christian, with other replies (such as participation in organized religion, prayer to God and belief in God.).

Estimating the Size of the Secular Group

Based on the developments described so far, it appears that the total number of people with a religious affiliation has decreased between the years 2007 and 2016. The number of members in the Church of Sweden is declining, as is numbers of the Free churches. Other religious minorities seem to be stable over time. If this development continues, it implies that the religious affiliations will become more similar in size, as the Church of Sweden shrinks and the others neither increase or decrease. Does this also mean that the number of people who claim not to have a religious affiliation is growing?

The respective shares of the population that are affiliated with the Church of Sweden, a church which is a minority, have Muslim affiliation, or belong to a religion that is neither Christian or Muslim, can, however, not be summed up to estimate how many people are without any religious affiliation. This is because it has long been common in Sweden to hold at least two religious affiliations. The most common combination is to be a member of a Free church and the Church of Sweden. During the 1990s nine out of ten members in the Free churches held such double membership.

Figure 5 shows that it is still relatively common to be both a member of a minority church and the Church of Sweden. 35 percent of people that belong to a minority church are also affiliated with the Church of Sweden. The category here referred to as “minority churches” include both the Free churches and other church traditions that do not share the Free churches traditions of double membership. It is therefore likely

that the share with double membership among the member of the Free churches is even higher than 35 percent.

It can also be noted that overlaps between religions exists in the group with Muslim affiliation and the group with an affiliation that is neither Christian or Muslim. These overlaps suggest that also these affiliations incorporate diversity, as one person can have several religious affiliations.

If the multiple double religious affiliations are taken into account, the share of the population without religious affiliation can be estimated to be 23 percent for the entire ten-year period. In other words, one out of four people living in Sweden claims to not have a religious affiliation and can thus be categorized as secular.

That one out of four has no religious affiliation in a country that is often described as one of the most secular countries in the world can seem rather low. The claim that Sweden is one of the world's most secularized countries is, however, often based on the low share (approximately five percent of the population) that regularly participates in religious services. It is not a description of how large the share is of the population that stand without religious affiliation.

The Many Faces of Diversity

In order to explore how many are affiliated with various religions in Sweden, this chapter applied two perspectives. The first one was the bird's eye view. By asking a representative sample of people which religions they are affiliated with instead of using the membership and visitor statistics of the religions organizations themselves, the perspective is broadened beyond the scope of a predetermined number of organizations. For it to be possible to summarize the results of the questions, the reply options have to represent the most common alternatives.

During the ten-year period, one of the main conclusions is that people affiliated with the Church of Sweden are decreasing in number, while those that are affiliated with minority churches, have a Muslim affiliation, or are affiliated with other religions consist of stable minorities. The share of the population that are affiliated with these groups are largely unchanged. If this development continues, the different groups of religious affiliation will become increasingly even in size.

The second perspective could be called diversity across the borders of religions. This points to the fact that it is relatively common to have more than one religious affiliation. Particularly those that are affiliated to a minority church tend to also be members of

the Church of Sweden. If it, based on survey results, is going to state how many people that have a certain religious affiliation, this overlap certainly needs to be considered. If this is done, it three out of four people in Sweden can be described as religious, while one out of four can be described as having a secular identity. Therefore, it can be said that it is considerably more common to belong to a church, community, or religion, than to not belong to one.

The population perspective broadens and makes diversity within and between religions visible, but it also seems sensitive for the public's attitudes toward religion and religious practice. The stability of the religious minorities described in this chapter was not expected and it might be an outcome of people not wanting to reveal what religion they are affiliated with. Public opinion regarding religion and religious practice can be a cause for this, together with differences in the understandings of what it means to be affiliated with a religion. Coming chapters will touch on the content of religious affiliations, such as visits to organized activities, individual prayer and beliefs.

4

What do the Various Religious Affiliations Mean?

This chapter deals with differences and similarities between religious affiliations in terms of religious practice. The chapter first describes and discusses differences and similarities of participating in organized events such as religious services. Then the chapter describes and discusses results of religious practices that can but do not necessarily have to be arranged by religious organizations.

TO BE AFFILIATED WITH A RELIGION does not have the same meaning for everyone. Some organizations and religious traditions expect regular attendance to their activities, while others arrange some activities for all members but some activities for smaller groups of members. It also has to be kept in mind that, even though leaders of religious organization maybe wish that people affiliated with their religion actively participate in services or activities, not everyone does. The ones who do not practice may still see themselves as affiliated. Ways of expressing religiousness may therefore differ between religious traditions and between groups of differing habits.

One example of this complexity was alluded to earlier in this report. For more than 100 years, it has been common to belong to the Church of Sweden while not participating in the weekly services. Even though religious leadership wish that the affiliated would participate regularly, the majority did not do so.

Faith communities also offer various types of activities. A large part of these operations run in a semester pattern, making a pause over the summer months. Other activities, like pastoral care at the end of life, are organized based on need. Some activities are outreaching and targets anyone interested in participating. Other activities are aimed at caring for the members, such as religious services and devotionals. It can therefore not be presupposed that religiously affiliated people participate in activities organized by religious organizations.

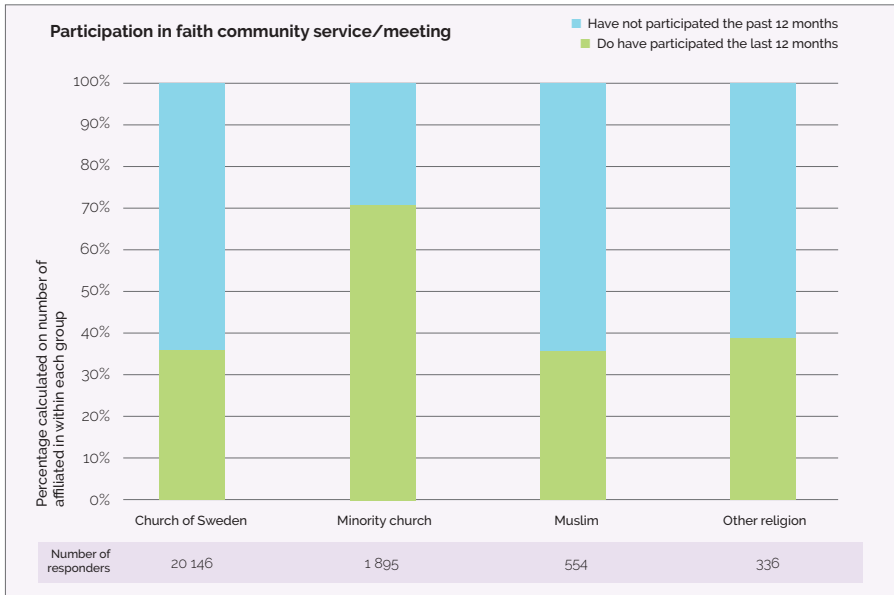


FIGURE 6. Participation in service/meeting. Comparison between religious affiliations.

Comment: The survey question was: “Are you affiliated with any church, religious organization, or religion?” with the reply alternatives “Church of Sweden”, “Other Christian church/community”, “I am a Muslim” and “I am affiliated with another religion which is neither Christian or Muslim”. The question could be answered in three ways: “No”, “Yes, but I haven’t participated in religious service/meetings in the past 12 months” and “Yes and I have participated in religious service/meetings in the past 12 months”. The figure compares the replies “Yes, but I have not participated in religious service/meetings in the past 12 months” with “Yes and I have participated in religious service/meetings during the past 12 months” for each of the religious affiliations.

Source: Religion Data 2007-2016 based on the SOM-surveys.

Also, comparisons between religious affiliations should take into account that activities may mean different things.

Comparisons between different activities can therefore not be taken to reveal which religious affiliations that are the most religious. Instead, the results can be regarded as patterns that provide knowledge about what practical significance the various religious affiliations can have for those affiliated.

Results regarding participation to religious activities for the years 2007-2016 are presented in figure number 6. The results are presented for all the 10 years at once since previously conducted in-depth analysis has showed that only those affiliated with the Church of Sweden have changed their habits to visit that church’s activities. People af-

Fadila Jasarevic

Vice president of the Bosniak Islamic Community

Which activities are most important to you?

We organize religious life for Bosnians and other Muslims in Sweden. Our congregations are religious gathering places and centers for social activities. For me, the most important part is that it strengthens my faith and makes me feel safe in my identity. It is also important that we promote culture, language and societal engagement concerning democracy, associations, sobriety and integration.



What do you see as the greatest challenge today?

The tougher climate in society and the discrimination of Muslims. Media mostly focuses on problems connected to Islam and Muslims. It is also a challenge to put a spotlight on the social activities of our congregations.

Have the conditions for organizing activities in Sweden changed during the last ten years?

The opportunities have changed, both in negative and positive ways. On the positive side, our membership numbers are increasing, we have more knowledgeable staff and a more stable economy. And our members show more interest and engagement! The negative sides are generally tougher attitudes, prejudice and hate crime targeting Muslims, resulting in attacks on mosques and congregation meeting places.

Rebecka Arman

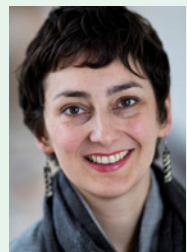
Board Member Zen Buddhist Council

What activities are most important to you?

Meditation and meditation retreats.

What do you see as the greatest challenge today?

Finances, to be able to offer our activities at a price that is doable for everyone and at the same afford facilities, course facilities, priests and teachers.



Have the conditions for organizing activities in Sweden changed during the last ten years?

Interest has increased, we have more people attending our introductions. Many that come to us are primarily interested in learning and getting support for meditation, they lack interest in the religious motivations for meditation and in our rituals/ceremonies. Mindfulness has popularized and secularized meditation into a form that is similar to the one we use. Our finances are founded partly on gifts from individuals and partly on membership fees and retreat fees.

filiated with the other religions included in the analysis have not changed their habits during the time period.³²

The comparative analysis regarding visits to religious activities demonstrate that approximately 70 percent of people affiliated with a minority church have visited their church during the past 12 months. The corresponding figure for the Church of Sweden, those with Muslim affiliation and those with another religion is around 35 percent. People affiliated with a minority church therefore seem to participate in their religious organizations more often than people of the other affiliations.

The fact that willingness to take part in activities remains unchanged over time for the three minority groups makes it relevant to discuss organizational cultures and the premises of diversity. It is only within the group of people that belong to a minority church that the majority of the affiliated participated (approximately 70%). Members in the Church of Sweden, Muslims and those that are affiliated with a religion that is neither Christian nor Muslim, have other habits. To view yourself as affiliated with a minority church in Sweden is thus also likely associated with participating in the church's activities, particularly in comparison to the other religious affiliations.

As mentioned earlier, the survey questions regarding religious affiliations are posed in a way that makes it possible to reply that you have a religious affiliation, without at the same time being a member of any specific organization. This may impact visitor statistics particularly for the two affiliations that are based on affiliation to a religion and not to a Church, meaning those with Muslim affiliation and those that have an affiliation that is neither Muslim or Christian.

That those who belong to minority churches participate in church activities more frequently than those affiliated with the Church of Sweden is in line with previous research.³³ That approximately 35 percent of the members of the Church of Sweden have participated during the past year can, compared to other studies³⁴, be yielded as relatively high share of the members. This result may depend on how the survey question was phrased. It was specified to attendance during the last 12 months and not to participating in religious services on a regular Sunday. This wording meant that those that participated in a funeral service, or visited an open pre-school during parental leave, could answer that they had participated. The broad definition of the survey question likely contributes to the large number of respondents that replied that they have participated.

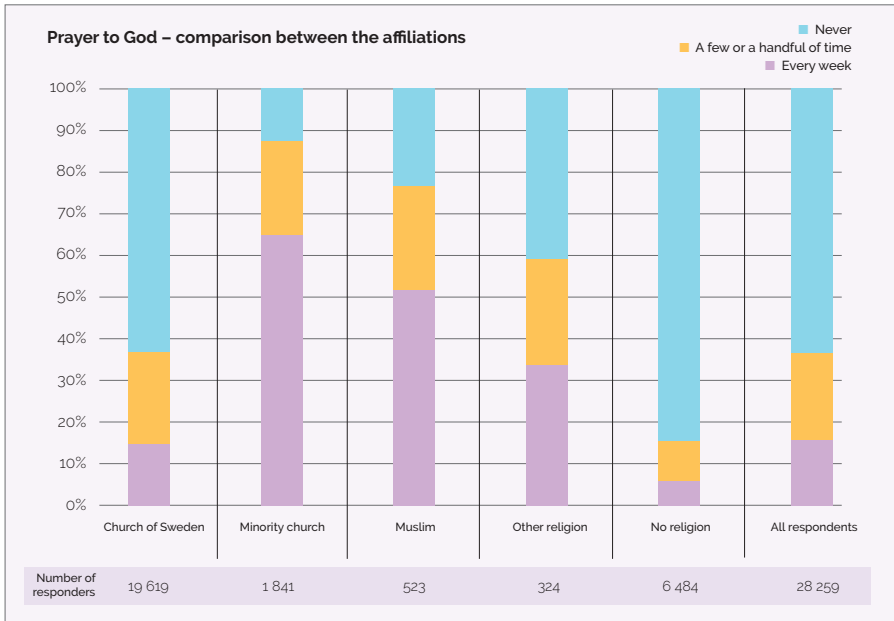


FIGURE 7. Prayer to God across religious affiliation

Comment: the survey question regarding prayer to God is, "How often have you during the past 12 months done the following?" "Prayed to God?" The reply alternatives are "Never", "A few times during the past 12 months", "A few times per six months", "a few times per quarter", "a few times per month", "a few times per week" and "several times per week".

Source: Religion Data 2007-2016 Based on the SOM-surveys

Prayer: Religious Practice Inside and Outside Organizations

One can practice religion without being affiliated with any religious organization. Sometimes, it is presumed that those that are affiliated with an organization are practicing religion more frequently than those that are not. In the previous chapter it was shown that over time, those that pray every week and those that pray sometimes to a few times per year have become fewer, while those that never pray have become more numerous. The same analysis revealed that 15 percent of the population pray to God every week. This is 10 percentage points more than those that participate weekly in services, confessionals, or organized prayer. (In the Swedish setting this means about one million more pray than participate in religious services on a weekly basis). Because more people pray than participate in religious services and it seem possible that people

pray without being religiously affiliated, it is not self-explanatory that the patterns of habits for participating in religious services, or even visits to organized religious activities, are to be found in an comparison of prayer habits.

Since it is possible to pray to God without being affiliated with a religion, those that replied that they do not belong to any religion are included in the analysis. Praying to God is most common among those that belong to a minority church. Among this group, two thirds state that they pray to God every week. Of the remaining third, a considerable part is made up of people that claim that they prayed once or a few times in the past year. This means that close to 90 percent of those that belong to a minority church – nine out of ten people – claim that they pray to God.

These habits are in striking contrast to the habits of those in the group affiliated with the Church of Sweden. Here, approximately 15 percent claim to pray to God each week. In addition, about one quarter say that they have prayed once or a handful of times per year. Roughly calculated, this means that four out of ten people affiliated with the Church of Sweden pray to God. When interpreting this data, it must be noted that those that belong to both a minority church and the Church of Sweden are counted as affiliated with both groups within the scope of the analysis.

Among those with a Muslim affiliation, a large majority pray. Approximately every other person affiliated with muslim communities prays to God every week. Combined with the number of people that pray a handful of times per year, the total reaches close to 80 percent of the Muslims.

Even though it is more common to pray to God than not to within the group that is neither Christian or Muslim, the share that does not pray is relatively large. Some 40 percent of those that belong to another religion state that they do not pray to God. The remaining 60 percent state that they pray.

Finally, those that claim no religion pray less than the average each week.

The results regarding habits of prayer was checked for changes over time. This analysis showed that it has become somewhat more unusual to pray within the group of people affiliated to the Church of Sweden and those with no religious affiliation.³⁵ Among those that are affiliated with minorities, the differences over time are so small that they are not statistically significant.

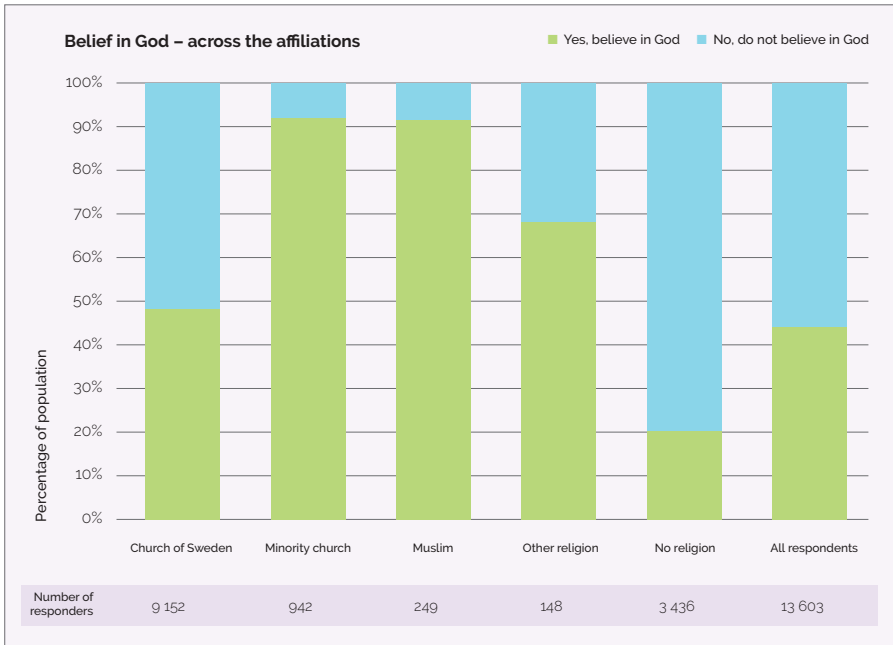


FIGURE 8. Belief in God across affiliation. NOTE! The time period is 2012 – 2016.

Comment: The survey question is "Do you believe in God?" and the reply options are "Yes" and "No".

Source: the SOM-surveys of 2012-2016

Belief in God across the Religious Groups

Do one have to believe in God in order to pray to God? In the narrow sense of survey analysis, an answer to this question would translate into an analysis comparing the ones that believe with the ones that pray. The SOM-surveys have, since 2010, posed the question "Do you believe in God" and the share of the Swedish population that say that they do so has decreased since then (see figure 3, chapter 2).

Within two of the groups – the group associated with minority churches and the group with Muslim affiliation – it is very common to claim a belief in God. Within each group, 92 percent state that they believe in God. To identify as a Muslim or as a member of a minority Church is thus closely related to believing in God.

Among those that have a religious affiliation that is neither Christian or Muslim, the share that states that they believe in God is close to 70 percent. If that is a high, low,

or expected number is hard to say. The religious affiliation that is neither Christian or Muslim may encompass many disparate religious beliefs. Some may describe holiness in terms of a God (in the same way as Christianity, Islam and Judaism) while other faiths do not necessarily share this view. They may thus call themselves believers, but still state that they do not believe in God.

People that are affiliated to other religions are more likely to believe in God than those that are affiliated with the Church of Sweden. Among the members of the Church of Sweden, almost half of the respondents (48 percent) reply that they believe in God. This is somewhat higher than the national average. Since many people in Sweden are affiliated with the Church of Sweden, the reply patterns of these members are very close to the national average (see the heading “All respondents” in figure 8). The Church of Sweden has undertaken several surveys where questions regarding faith in God have been asked.³⁶ They have shown that the share of believers are higher among those that have a closer relationship to the church than those that do not. Also, with the data analyzed here, an in-depth analysis showed that considerably more of the individuals that actively participate in the activities of the Church of Sweden believe in God, compared to those that are passive.³⁷ Thus, it is possible that the relatively large group of people in this survey that says that they visit church activities could be a possible explanation to the relatively high share of believers in this church.

In this analysis, those that reply “no” to questions regarding affiliation to a religion, are described as being without a religious affiliation. Generally, they do not believe in God. Those that are secular, meaning that they do not believe, consists of 80 percent of the group of people with no religious affiliation.

Summing up, the compared religious affiliations do show similarities, but they also appear to be distinct. To be affiliated with the Church of Sweden is associated with *not* visiting activities, praying, or believing in God. Among those that belong to a minority church, the majority visit activities, pray and believe. The Muslim affiliation is signified by the fact that Muslim organizations are visited at approximately the same frequency as the Parishes of the Church of Sweden. To have a Muslim affiliation is however associated with the highest share of people praying and believing in God. Those that belong to another religion visit activities at the same rate as those that belong to the Church of Sweden and those with Muslim affiliation. Within this group, it is common to pray to and believe in God. However, not as common as among those that belong to a minority church or have Muslim affiliation. Last, but not least, it is more common among those

with no religious affiliation to believe in God than to pray to God. Considering these results, it is reasonable to think that religious affiliation means different things for the various groups.

Is Affiliation and Practice a Package Deal?

What does it mean to be affiliated with a religion? The religious organizations in Sweden express their purposes and goals in different ways. They organize activities for people that believe or are interested in them. The organizations also arrange activities for people who call themselves Muslims, Buddhists, Jews, or Christians. Within the framework of this report, short questions have been posed to spokespeople for various faith communities, who have, among other things, answered the question of who they are for. Noteworthy here are both some similarities and differences in the responses. Some spokespersons highlight activities that could also be performed by non-religious organizations, such as schools and choirs. Others particularly emphasize devotionals or other religious services.

The results introduced in this chapter are based on replies from religiously affiliated people that normally are not leaders or managers of religious organizations. Because of this, they may have another view of their religious affiliations than the religious establishment. They may also see themselves as Christians, Jews, Buddhists, or Sikhs, without formally being members of a community. The lay person's perspective is of importance as it can shed light on popular forms of religiosity that is not acknowledged by the religious leaders or tradition.

The analyses show that those that are affiliated with minority churches are the individuals that tend to most frequently visit religious activities, pray regularly to God and believe in God. Those that are affiliated with a minority church thus more frequently display habits and attitudes that go hand in hand with what is often presumed to be religiousness. Those that are affiliated with the Church of Sweden more rarely visit religious activities. They pray more infrequently to God and approximately half of them responded that they believe in God. Those that are affiliated with this church share habits that perhaps may not be associated with religiousness, but are common ways of relating to religion in Sweden. This way of relating to religion may have transitioned to being the "normal" attitude toward religion in Sweden because it for a long time has been the norm to belong to the Church of Sweden but not regularly visit its religious service. The majority and minority church affiliations differ from one another, even though it

is relatively common to be affiliated both with a minority church and the Church of Sweden. This can be the case because so many more individuals are affiliated with the Church of Sweden (more than six million) than the minority churches (approximately 700,000 people).

One area where the common versus the less common may matter is the public's attitude toward religion. The literature regarding being affiliated with a religion but not practicing it often highlights that those that do this are actually indifferent to religion. This indifference is believed to include religion in general but also those who practice religion in ways that differs from one's own. However, in a situation where being affiliated but not practicing is the norm, to be affiliated and practicing can be viewed as deviant.

Finally, the results show that over time, the propensity to visit activities, believe and pray, neither increases or decreases within the various religious affiliations. It is as likely that a person with Muslim affiliation believes in God now as it was ten years ago. This may matter a great deal when it comes to discerning what future religious diversity will look like. So far, the Swedish church affiliations appear to be on the decrease, while all minority affiliations seem to be stable over time. Religious affiliations coupled with a low degree of visits, prayer and beliefs are in other words decreasing, while religious affiliations associated with prayer and beliefs remain stable. In the long run, this may mean that religious affiliation will become associated with prayer and belief in a much clearer way than today.

5

Who is Affiliated with Which Religion?

The following chapter examines religious affiliation based on gender and age. It addresses questions such as: Do certain groups comprise more women than men? Does a greater number of older people see themselves as religious, compared to the younger generations? The chapter also takes a closer look at religion in Sweden based on differences in education and income.

ARE THE RELIGIOUSLY AFFILIATED WOMEN OR MEN? Which ages are the most common? Do they generally have high educations? Are there relations between the educational level and income of the religiously affiliated? These types of questions are fundamental when it comes to gaining a deeper understanding of diversity, but despite this there is relatively little research addressing these questions from the research site at issue. Previous research has moreover defined religiosity as a package comprised of affiliation, belief and regular attendance. As a consequence, religious affiliations with diverging religious practices have been overlooked. Here, in contrast, a full range of religious affiliations are compared.

Despite the narrow scope of previous research, some general results from earlier studies are noteworthy. The studies comparing religious practices of men and women have found that women are more likely to practice than men.³⁸ The general trend where more women than men reply that they are affiliated, believe and pray, is not limited to Sweden. Rather, this is an internationally acknowledged observation. Surveys regarding religious practices and age undertaken in Sweden have shown that religion is maintained throughout one's life.³⁹ People that regard themselves as religious when they are young and that participate in religious practice are more likely to also do it when they become older. That religiousness is maintained throughout one's life matters for how religion is changing over time. In Sweden, it has been supposed that religious transformation is explained by more religiously active generations being replaced by less religiously active



FIGURE 9. Women and men with a religious affiliation out of all women and men. 2007-2016.

Comment: Religious affiliation means member of the Church of Sweden, minority church, person with Muslim affiliation, or other religious affiliation that is neither Christian or Muslim.

Source: Religion Data 2007-2016 based on the SOM-surveys.

ve generations.⁴⁰ In studies about religion and education, higher education and income are nevertheless often supposed to lead to a lower degree of religiousness, based on the assumption that education and income creates a type of existential safety that replaces religion.⁴¹ Results from studies on education and income thus suggest that religion may change over an individual’s lifetime.

Gender and Religious Affiliation

In previous research, it has been concluded that women are more religious than men. To find out if this is the case for the situation in Sweden, all religious affiliations were reorganized into a single category; people with at least one religious affiliation. Religiously affiliated women and men could then be compared side by side. The results of this endeavor are presented in figure 9.



FIGURE 10. Women and men in each religious affiliation group over time (2007-2011, 2012-2016).

Comment: In the years 2013-2016, respondents to the SOM-surveys could describe themselves as women, men, or other transgender identity. As this opportunity was only present in some years and the number of respondents are too few for being able to be shown in an ethically defensible way, these responses have been excluded from the analysis. The differences over time between men and women inside the religious affiliations are not significant within any of the groups: Church of Sweden $\chi^2(1, n=20141) = 0.70, p = .40$, minority church $\chi^2(1, n=1892) = 0.09, p = .76$, Muslim affiliation $\chi^2(1, n=553) = 2.49, p = .12$, Other religious affiliation $\chi^2(1, n=334) = 0.27, p = .61$, no religious affiliation $\chi^2(1, n=6619) = 0.10, p = .76$.

Source: Religion Data 2007-2016 based on the SOM-surveys.

Based on this analysis it can be argued that it has become less common among both women and men to claim a religious affiliation. At the start of the survey period (2007), 86 percent of the women and 80 percent of the men stated that they had a religious affiliation. By the end of the same period, 76 percent of the women said that they had a religious affiliation, compared to 68 percent of the men.

The analysis shows that men and women vary to some degree over time but the main difference (women have a religious affiliation to a higher degree than men) is not changed.

The result that a larger share of women than men have a religious affiliation makes it plausible that there are also more women than men in the individual religious af-

filiations. But that is not quite the case. Among the Christian groups (the Church of Sweden and the minority churches) there are more women than men, while the distribution is more equal in the groups with Muslim affiliations and other religions that are neither Muslim or Christian (see figure 10). Among the group with Muslim affiliation, the men are more numerous than the women between 2007 and 2011, but between 2012 and 2016 they are of similar size. This change should be described as a tendency as it is not a statistically confirmed change.

If the main content of the gender analysis is repeated, more women than men reply that they have a religious affiliation. The in-depth analysis however shows that it is primarily the Christian groups that contributes to this overall pattern. Thus, the result should perhaps be understood as more women than men are Christians, rather than that this is a valid assumption across all religious groups.

Age and Religious Affiliation

Earlier research concluded that people tend to keep the religion they had when they were younger and maintain it throughout their lives. Given this condition for change, a process of secularization implies that younger (less religious) generations are replacing the older (more religious) generations. In a country that strives to maintain religious expressions, younger generations can be expected to be as likely to practice religion as the older generations.

Considering this, the age of the individuals affiliated with various religions becomes relevant. If one religious affiliation is characterized by many older people and few younger, it is possible to suppose that it will, over time, decrease through generational shifts. In a similar way, a religious affiliation that attracts many young people can be thought to strengthen over time.

The religious affiliations with the largest share of younger affiliated people are those with Muslim affiliations and those with a religious affiliation that is neither Muslim or Christian. This is followed by those that are not affiliated with any religion. Among those with Muslim affiliation, only 10 percent of the affiliated are over 60 years old. Among those with a religious affiliation that is neither Muslim or Christian, those over 60 years old are a larger group, but the older are still fewer than the younger. If the Muslim religious affiliations and the affiliation to religions that are neither Christian or Muslim were to stay at current levels, they may stay at their current levels or increase in the future.

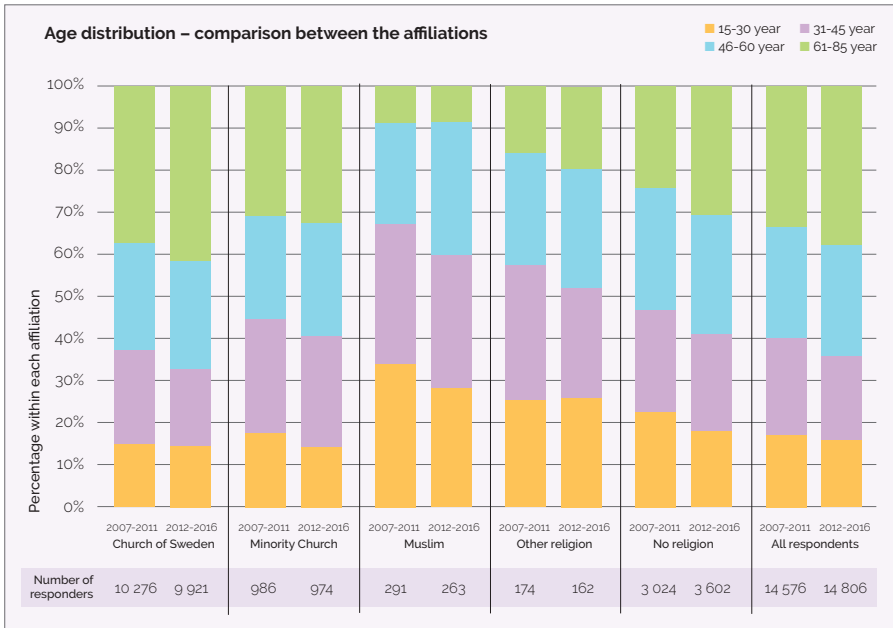


FIGURE 11. Age categories. Religious affiliations over time (2007-2011 and 2012-2016)

Comment: the respondents to the SOM-surveys were divided into four age brackets: 15-30, 31-45, 46-60 and 61-85 years of age. Changes over time within each religious affiliation showed a significant bias toward an older membership cadre for the Church of Sweden and older affiliated within the group with no religious affiliation: Church of Sweden $\chi^2(3, n=20145) = 68.36, p < .00$ and no religious affiliation $\chi^2(3, n=6626) = 42.09, p < .00$. The other groups did not show significant age changes, which can imply that current age distribution is maintained: minority church $\chi^2(3, n=1895) = 4.79, p = .19$, Muslim affiliation $\chi^2(3, n=554) = 2.44, p = .22$ and other religious affiliation $\chi^2(3, n=336) = 1.89, p = .59$.

Source: Religion Data 2007-2016 based on the SOM-surveys

The churches have the oldest affiliated people, particularly the Church of Sweden where almost four out of ten are over 60 years old. This can be compared to those with Muslim affiliations, a group in which one out of ten is over 60 years old.

Even though the SOM-surveys arguably are of high quality, one source of bias is the large number of elderly who have completed the survey. The response pattern of the older age groups may have contributed to this age group being the most common in most of the affiliations. The only exception to this observation is people with Muslim affiliation.

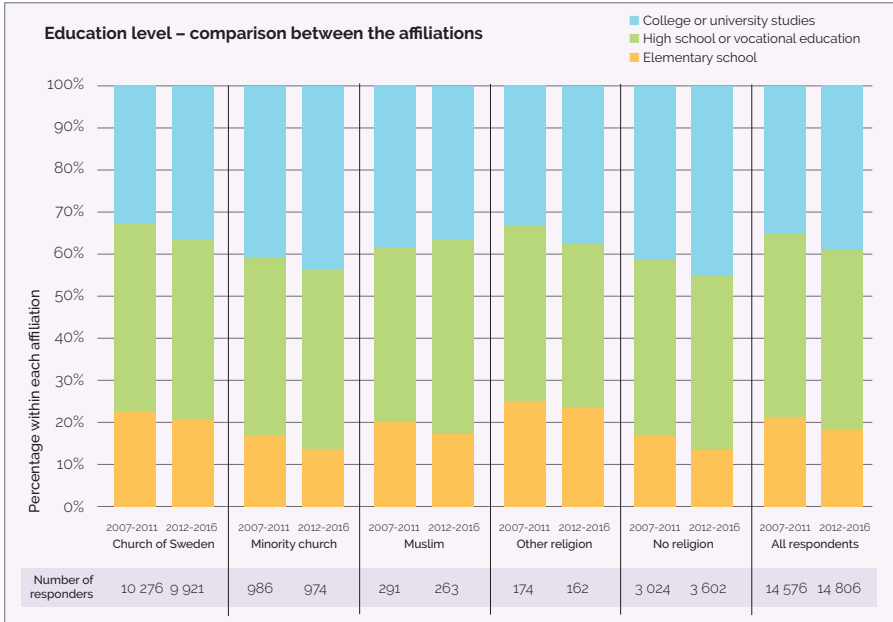


FIGURE 12. Education up to high school level and college level, across religious affiliation and time (2007-2011, 2012-2106).

Comment: The SOM-survey respondents were divided into three groups according to their highest completed education: elementary school, high school or vocational training and college or university education. The education levels have changed in a statistically significant way for the Church of Sweden ($\chi^2(2, n=19752) = 41.56, p < .00$) and for those that have no religious affiliation ($\chi^2(2, n=6497) = 15.89, p < .00$). In the remaining groups, education did not change in statistically significant way and current education levels can thus be expected to be maintained. Minority church $\chi^2(2, n=1849) = 4.28, p = .12$, Muslim affiliation $\chi^2(2, n=529) = 1.26, p = .53$ and other religious affiliation $\chi^2(2, n=326) = 0.57, p = .75$.

Source: Religion data 2007-2016 based on the SOM-surveys.

Education and Religious Affiliation

Is there a connection between lack of religious affiliation and higher education? Previous research has suggested this, but is this true also when it comes to the analysis of the current situation in Sweden? The main characteristics of the results regarding education can be described in the following way: among the minority church groups and those without religious affiliation, comparatively few people have only a basic education. The group of people with religious affiliations that are neither Christian or Muslim was the one where most of the respondents only have basic education. Within the

Gábor Sebestyén

Chairman of the council of the Hungarian Protestant Congress in Sweden

Which activities are most important to you?

The most important thing is our services, but also other congregation services such as funerals, baptisms, weddings and confirmations. It is also important to meet wishes regarding pastoral care at the end of life, for the severely ill or after a big trauma.

What do you see as the greatest challenge today?

The biggest challenge for us is that the only employed priest has to keep at least one service each month in the 13 small congregations we have across Sweden.

What changes do you see among the members in the past few years?

A general change is the age of the members. Members that regularly participate in Church activities are becoming older and older. The average age is rather stable, but the influx of youth to our religious activities is not satisfactory. The younger generation does not regard religion as something that is important to their lives.



Cristina Grenholm

Church Secretary, the National Secretariat of the Church of Sweden

Who is your faith community for?

The Church of Sweden is a church for the people. Our congregations are both for those who are registered as members but also for anyone who resides in the area of the local parish. We exist across the whole country.

Which activities are most important to you?

We see religious service, education, services and missions as the fundamental tasks of the congregation.

What changes do you see among the members in the past few years?

We can affirm that there are obvious tendencies where we increasingly are becoming a middle-class church, with problems keeping members among people who are in socially exposed situations. Activities that aim to be there for those in need are increasing. At the same time, we can affirm that the Church of Sweden is the faith community that has the most numerous (not the largest share of) people with immigration background and that quite a few new arrivals become members in the Church of Sweden. Finally, we also see a tendency where our members have increasing needs to be able to express and live their Christian faith in new ways. As the share of members of the population decreases, the affiliation with the Church of Sweden becomes more like people's actual identities. We see this as a contributing factor to the increasing voluntary engagement.



groups that are affiliated with the Church of Sweden or has a Muslim affiliation, two out of ten has only elementary school level education. These groups are in between the other groups.

College education is relatively common in the group that has no religious affiliation. This is in line with earlier research. But to have a college education is also relatively common in the group that belong to a minority church. Among those with a Muslim affiliation, it is somewhat more common to have a college education than among members of the Church of Sweden, but the difference is small. The same goes for the group without either a Muslim or Christian affiliation: the smallest share of college educated exists, but the differences to the Church of Sweden and the Muslim group are very small.

It has nonetheless become more common over time that those that reply to the SOM-surveys have higher levels of education. The general increase of the share with a college degree is due to more people educating themselves in Sweden. The increase visible in the SOM-data can thus at least partially be said to reflect a real increase in the overall educational level in the country.

Income and Religious Affiliation

There are few earlier studies focused on the relationships between religious affiliation and income levels. When income has been analyzed in relationship to religiousness, it has often been as a part of a more complex and interconnected phenomenon such as existential security. One example of this is the cultural map developed and produced by Ronald Inglehart. Inglehart supposes that in countries with high GNP and expansive welfare, fewer citizens practice religion than in countries with tougher economic circumstances.⁴² Even though studies of the kind Inglehart conducted are based on general measurements for a country, the line of argument can work as an entryway to the analysis of income differences between religious affiliations. In this report, this line of reasoning could be translated into an expectation that those without religious affiliation also having the highest income levels.

There are two more concrete reasons that those with no religious affiliation would have higher incomes than those with religious affiliations. Ever since people started to leave the Church of Sweden, those with higher incomes have been more prone to leave the church. Even if those that leave the Church of Sweden also motivate their exit in other ways, the tendency of high earners leaving at a higher rate than low income ear-

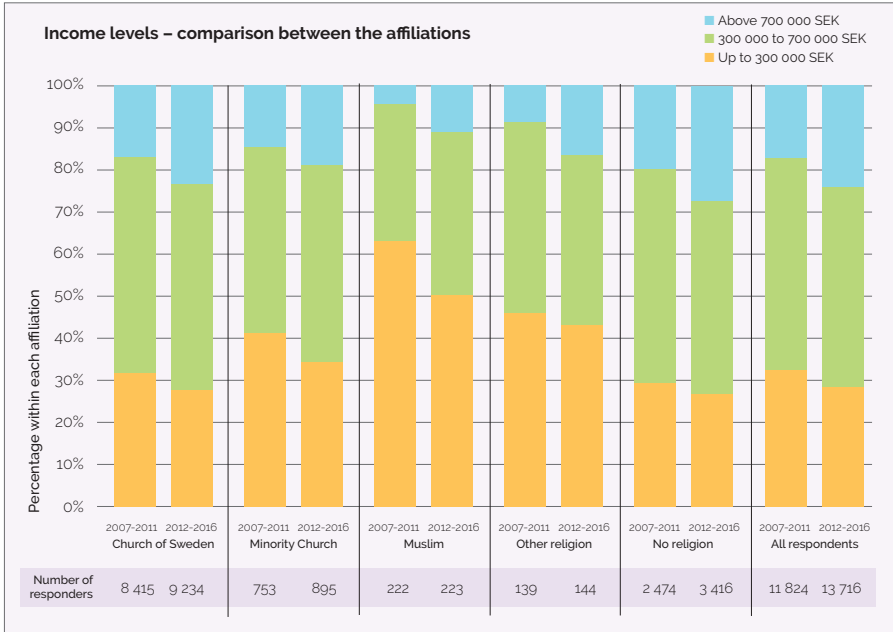


FIGURE 13. Household income across religious affiliation and time (2007-2011, 2012-2016)

Comment: the division into three income brackets is based on replies from the survey question "What is the approximate combined yearly income in SEK for all people in your household before taxes (retirement, study aid etc. should be counted)". Three income brackets have been used: 300,000 SEK or less, 300,000 to 700,000 SEK and 700,000 SEK or more. The changes are significant for all groups except the group with other religious affiliation: Church of Sweden $\chi^2(2, n=17649) = 118.87, p = < .00$, minority church $\chi^2(2, n=1648) = 10.33, p = .01$, Muslim affiliation $\chi^2(2, n=445) = 10.78, p = .01$, other religious affiliation $\chi^2(2, n=283) = 4.15, p = .13$, no religious affiliation $\chi^2(2, n=5890) = 46.84, p = < .00$.

Source: Religion Data 2007-2016 based on the SOM-surveys.

ners contributes to those without religion being expected to earn more than those with a religious affiliation.⁴³

Another reason for those with a religious affiliation making less money may be discrimination. Religion is a noted cause of discrimination at Swedish workplaces.⁴⁴ Investigations have shown that religious expressions (such as wearing certain clothing or jewelry) has led to conflicts. Whether or not the conflict-filled presence of religion in the workplace also expresses itself in the way that those with a religious affiliation makes less money than those without a religious affiliation, has not yet been investigated. Combined, these two reasons could contribute to those that have a religious affiliation also having a lower income level.

Aside from this, there could be reason to direct attention to the fact that Muslim or religious affiliations that are neither Christian or Muslim are more common among people that have migrated to Sweden. Swedes born abroad generally have lower income than Swedes born in Sweden, for several reasons, but one of them has to do with being established on the labor market.

The analysis reported here contains three income categories: household incomes under 300,000 SEK per year, 300,001 to 700,000 SEK per year, or 700,000 SEK per year and up. The bracket under 300,000 is considered low income, while 300,001 to 700,000 is described as middle income and above 700,000 is considered high income.

The high earners among those with no religious affiliation have also increased in the five-year period between 2007 and 2011 and 2012 and 2016. The second largest share of high earners are among those that are affiliated with the Church of Sweden. This means that the high earners are fewer within the religious minorities – particularly small is the share of high earners among those that claim a Muslim affiliation (see figure 13).

An income pattern becomes even more visible if the shares that have low incomes are highlighted. The largest share of low earners is found among the religious minorities, in particular among those with Muslim affiliation. Every other person with Muslim affiliation claims that their household earns less than 300,000 SEK per year. It should be noted that the figures concern the income of the household and that the analysis does not check in on how many people that are a part of the household, nor how many people in the household has an income.

Analyzing income over time in fixed categories composed of exact monetary figures has its advantages – it is a clear-cut measurement that easily can relate to an experienced everyday reality. The analysis however does not account for salary increases or general inflation. Generally, it can be noted that those that have replied to the SOM-surveys claim that they make more money in 2012-2016 compared to 2007-2011. This general increase among the respondents should be noted when results regarding differences between religious affiliations are interpreted and put in their proper contexts.

Gender, Age, Income and Education: New Premises of Diversity?

In this chapter, the analysis of religious diversity was deepened. Focus rested on the distribution of women and men, age groups and on education. The chapter also dealt with income differences.

When differences between the various religious affiliations are considered, it is clear

that more women than men have Christian religious affiliations. Among those with a Muslim affiliation or an affiliation that is neither Christian or Muslim, the distribution between women and men is more comparable. This means that the claim that women more often have a religious affiliation than men can be specified as women more often having a Christian affiliation than men. The men that participated in the surveys are more often without religious affiliation, compared to the women.

Similar comments can be made about age. Most of those with Christian affiliations are over 45 years old and relatively few of the Christians say that they are between 15 and 30 years old. Among those with Muslim affiliation or religious affiliations that neither is Muslim nor Christian, the younger generations are a far larger share of the affiliated. Claims that society gradually is becoming less religious through the process of attrition where generations with a clear religious affiliation is replaced by younger generations without such affiliations should therefore perhaps be clarified as being specific to the Christian religious affiliations.

The patterns regarding education and income show two tendencies. On one hand, those that are affiliated with minority religions (Christian, Muslim, or neither Christian or Muslim) relatively more often have a college education. Those with Muslim affiliation or affiliations that is neither Muslim or Christian also relatively often only have elementary education. On the other hand, the educational levels do not seem to be reflected in the combined incomes of the households. Primarily, many of those with Muslim affiliation have low incomes. Does this mean that the minority religions have a high cultural capital (education) but lower financial capital? Or is the financial fall-out a result of single households among the minority religions, or due to only one person in a family is working? It would be gainful to put further research toward the divided tendencies regarding education and income.

Among those that have no religious affiliation, it is more common to be a man, middle-aged, with high education and a relatively high income. The share with an annual income over 700,000 SEK within this group has increased over time. Going deeper into what these premises mean for the status of the non-religious affiliations in Swedish society is outside the scope of this report, but the results do encourage further research on the topic.

6

Religious Affiliation and Social Cohesion

This chapter deals with issues regarding religion and social cohesion. The main focus is: in what way can religion be said to contribute to the cohesion of Swedish society? Two perspectives of social cohesion is explored to answer this question: inter-personal trust and feelings of affinity with someone perceived to be culturally or religiously different.

THE CONDITIONS FOR A DIVERSE SOCIETY have changed in a noticeable way in Sweden. When looking back, particularly at the period 1500-1700, unity in religion was regarded as a prerequisite for social cohesion. At that time, laws and regulations did not differentiate between religious and national affiliation. Today, the relationship between religions and social cohesion look different.

The change can be understood in terms of the philosopher Charles Taylor's, ideas regarding 'secular age'.⁴⁵ A turn towards a 'secular age' implies a shift from one religion being a guarantee of cohesion, to several religions together contributing to this cohesive development. According to Taylor, we live in a time when we are conscious of the fact that others believe and practice religion in ways that differ from our own. This way of perceiving the world around us is different from how it was in the past when unity in religion was the ideal. When start by seeing the diversity in the way that Taylor describes, social cohesion postulates that groups of different religions are recognized and seen as a part of society.

What is then required to achieve social cohesion? A prerequisite is trust.⁴⁶ Trust is required on a general and inter-personal level. In order for the trust to stimulate cohesion it cannot merely include our closest ones (family, extended family, neighbors), or those that one feels are similar to oneself.⁴⁷ Trust risks becoming an empty word, if it does not have practical consequences in everyday lives. This is why it is important that trust also exists in-between individuals that feel that they are different from one another. In

the context discussed here, this means that there is a feeling of cohesion between for example religious groups, ethnic groups, age groups, etc.⁴⁸

In international contexts, Sweden is renowned as a country with high levels of trust. This is often seen as an important resource. The Nordic Council of Ministers even talks about the inter-personal trust as “the Nordic Gold” and highlights its significance for the high standards of living in the region.⁴⁹ At the same time, critics in the research community focused on social cohesion studies have pointed out that this trust does not necessarily encompass everyone that lives here, but rather primarily encompass those that are perceived as belonging to the majority population. The concept of trust in Sweden, according to these researchers, comes with “strings attached” that excludes certain parts of the population such as ethnic and religious minorities.⁵⁰ The idea that trust comes with strings attached is not researched to the same extent as the levels of general inter-personal trust. Since general inter-personal trust is a relevant aspect of social cohesion and seldom studied from the perspective of religion, this chapter will begin with an analysis of interpersonal trust. The chapter ends with an analysis of feelings of affinity with someone perceived to differ from oneself, culturally or religiously.

Religious Affiliation and inter-personal trust in Sweden

As previously mentioned, Sweden can be described as a country where many people feel a high level of general trust.⁵¹ Not all groups, however, display the same levels of trust. There are, for example, differences between those with low education and high education. Also, those with a safe upbringing with middle class parents seem to become more trusting as adults than people with less fortunate experiences during childhood.

Previous research has also found that those with a political conviction – no matter if they lean towards the left or right – express higher degrees of interpersonal trust than those that are not as convinced. This is noteworthy because there are substantial differences in trust between voters of different political parties. Specifically, supporters of the Sweden Democrats have lower trust levels than other party supporters, according to earlier research.⁵²

Previous studies concerning which groups that tend to have high versus low trust levels do not as a rule encompass religion. The exceptions to this observation are surveys that have paid attention to single aspects of religious practices, such as prayer habit, that have found that these aspects are secondary for trust compared to, for example, education.⁵³

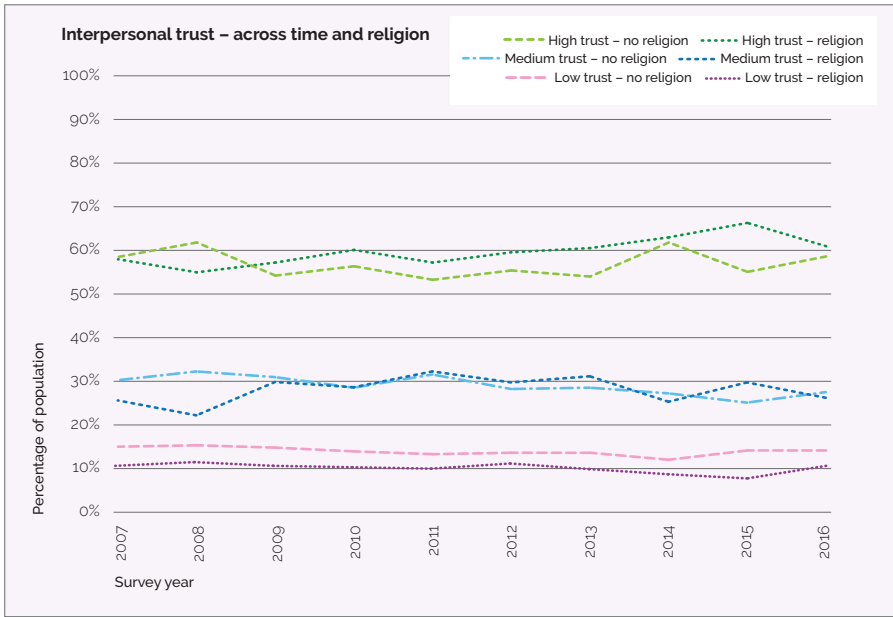


FIGURE 14. Feelings of general trust across time. Low, middle and high trust compared between those with no religious affiliation compared to those that have at least one religious affiliation.

Comment: The survey question regarding interpersonal trust to other people is, "According to you, to what extent is it possible to trust people in general?" The reply alternatives run from "0" – "It is not possible to trust people in general" to "10" – "It is possible to trust people in general". The survey question thus has 11 reply alternatives (0-10). These have been subdivided as follows: 0-3 low trust, 4-6 medium trust, 7-10 high trust.

Source: Religion data 2007-2016 based on the SOM-surveys.

Similarly to what was shown in chapter 4 of this book, the prayer habits and propensities to participate in congregation activities differ between different religious groups. Thus, it is relevant to test if different religious affiliations contributes in a comparable way to inter-personal trust. For this analysis to be comparable to previous analyses, the levels of trust are shown as belonging to three different categories: high, medium and low trust.

When the categories high, medium and low were used in previous surveys, close to 60 percent of the Swedish population reply in a way that indicate high levels of trust. 30 percent respond in ways that place them in the medium group. Around ten percent reply that they have low levels of trust. Even though trust levels have varied somewhat during the past decades, they have largely maintained this distribution.⁵⁴

Patterns comparable with previous research become observable when trust is analyzed with religious affiliation as a comparative (see figure 14). Around 60 percent of both those that lack religious affiliation and those that have an affiliation can be said to have high level of trust and around thirty percent belong to the medium group. There is however a tendency in both these groups: those with a religious affiliation are somewhat overrepresented in the groups displaying medium and high levels of trust.

Accordingly, those with a religious affiliation are to a certain degree absent from the group with a low level of inter-personal trust. Those with low trust levels tend to therefore be without religious affiliation. Correspondingly, it is more unusual that a person with a religious affiliation expresses low levels of trust. The distance between those that are affiliated with a religion and those that do not is constant and it does neither increase nor decrease over time. Possibly, religious affiliation could work as protection against low levels of trust, even though it cannot explain high trust levels.

In conclusion, the results can be explained in the following way: relationships between religious affiliation and inter-personal trust is most obvious among the group with low levels of trust. Within this group, it is more common to be without religious affiliation. The groups with high and medium levels of trust encompasses somewhat larger shares that have a religious affiliation. Based on this introductory analysis, it is not possible to determine if the differences are real in a statistical sense.

Inter-personal Trust Among Different Religious Groups

These results makes it interesting to ask the question if all religious affiliations⁵⁵ are signified by the affiliated having a comparatively high trust in people in general. When religious affiliations are compared, it quickly becomes clear that those with connections to the Church of Sweden have the lowest levels of low trust (see figure 15). The smallest group with low trust is found among those who have an affiliation to the Church of Sweden and a minority church (9 percent of the dually affiliated can be counted as having low levels of trust). Historically, it has been primarily members of the Free churches (such as the Equmenia Church and the Pentecostal Church) that have remained members of the Uniting Church.⁵⁶ The second smallest group with low levels of trust are those that only belong to the Church of Sweden. Some 10 percent of those that belong to this church have low levels of trust.

Among those that only belong to a minority church, the share of people with low levels of trust is 13 percent, which is above the national average of 11 percent. This group

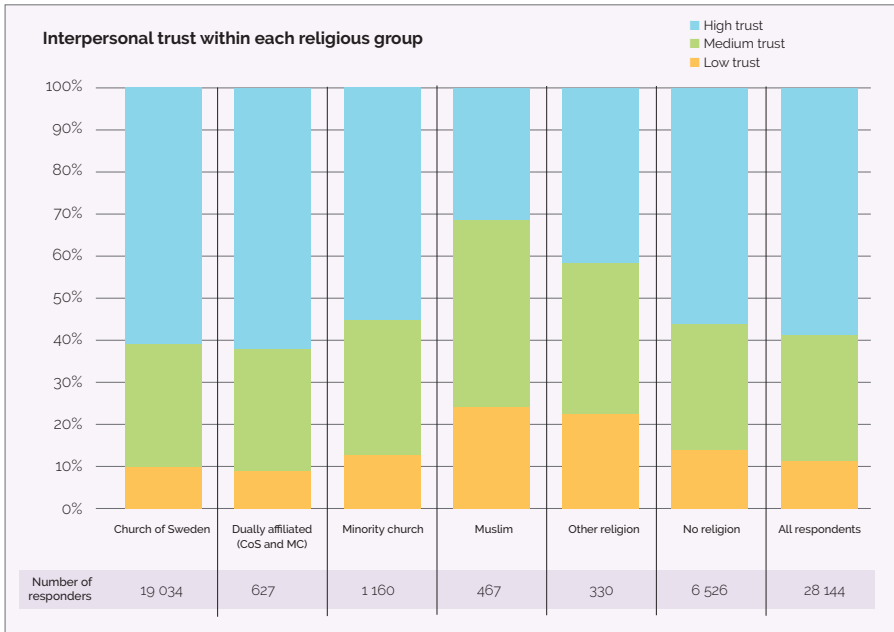


FIGURE 15. Feelings of general trust across affiliation.

Comment: The survey question regarding trust in other people was, “According to you, to what extent is it possible to trust people in general?” The response alternatives run from “0”= “It is not possible to trust people in general” to “10”= “It is possible to trust people in general” The presentation of differences between the religious affiliations follow the previously mentioned categories low trust, medium trust and high trust. In addition to the simple, descriptive comparison presented above, two analyses of means were done to statistically test the differences between religious affiliations. The analysis (one way anova) showed significant differences between religious affiliations: $F(5, 28138) = 67.23, p = .0001$. Affiliated with the Church of Sweden ($M = 6.59, SD = 2.17$) were markedly different from those that only are affiliated with a minority church ($M = 6.33, SD = 2.31$), have Muslim affiliation ($M = 5.11, SD = 2.42$), are affiliated with a religion that is neither Muslim or Christian ($M = 5.52, SD = 2.69$) and those that are not affiliated with any religion ($M = 6.31, SD = 2.37$); but not from those that both are affiliated with the Church of Sweden and a minority church and are dually affiliated ($M = 6.72, SD = 2.22$). In a comparable way, people with Muslim affiliation differ from those that are affiliated with the Church of Sweden, the dually affiliated, those that only are affiliated with a minority church and those that have no religious affiliation. Individuals with Muslim affiliation replied in ways that are similar to those with another religious affiliation. Finally, people not affiliated with any religion replied in a way that corresponds with those that only are affiliated to a minority church. A consequence of some mean differences being small was that the effect size was small.

Source: Religion data 2007-2016 based on the SOM-surveys

responds in a way that is similar to those that have no religious affiliation. Among those that have replied that they have no religious affiliation, 14 percent count as having low levels of trust.

Among the other two minority groups, the share of low trust levels is larger. In the

group that has a religion that is neither Christian nor Muslim, 22 percent express skepticism towards the idea of general inter-personal trust and among the group with Muslim affiliation, 24 percent reply in a way that here can be described as low trust. The minority groups without any connection to Christianity express more skepticism to the idea that people generally are trustworthy.

The differences in trust between the compared affiliations are large enough to constitute real differences in a statistical sense. An exploration of what pattern of answers contributes to the statistical robustness showed that the low trust levels are a contributing factor. This means that even if general religious affiliation appears to counter low trust levels (figure 14), there are large differences between the separate religious affiliations.

There are also differences between those who express high trust levels. The largest share with high trust levels are found among the dually affiliated (62 percent of the dually affiliated reply that they feel a generally high inter-personal trust). The group consisting of members in the Church of Sweden answered in a way that resembles the dually affiliated. Within the group that only are affiliated to a minority church, the trust levels are also high, with 55 percent replying that they feel high levels of trust. Those that belong to a minority church answer in ways that are very close to the group with no religious affiliation, where 56 percent respond that they feel high levels of trust.

In contrast to the groups that are affiliated with the Church of Sweden, dually affiliated, affiliated to a minority church and with no religious affiliation, it is considerably less common to feel high levels of trust if affiliated with a religion that is neither Christian or Muslim, or have a Muslim affiliation. In the group affiliated with a religion that is neither Muslim or Christian, 42 percent state that they feel high levels of trust. In the group with Muslim affiliation, 32 percent claim high levels of trust. The differences between the affiliation groups are also real in a statistical sense.

Thus, it can be stated that it is possible that religious affiliation counteracts low feelings of inter-personal trust, without it contributing to high levels of trust. There are however real differences between the religious affiliations. Those with a connection to the majority religion have higher degrees of inter-personal trust than those that belong to religions connected to minorities in Sweden. Those with minority connections are few enough that their replies to questions regarding inter-personal trust are not visible when religious affiliation is analyzed as a general category.



FIGURE 16. Feelings of general trust across affiliation and level of education.

Comment: The differences in interpersonal trust between religious affiliations were tested using a two-way anova. The analytic method enabled regard being given to educational levels. The results showed that there were significant interaction effects (meaning college educated within all religious affiliations expressed higher trust than elementary educated): $F(10, 27609) = 3.35, p < .0001$. Despite the interaction effects, there were significant differences both between religious affiliations $F(5, 27609) = 71.51, p < .001$ and between education levels, $F(2, 27609) = 88.14, p < .001$. Figure 16 show the mean values of the religious affiliations for general trust with regard to differences in education levels.

Source: Religion data 2007-2016 based on the SOM-surveys

Trust, Religious Affiliation and Education

Education, class and country of origin were mentioned before as factors explaining differences in inter-personal trust.⁵⁷ Education levels do however not differ particularly in between religious affiliations. Moreover, the religious affiliations with the lowest levels of trust are not the ones with the lowest levels of education.

Because of these circumstances, an analysis was made to check whether the influence of religious affiliation is explainable given the education levels of the respondents. This analysis showed that education certainly affects all religious affiliations, but that the

differences between the groups remain even when education is considered. Figure 16 illustrates that within all religious affiliations, the feeling of general trust increases with education, at the same time as the differences between religious affiliations remain.

The results shown in figure 15 (which showed that the Christian groups express larger inter-personal trust than the non-Christian groups) also remains when the analysis considers different educational levels. This necessitates the question: why? Do the Christian groups feel more trust in everyone, or does the trust level primarily encompass those that are considered similar to themselves? Is the trust among the Christians dependent on current minority/majority circumstances?

Feelings of Affinity and Religious Affiliation

It has been suggested that the high level of inter-personal trust excludes trust in people that are perceived as being religiously different.⁵⁸ The relevance of this suggestion is supported by the finding that the share of the population in general who claim that people with different religions are not trustworthy has increased. This could mean that the inter-personal trust comes with terms attached and is not generalized.

Even if there are reasons to believe that the high general trust level in Sweden exclude groups of stigmatized religious affiliations, there are no previously tested ways to discover the impact of religious affiliations on those that are considered "us" and those that are perceived as belonging to "the others". One reason for this is that such processes primarily have been explored in communications aided by textual analysis. Research have also been based on experiments and these have not led to the creation of standardized survey questions. To undertake research with the aid of surveys thus becomes an exploratory mission.

The SOM-surveys of 2015 and 2016 posed questions regarding feelings of affinity. They carried the survey question "To what extent do you feel affinity with the following groups in Swedish society?" Two possible multiple-choice answers were "people that have a completely different *religion* than me" and "people that come from a completely different *culture* than me" (the italics were made by the author of this report). The response alternatives could be stated in a range from "no affinity" (=1) to great affinity (=4).

The replies to these questions correlated with each other in a way that can be judged as of medium strength.⁵⁹ The replies were thus supposed to capture aspects of a larger phenomenon that together compensates for the tendency of religion to be understood

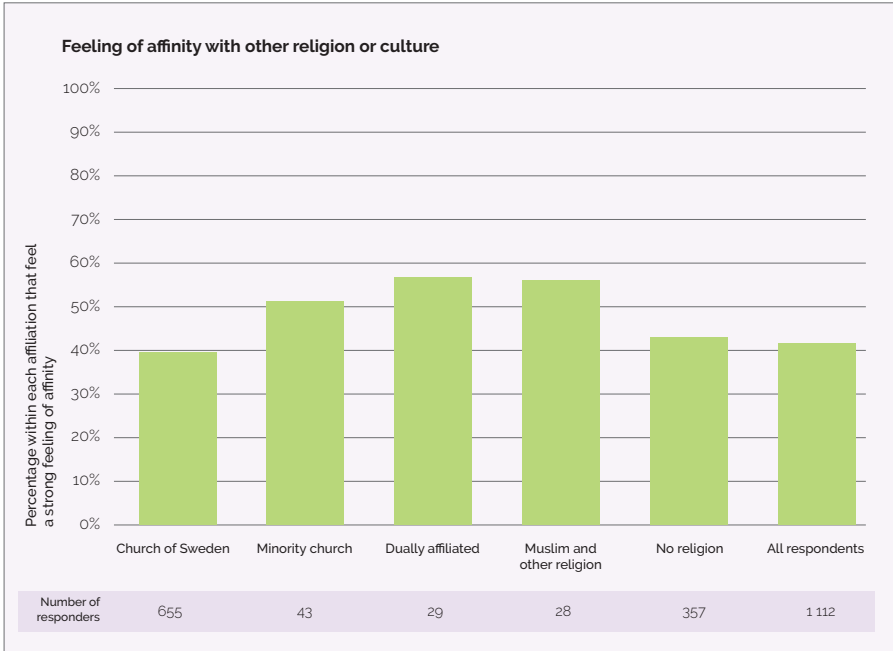


FIGURE 17. High levels of affinity with someone the respondent judge has another religion or culture than themselves.

Comment: The statistic is based on those that replied to the survey question, “to what extent do you feel affinity with the following groups in society?” with the reply options being “People that come from a completely different culture than me” and “people that have a completely different religion than me” in a way that gives them a value of 4, 5 or 6 on a scale from 0 to 6.

Source: the SOM-surveys of 2015 & 2016.

as culture and culture as religion. Hence, the replies were summed up on a common scale, ranging from no affinity (=0) to strong feeling of affinity (=6) with people from another religion, or with people from another culture than oneself. The scale was utilized to help explore differences in feelings of affinity between the religious affiliations.

As previously mentioned, the survey questions regarding affinity were first asked in the SOM-surveys of 2015 and 2016 and because of this, considerably fewer respondents have had the possibility to respond to these questions compared to the survey questions regarding inter-personal trust. Because this report does not present results based on less than ten replies, the results for the Muslim affiliation has been combined with those that have replied that they have a religion that is neither Muslim nor Christi-

Rainer Refsbäck

Executive Secretary of the Seventh-day Adventist Church

Who is your faith community for?

For our members and for the Swedish public, who needs to be reached by the knowledge of salvation in Jesus Christ, who has promised to return to Earth soon.

Have the conditions for operating in Sweden changed during the last ten years?

At the same time as we during the past 20-30 years have been living in an increasingly pluralist society which is ever more permissive when it comes to religious differences, intolerance toward the Christian faith and conviction is increasing. During the past 10 years, this has perhaps been most obvious in the debate about free schools, but also the refugee situation since 2015 and the ignorant attitude from the authorities when it comes to converts to christianity.

What changes do you see among the members in the past few years?

For better or worse, our members are affected by the toughening political climate and discourse, particularly when it comes to immigration issues. Perhaps not only through what happens in Sweden, but also around the world. The good thing is that many are thinking about, reacting and acting more clearly against intolerance. The worse thing is that a lot of the negative rhetoric is perceived as a defense of traditional Christian values.



Isak Reichel

General Secretary, the Jewish Congregation in Stockholm

Who is your faith community for?

Primarily for our 4,300 members, but also for other Jews and for an interested public.

Which activities are most important to you?

Education, social, cultural, child and youth activities and religious activities.

What do you see as the greatest challenge today?

A strained security situation forces us to put a lot of resources toward security issues. Also, that activities must be cancelled due to a lack of security resources.

Have the conditions for organizing activities in Sweden changed during the last ten years?

Our security situation has worsened during the past ten years which has meant that we have been forced to put ever more resources toward security.

What changes do you see among the members in the past few years?

Here in Stockholm we have seen an increased influx of members from Malmö during the past ten years. The number of members is relatively constant.



an. This new category can be viewed as a catch-all for people affiliated with non-Christian minority religions. The new division is used to illustrate differences in feelings of affinity in a way that disables the possibility to identify any individual respondent. Because the data sample is smaller, answers by those who expressed a strong feeling of affinity with people that they feel have a different culture or religion than themselves, are presented. The results showed the following pattern: the greatest affinity with others was felt among those with dual affiliations and those that belong to a minority that is not Christian. Among the dually affiliated, 57 percent stated that they feel a high degree of affinity and among those with a minority affiliation the corresponding reply frequency was 56 percent. Close behind followed those that are affiliated with a minority church (51 percent of respondents). Among these three forms of minority religions, more than every other person feels strong affinity with people that have another religion or culture than themselves.

Among those that only are affiliated with the Church of Sweden or that have replied that they have no religious affiliation, more people feel distance than affinity. Those that do not have a religious affiliation answer in a way similar to the national average (43 percent reply that they feel a high degree of affinity compared to the national average of 42 percent). Those affiliated with the Church of Sweden reply in a way that places them slightly shy of the national average – 40 percent of those that are only affiliated with the Church of Sweden reply that they feel a high degree of affinity with people of other religion/culture.

In conclusion, feelings of affinity with others (minorities and majorities) are more common among the minorities than among people that are affiliated with the dominant cultural and religious tradition.

New links between Religion and Social Cohesion?

Historically, a uniform religion was regarded as a fundament for social cohesion in Sweden. In the society of the 17th and 19th centuries, it was assumed that those that live in Sweden share religious convictions and that this was the foundation for harmony in society. Since then, times have changed. Freedom of religion has increased and the Church of Sweden now has a more independent relationship with the government. Many of Sweden's residents regard religion as something that belongs to the past and they feel that it is unnecessary to share a faith to achieve social cohesion. At the same time, social cohesion may actually be founded on the fact that this is a country where

people see themselves as unreligious. But if this is true, how are those that see themselves as religious allowed space in the community?

This chapter discussed two aspects of social cohesion: inter-personal trust and feelings of affinity. It was shown that religious affiliation contributes to countering low levels of inter-human trust, but also that this contribution is not evenly distributed among the religious affiliations. Christians contribute to general trust to a higher degree than affiliations associated with non-Christian minority religions. The differences between religiously affiliated were shown to be real even when the analysis considered education levels.

Differences in general inter-personal trust also appear to track alongside the border between religions associated to Christianity and minority religions with no connection to Christianity. This result motivated an analysis of social cohesion based on processes of categorizing groups as belonging to “us”, or to “the others”. It was suggested that the high levels of inter-personal trust could consist of principal standpoints and do not actually include all religious affiliations.

The analysis of the feelings of affinity showed (in contrast to the trust analysis) that those who feel a high degree of affinity are associated with minority religions, Christian as well as non-Christian. This analysis is based on a new way of investigating feelings of affinity and this should be considered when conclusions are drawn from the results. The results indicate that minorities are more inclusive regarding who they see as “us” compared to among those that belong to the majority.

Those with Christian affiliations thus express higher levels of trust in people in general, but lower affinity with others that are not Christians. At the same time, those with a minority affiliation that is non-Christian express a greater feeling of affinity with the perceived “other”, but a lower degree of trust to people in general. Those that are not affiliated to any religion at all express affinity to an extent that lies in between the levels of the religious minorities and the religious majority. These results awaken questions regarding present and historical majority and minority conditions and how they impact the contributions of religion to social cohesion. Another set of questions these results addresses are the impact of religious teachings. What roles do teachings play for the feelings of affinity?

7 New Landmarks with a New Map: Closing Reflections

This chapter highlights landmarks in the religious landscape that have become visible through the analyses presented in the report. The chapter describes the important main results and discusses what they may imply for a deepened understanding of religion's roles in a diverse society.

WHAT IS LASTING AND WHAT IS NEW in the religious landscape? The aim of this report is to sketch a current, relevant map of the religious landscape. The first chapter motivated this aim by stating that the premises of diversity have changed dramatically, but that it is uncertain if the scope of diversity have changed in a corresponding way. This closing chapter begins with a summary of the scope of diversity and ends with a discussion around the meaning of the current scope of diversity.

Changes in the Religious Landscape

There is an established idea in Sweden today that religiosity has undergone a sharp decline during the past few decades. The conclusions of this report only lend some credence to this notion. One is that since the turn of the millennium the share of the population affiliated with the Church of Sweden has decreased. At the turn of the millennium, 83 percent of the population were members of the Church of Sweden. At the end of 2016, only 60 percent of the population were members. The individuals that have left the Church of Sweden have as a general rule not joined any new church or congregation and now stand without religious affiliation. One out of four people in Sweden can therefore be thought of as secular in the sense that they have no religious affiliation.

Another major change is that fewer people participate in religious services and pray to God. During a period of 30 years, those that state that they never participate in religious services has increased from every other one, to seven out of ten people residing in Sweden. In a corresponding way, those that claim that they never pray to God have

increased, from 50 to 60 percent of the population. This means that less than half of the population have current personal experiences of religious practice. When most people in Sweden talk about religious practice, they are talking about someone else's religious practice. This can be religious practices that someone close or familiar to them have talked about, or religious practices they have heard about (for example in school), or taken part of via media, research, or culture. This development can feasibly make the conditions for religious practice particularly sensitive to stories, ideas, or prejudices regarding what religious practice actually means.

Constancy in the Religious Landscape

In contrast to the substantial change in the number of people that are unaffiliated and do not participate or pray, those that regularly participate in religious services may be described to be constant. 30 years ago, around five percent of the population participated in religious services regularly each week and that share is the same size today. This was an expected result. Approximately five percent of the population has regularly participated in religious services, all the way dating back to the beginning of the 20th century (so the trend has thus been stable for more than 100 years). Viewed in the light of the ever-growing majority that claim to never participate in religious services, those that participate regularly may come to be seen as more different or even deviant, as many people now lack experience of what happens in church on Sunday, or in the mosque on Friday for that matter.

It may come as a surprise that the share of the population that participates in religious services today resembles the share that did so 30 years ago. This goes against the grain of general perceptions regarding the substantial decline of religiosity. The results of the report also show that the groups that are affiliated with a minority church, have Muslim affiliation, or an affiliation that is neither Christian or Muslim, remain stable over the past ten-year period. The group belonging to religious minorities have as a result neither increased or decreased in relation to the population. Christian minorities encompass about eight percent of the population, the Muslims just short of two percent and those with neither Christian or Muslim affiliation also just shy of two percent. The found stability goes against the idea that diversity has increased in numbers as an effect of migration to Sweden.

The stable minority attending religious services is not only observable in Sweden. Similar patterns can be found in the whole Nordic region and it can be explained by a

shared history including a state church system and a Lutheran church tradition. The habits of sometimes participating in religious services yet remain a member of the majority church can therefore be regarded as a Nordic expression of the religiosity.

That the minorities outside the Church of Sweden are not increasing, even though there is considerable migration, is not as easy to explain when looking at earlier research. Reasons for this may include that survey pollsters fail to receive replies from people that do not speak Swedish or do not have a fixed address or contact information. It can also be that religious affiliations are withheld in contexts where very secular or anti-religious norms are expressed

A Minority Without Religious Affiliation

The religious landscape contains diversity, not only on a group level but also on an individual level. The results of this report shows that it (particularly within Christian groups) is common to have several religious affiliations. This overlap stresses the relevance of accounting for individual diversity when aiming to find out how many people stand without a religious affiliation.

When the overlap between religious affiliations is accounted for, it can be concluded that one out of four people in Sweden are without religious affiliation. Considering that Sweden today is the home to approximately ten million people, this amounts to 2.5 million people. This also means that a large majority of those that live in Sweden have formal ties to religion.

Variation in the Religious Landscape

The overlaps that grace the religious landscape becomes meaningful when analyzing differences between religious affiliations. Within the group affiliated with a minority church, for example, seven out of ten visit church activities. Because 35 percent of those that are affiliated with a minority church also are affiliated with the Church of Sweden, the replies from people with affiliations to minority churches contributes to the fact that the visitor statistics of the Church of Sweden have not dropped even more. All described differences and similarities between different religious affiliations need to consider these circumstances.

This overlap necessitates carefulness when interpreting differences between groups, but the following major differences can still be highlighted:

- People affiliated with a minority church participate in church activities at a higher rate than other religious groups. People affiliated with the Church of Sweden, people of Muslim affiliation and those with an affiliation that is neither Muslim or Christian visit activities connected to their respective religions at approximately the same rate (three out of ten within these groups state that they visit organized activities).
- Praying to God and believing in God is more common among those affiliated with a minority church or have a Muslim affiliation, than other groups.
- Women state a religious affiliation more often than men and men more often have a non-religious affiliation than women.
- The Christian faith communities tend to have older members. Particularly in comparison to the group with a Muslim affiliation.
- 50 percent of the persons that state that they have a Muslim affiliation are living in a household that earns less than 300,000 SEK per year. It is a considerably larger group than any other religious affiliation.

Similarities in the Religious Landscape

The overlap between religious affiliations tend to lessen differences at the same time as it promotes similarities. Some of the more noticeable similarities between the religious affiliations are the following:

- Circa three out of ten of those affiliated with the Church of Sweden, a Muslim community, or a religion that is neither Muslim or Christian, participate in activities held by religious organizations.
- 50 percent of those with a Muslim affiliation are women and 50 percent are men.
- There are no significant differences in educational levels between the examined religious affiliations.

Change and Constance, Differences and Similarities: What May the Future Hold?

Fewer people are saying that they have a religious affiliation and this group is growing. Most people in Sweden answer that they do not believe in God or pray to God. This

has led to an increasing number of people lacking an up-to-date personal experience of religious practice.

For future considerations, it may be relevant to highlight the that the Church of Sweden is losing members at the same time as other religious affiliations remain stable in relation to the population over time. Looking ahead, this development implies that the religious affiliations will come to represent more evenly sized groups.

The religious affiliations that neither increase or decrease are characterized by members that believe in God and pray to God. If the religious affiliations become more even in size, this will mean that the landscape will change its characteristics. If the most common expression of the landscape today is to be a member of the Church of Sweden but not participating in the activities held by this church, (and also believing or praying) then the future landscape may come to be characterized by affiliations to various religions where it is common for the affiliated to believe and pray.

Cohesion and the Religious Landscape

Change, constancy, variation and similarity in the religious landscape may all influence to which degree religion has a meaningful bearing on social cohesion. This report used two indicators of social cohesion: inter-personal trust and feelings of affinity for groups that are perceived to belong to another religion or culture than oneself.

The ties between religious affiliation and trust were tried, first generally through a joint measure of religious affiliations compared against a measure of those with no religious affiliation. This comparison showed that it is debatable whether or not religious affiliation contributes to high levels of trust. Instead, it seem as if religious affiliation can function as a form of protection against low levels of trust, but not really explain high levels of trust.

A detailed study of the relations between religious affiliation and social cohesion showed that Christian groups feel a higher level of interpersonal trust, while minority groups feel a higher degree of affinity with others that they gauge are different from themselves. It is possible what these results are pointing towards is that those affiliated with the dominant church feel more interpersonal trust given the current dynamic between majority and minorities. If this is true, interpersonal trust could be understood as principal belief (for example as a commitment to human rights in theory). The results does not necessary mean that the minorities are practically included in the feelings of interpersonal trust.

People affiliated with minority religions, particularly non-Christian minority religions, expressed lower degrees of interpersonal trust than the Christian groups. In return, these minority groups generally expressed an affinity with people and groups that they gauge are different from themselves. Taken as an overall result, minorities seem more inclusive in their attitudes to the world around them. Minorities may as such have a greater understanding and feeling of affinity with majority religious people and what people affiliated with the majority religion feel for the minorities. These results are a contrast to reports regarding single or small groups within minorities that express distance to majority religions or society in general. These minorities within minorities, however noticeable, may be thought of as representing attitudes to the common good that are not representative for the minority groups in general.

Trust and affinity: New Aspects of the Premises of Diversity?

One goal of the results and analyses regarding religious diversity presented here was to sketch a relevant and current map over the religious landscape. Aided by such a map, new light can be shed on the premises of diversity.

As noted in chapter 1, the premises for religious diversity in Sweden have changed in a substantial way. A system where the religion of the king also had to be the people's religion and where national affiliation was interwoven with religious affiliation, has given way to a system where the role of religion for the sake of societal cohesion is something that ranks lower than mutual values among groups.

One foundation for the new system is the principles ensuring freedom of religion. The new premises have enabled a greater level of diversity, where the relatively great endorsement surrounding being without a religion today can be viewed as an expression for a broader spectrum of affiliations.

The new system causes the connection between religions and social cohesion to take on new forms. One religion no longer dictated the terms for societal cohesion. Instead, cohesion must be achieved across religious boundaries, for example through feelings of affinity with those that practice religion in ways that differ from one's own. Such cohesion is common among those that are affiliated with religious minorities in Sweden. This may be a relevant way of contributing to the general level of cohesion.

For this type of interfaith-based social cohesion to gain ground, its active mechanisms need to be studied in greater detail. Does social cohesion depend on what individual religions teach about others? How is this knowledge transferred? Is the teaching

undertaken through participation in organized religion (religious services, devotionals, prayers, or activities)? Or, does the minority and minority roles play into how the others are viewed? Are the groups with high social status recognized, while groups with little influence and lower status are being ignored?

Finding answers to these questions is complicated by the fact that it has become common to abstain from prayer and religious services. Understandings of what it means to pray and participate in religion thus becomes dependent on how the individuals that actually do so are talked about and described. Images based on stories about religion are at risk for uncritical assertiveness. Thus, finding mutual grounds for understanding and respecting one another may become a fragile enterprise.

The new questions that the results presented in this report have helped shed light on may be deepened and clarified through further research. The issues could hopefully also be the basis of immersive conversations regarding religious diversity outside the domains of academic research.

List of References

Author's Preface

- 1 Rules and guidelines for research in the social sciences are gathered by the Swedish Research Council, available on the following webpage on February 22, 2019: <http://www.codex.vr.se/index.shtml>

The Map and the Landscape

- 2 For the discussion regarding the new visibility of religion, see among others Habermas, J (2008) "Notes on PostSecular Society". *New Perspectives Quarterly*. 25(4): 17-29 and Hans Joas (2008) *Do we need Religion? On the Experience of Self-Transcendence*. Boulder, London: Paradigm Publishers. Particularly pages 105-111. In Sweden, the visibility of religion has been discussed by Sigurdson, O (2009) *Det postsekulära tillståndet – religion, modernitet, politik*. Göteborg: Glänta produktion
- 3 The religious affiliations were created from the replies to the survey question: "Are you affiliated to any church, religious community, or religion?" with the reply alternatives being "The Church of Sweden", "Other Christian church/community", "I am a Muslim" and "I am affiliated with another religion that is neither Christian or Muslim". That the survey phrasing both comprise affiliation to churches, organizations and traditions, enables us to define religious affiliation as membership or identification with a religion. The definition of religious affiliation can thus be considered to be broad. The fifth religious affiliation is really an opposite category consisting of those that replied "no" to all four reply alternatives regarding religious affiliation. In shorthand, in figures and tables, this group is called "no religion".
- 4 The perspective that religion is weakening in Sweden is confirmed by international observers such as Norris, P. and R. Inglehart (2004) *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Historical nuances regarding the phenomenon are discussed by among others A. Bäckström (1999) *När tros och värderingsbilder förändras: En analys av nattvårds och husförhörssedens utveckling i Sundsvallsregionen 1805-1890*. Stockholm: Verbum och mer samtida inställning till religion av Thurfjell, D (2015) *Det gudlösa folket: De postkristna och religionen*. Stockholm: Molin & Sorgenfrei. A discussion regarding how the surveys that has shown to advanced secularization can be found in Willander, E (2015) "Religiositet och sekularisering", in Lövhelm, M och M. Nordin (red) *Sociologiska perspektiv på religion i Sverige*. Malmö: Gleerups.
- 5 A description of many smaller religious groups in Sweden can be found in Andersson, D och Å, Sander (2015) *Det mångreligiösa Sverige: Ett landskap i förändring*. Lund: Studentlitteratur.
- 6 Kyrkio-Lag och Ordning 1686, §1 (Paragraph 1 in The Church Law of 1686)
- 7 Jarlert, A (2007) "Vem definierar religion? Från kyrkolagen 1686 till omskärelselagen 2001" page 2. Jarlerts essay was published by the University of Lund.
- 8 See for example Pleijel, Hilding (1958) *På stugmötenas tid: till 100-årsminnet av konventikelplakats upphävande*. Stockholm: Evangeliska fosterlandsstiftelsen.

- 9 Regeringsform 1809, §16 (Paragraph 16 in Instrument of the Government of 1809)
- 10 Children of parents that are members in the Church of Sweden may still be signed up awaiting baptism. For such a sign-up to be made, the parents need to request this specifically. Hence, it is an exception to the rule regarding baptism, an exception that concern relatively few potential members of the Church of Sweden.
- 11 See The Act on Religious Communities (SFS 1998:1593)
- 12 See The Act on Religious Communities (SFS 1998:1593)
- 13 See the webpage for the Agency for Support to Faith Communities: <https://www.myndigheten.se/omoss/regelverk/tillämpningsforeskrifter-for-statsbidrag-till-trossamfund.html>
- 14 See, Weibull, L (2016) "Svenskarna och världsreligionerna", in Ohlsson, J., Oscarsson, H. & M. Solevik (red) *Ekvilibrum*. Göteborgs universitet: SOM-institutet
- 15 See, Demker, Marie (2018) "Oförändrat motstånd mot flyktingmottagning men stärkt hotbild kring religion och svensk kultur", pages 393-405 in Ulrika Andersson, Anders Carlander, Elina Lindgren and Maria Oskarsson (ed.) *Sprickorna i fasaden*. University of Gothenburg: the SOM-institute.
- 16 Large survey materials such as the World Value Survey are freely available online at for example <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSONline.jsp>
- 17 The line of reasoning was gathered from: Viktor Rundgren (1897) *Statistiska studier rörande Svenska kyrkan*. Örebro: Sten Söderlings boktryckeri.
- 18 See, Lövgren och Rodhe (1911) *Vår kyrka från början av tjugonde århundrandet: Periodvis skildrad. Del 1, tiden 1901-1910*. Stockholm: Svenska kyrkans diakonistyrelse and Dagens Nyheter's article series regarding participation in religious services from 5 Januari-4 Februari 1928.
- 19 Dagens Nyheter's article series regarding participation in religious services from 5 Januari-4 Februari 1928.
- 20 Statistics from 1910 are available on the home page of Statistics Sweden: https://www.scb.se/Grupp/Hitta_statistik/Historisk_statistik/_Dokument/SOS/Folkrakningen_1910_4.pdf
- 21 Membership statistics from the Church of Sweden is available on the Church of Sweden web page: <https://www.svenskakyrkan.se/statistik>
- 22 See, web page of Statistics Sweden: <https://www.scb.se/hitta-statistik/> particularly statistics regarding those born abroad: <https://www.scb.se/hitta-statistik/sverige-i-siffror/manniskorna-i-sverige/utrikes-fodda/>
- 23 See page 121 in Willander, E. (2014) *What Counts as Religion in Sociology? The Problem of Religiosity in Sociological Methodology*. Uppsala: Uppsala University.
- 24 The survey from the 1980:s is covered in Gustafsson, G (1997) *Tro, Samfund och samhälle: Sociologiska perspektiv*. Malmö: Liber. Data from the year 2000 was gathered by the World Value Survey and are available on their home page at: <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org>

25 For more information regarding SST statistics, see www.myndigheten.sst.se

How is Religion Practiced?

26 See for example Bruce, S (2000) "The Supply-Side of Religion: The Nordic and Baltic States", *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 39 (1):32-46 or Gustafsson, G. (1985) *Religiös förändring i Norden 1930-1980*. Lund: Liber.

27 The claim that the religious landscape is unchanging is limited to observations based on the data presented in the chapter. The stable trend where people affiliated with religions not connected to Christianity can hide large changes on a detail level. For example, groups within the minority may have increased and replaced other groups that have been decimated.

How Many Are Affiliated with Different Religions?

28 See, law (1999:932) for support to faith communities

29 Regarding the statistics gathered in 1976, it has to be highlighted that the faith communities during this period had no option to show their numbers of regular participants only their membership count. During later years, (1996 and 2016), faith communities had the options of both showing their membership numbers and their participant numbers – causing the figures to rise. Also, in 1976, the Muslim communities that received subsidies were only a handful local congregations. A national organization or cooperation organization had not yet been founded. For Orthodox and Eastern churches, the same system was used and in 1976 subsidies were given to the following churches: Orthodox churches, Estonian, Finnish, Greek, Macedonian, Russian, Serbian, Syrian-Orthodox along with the Swedish Orthodox and the Eastern Assyrian Church. Figures from Dutch protestant congregation (600 people) and the French Reform congregations (239 people) have been counted into the Hungarian Protestant Church statistics (4,338 people). To save space, the reported statistics from the Swedish salvation army (2,048 people) were counted into the data for the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden for that year. Statistics for 1976 was taken from the SST archive collection of government documents (Volume: Sveriges Frikyrkosamråds samarbetsnämnd 1976-1977, AI:4). Regarding the statistics for the year 1996, it should be explained that the following Islamic faith communities at this time were a part of the government subsidy eligible cooperation organization ISR: Förenade Islamiska Föreningar i Sverige (FIFS), Islamiska Kulturcenterunionen i Sverige (IKUS), Sveriges Muslimska Förbund (SMF). It should be noted that the de-merger of the EFK during the first years (1997 to 2002) happened under the working name Nybygget – Christian Cooperation. The statistics for 1996 are taken from the SST yearbook for 1998. For the statistics for the Syrian-Orthodox church it should be clarified that since 1996, this church is divided into two dioceses with two separate administrations – both which report their statistics separately. In the table in this report they are combined due to space considerations. The statistics for 2016 are taken from the SST yearbook of 2018.

- 30 Regarding statistics for 2007, it should be clarified that the following Islamic faith communities at this time were a part of the government subsidy eligible cooperation organization ISR: Förenade Islamiska Föreningar i Sverige (FIFS), Islamiska Kulturcenterunionen i Sverige (IKUS), Sveriges Muslimska Förbund (SMF), Svenska islamiska församlingarna (SIF) samt Islamiska shiasamfundet (ISS). In 2011, the Bosnian Islamic organization had also been included. Regarding statistics for the Syrian-Orthodox church, it should be clarified that since 1996, this church is divided into two separate dioceses with two separate administrations – each which report their statistics individually. In the table in this report, they are combined due to space considerations. From 2000, the Danish, Norwegian and Icelandic churches in Sweden were subsidy eligible through the SST. These churches are largely "sailor churches". Some statistical numbers from these churches were not registered for the years 2000 – 2014. The statistics in this table are taken from the SST yearbooks for 2009, 2013 and 2018.
- 31 Membership statistics from the Church of Sweden is available on the Church of Sweden web page: <https://www.svenskakyrkan.se/statistik>

What do the Various Religious Affiliations mean?

- 32 Differences over time were tested between the time intervals 2007-2011 compared to 2012-2016. Within the Church of Sweden group, the differences between the visiting and non-visiting over time significant $\chi^2(1, n=20146) = 8.08, p = .0014$. The differences are not significant for the minority church group $\chi^2(1, n=1895) = 0.47, p < .49$, Muslim affiliation $\chi^2(1, n=554) = 0.01, p < .93$ or other religious affiliation $\chi^2(1, n=336) = 0.40, p <=.53$. As for all chi-square analyses in this report, the results are influenced by the groups being different size in numbers.
- 33 Skog, M. ed. (2001) *Det religiösa Sverige: Gudstjänst och andaktsliv under ett veckoslut kring millennieskiftet*. Örebro: Libris.
- 34 Bromander, J. (2005) *Medlem i Svenska kyrkan: en studie kring samtid och framtid*. Stockholm: Verbum.
- 35 The change over time and the differences between the prayer habits are real for those that are affiliated with the Church of Sweden $\chi^2(2, n=19619) = 40.04, p < .001$ and those with no religious affiliation $\chi^2(2, n=6484), 8.88, p = .012$. within both groups, the propensity to visit activities have decreased. Also, there are no significant results for the minority church group $\chi^2(2, n=1841) = 0.16, p = .992$, those with Muslim affiliation $\chi^2(2, n=523) = 2.09, p = .351$, or with other religion that is neither Christian or Muslim $\chi^2(2, n=324) = 0.21, p = .899$.
- 36 Bromander, J. (2005) *Medlem i Svenska kyrkan: en studie kring samtid och framtid*. Stockholm: Verbum och Bromander, J. & P. Jonsson (2018) *Medlemmar i rörelse. En studie av förändringar i Svenska kyrkans medlemskår*. Uppsala: Church of Sweden.
- 37 Willander, E. (2018) "Bortom den nordiska paradoxen" Enstedt, D. & K. Plank (red) *Levd Religion: Det heliga i vardagen*. Lund: Nordic Academic Press.

Who is Affiliated with Which Religion?

- 38 See, Stark, R. (2002) "Physiology and Faith: Addressing the "Universal" Gender Difference in Religious Commitment", *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 41(3):495-507 or Voas, D. McAndrew, S. & I. Storm (2013) "Modernization and the gender gap in religiosity: Evidence from cross-national European Surveys", *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie*. 65: 259-283.
- 39 Hamberg, E. M. (1991) "On Stability and Change in Religious Beliefs, Practice and Attitudes: A Swedish Panel Study", *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 30 (1):63-80.
- 40 Bruce, S. (2011) *Secularization: In Defense of an Unfashionable Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- 41 Norris, P. & R. Inglehart (2004) *Sacred and Secular: Religion and Politics Worldwide*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- 42 Inglehart, R. and W. E. Baker (2000) "Modernization, Culture Change and the Persistence of Traditional Values", *American Sociological Review*, 65 (1):19-51.
- 43 For research regarding defections from the Church of Sweden, see Bromander, J. (2005) *Medlem i Svenska kyrkan: en studie kring samtid och framtid*. Stockholm: Verbum och Bromander, J. (2011) *Svenska kyrkans medlemmar*. Stockholm: Verbum.
- 44 Bursell, M. (2016) *Kedjor av händelser. En analys av anmälningar av muslimer och förmodade muslimer*. Stockholm: Diskrimineringsombudsmannen or Johansson, E. (2013) *Forskning om utsatthet hos förmodade muslimer och islamofobi i Sverige*. Stockholm, Diskrimineringsombudsmannen.

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- 45 Taylor, C. (2007) *A Secular Age*. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- 46 Putnam, R. D. (2000) *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York, London, Toronto, Sydney, New Delhi: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks.
- 47 Lundåsen, S. & T. Pettersson (2009) "Att mäta tillit – teori och mätproblem", in Trädgårdh, L. (red) *Tillit i det moderna Sverige*. Stockholm: SNS förlag or Trädgårdh, L (2013) "Om gapet mellan abstrakt och konkret tolerans", in Lundberg, E. (2013) *Toleransens mekanismer: en antologi*. Stockholm: Forum för levande historia.
- 48 Lamont, M. (2018) "Addressing Recognition Gaps: Destigmatization and the Reduction of Inequality", *American Sociological Review*, 83(3):419-444.
- 49 Holmberg, S. & B. Rothstein (2017) "Trusting Other People". *Journal of Public Affairs*. 17(1-2):1-8 or Trädgårdh, L. (red) *Tillit i det moderna Sverige*. Stockholm: SNS förlag.
- 50 Lundåsen, S. & T. Pettersson (2009) "Att mäta tillit – teori och mätproblem", in Trädgårdh, L. (red) *Tillit i det moderna Sverige*. Stockholm: SNS förlag or Trädgårdh, L (2013) "Om gapet mellan abstrakt och konkret tolerans", in Lundberg, E. (2013) *Toleransens mekanismer: en antologi*. Stockholm: Forum för levande historia.

- 51 Holmberg, S. & B. Rothstein (2017) "Trusting Other People". *Journal of Public Affairs*. 17(1-2):1-8
 or Trädgårdh, L. (red) (2009) *Tillit i det moderna Sverige*. Stockholm: SNS förlag.
- 52 Holmberg, S. & B. Rothstein (2018) "Misstroendets lokalisering i högtillitslandet Sverige" in Andersson, Ulrika., Carlander, Anders., Lindgren, Elina och Maria Oskarsson (red.) *Sprickorna i fasaden*. Göteborgs universitet: SOM-institutet eller Holmberg, S. & B. Rothstein (2015) "Hög mellanmänsklig tillit i Sverige – men inte bland alla", in Bergström, A., Johansson, B., Oscarsson, H. & M. Oskarsson (red) *Fragment*. Göteborg: SOM-institutet.
- 53 Weibull, L (2016) "Svenskarna och världsreligionerna", in Ohlsson, J., Oscarsson, H. & M. Solevid (red) *Ekvilibrium*. Göteborgs universitet: SOM-institutet.
- 54 Holmberg, S. & B. Rothstein (2018) "Misstroendets lokalisering i högtillitslandet Sverige" in Ulrika Andersson, Anders Carlander, Elina Lindgren and Maria Oskarsson (red.) *Sprickorna i fasaden*. Göteborgs universitet: SOM-institutet or Trädgårdh, L (2013) "Om gapet mellan abstrakt och konkret tolerans", in Lundberg, E. (2013) *Toleransens mekanismer: en antologi*. Stockholm: Forum för levande historia.
- 55 The analysis of differences between religious affiliations are based on a partition that is somewhat different from previous chapters. Instead of allowing the religious affiliation to overlap (as they do in reality), separate categories have been made. This means that those that are affiliated both with the Church of Sweden and a minority church are seen as their own group, the dually affiliated. The change of religious affiliation is due to the analysis and to the statistical tests that were used.
- 56 Palm, I. (1993) "Frikyrkofolket och ekumeniken", *Tro och tanke*, 83(5):37-88.
- 57 Holmberg, S. & B. Rothstein (2015) "Hög mellanmänsklig tillit i Sverige – men inte bland alla", in Bergström, A., Johansson, B., Oscarsson, H. & M. Oskarsson (red) *Fragment*. Göteborg: SOM-institutet.
- 58 Trädgårdh, L (2013) "Om gapet mellan abstrakt och konkret tolerans", in Lundberg, E. (2013) *Toleransens mekanismer: en antologi*. Stockholm: Forum för levande historia.
- 59 A correlation analysis showed a medium strength, positive, significant correlation between feelings of affinity with someone of another culture and someone with another religion: : $r = .67$, $n = 3132$, $p < .001$

Methodology Appendix

This appendix presents details regarding the data sets used for the analyses in the report.

THE ANALYSES IN THE REPORT ARE BASED ON surveys gathered by the SOM-institute at the University of Gothenburg. The surveys are representative for the population of Sweden because a representative sampling procedure is the basis of who has answered to the surveys. The surveys were collected using postal queries (paper surveys answered with the help of a pen). In some cases, the paper surveys were followed by an option to reply via Internet. The reply frequency (the share of respondents out of all the individuals that received the survey) has never been below 50 percent – which in Sweden is unusual. The surveys are described on the SOM-institute home page: <https://som.gu.se/>.

Three different data sets were used as a basis for the analyses presented in this text.

Super-Riks-SOM 1986-2015 and SOM 2016

Chapter 2 uses a data set called Super-Riks-SOM 1986-2015 and a data set called the national SOM-survey of 2016. The Super-Riks-SOM 1986-2015 is a longitudinal data set produced by the SOM-institute by summing up all the survey results made between the years 1986 and 2015. Combined with the dataset for 2016 a total of 93,525 people have participated in the surveys analyzed in chapter 2. The data sets are available upon request from the head of research through the Swedish National Data Service home page: <https://snd.gu.se/sv/catalogue/study/snd0905>. Information regarding collection methods, reply frequencies for individual years and survey questions are also gathered here. At the time of data gathering for this report, the Super-Riks-SOM 1986-2015 was the most current file. To harmonize it with the other chapters in this report, the information from the national SOM-survey of 2016 has been added to the longitudinal file for the analyses in chapter 2.

Three variables are used in chapter 2. They concern participation in religious services/meetings, prayer to God and belief in God. In 2016, the national SOM-survey con-

sisted of a total of six representative but separate survey mailings.

Out of these, the survey question regarding "prayer to God" was posed in all the mailings, while the survey questions about "religious service/meeting" and "belief in God?" was posed in only one of the total six mailings. This means that more people have had the opportunity to reply to the question about "prayer to God" (in total 9,834 people of which 336 people have elected to partially or completely not reply) than the survey questions regarding participation in "religious service/religious meeting" and the question regarding "belief in God". Of the 1,650 people that replied to survey number five, 43 people have chosen to not or partially not answer the question regarding "participation in religious service/religious meeting". In a corresponding way, 89 people out of total 1,650 have chosen to not reply to the question about "faith in God". In practice this means two things: (1) the individuals that receive the questions about "prayer to God", "participation in religious service/religious meeting" or "belief in God" tend to reply to the questions and (2) differences in respondent numbers depend on whether or not the respondents have received the mailing posing these questions. Differences in number of respondents are not due to the survey questions being sensitive in nature and thus discouraging the individuals responding to the SOM-surveys.

Religion-Data 2007-2016

Chapter 3-6 utilizes a longitudinal approach based on the SOM-institute data collection for the years 2007-2016 which was built specifically for this report. This data set is called Religion-Data 2007-2016. Since this data set was created specifically for this report, a more detailed description of its content is relevant to fulfill research ethical demands on transparency and clarity.

The time frame between 2007 and 2016 was chosen because the survey period is thought to represent a period when religious diversity was thought to be increasing (for details, see the chapter 1 discussion regarding the premises of diversity). The choice of time period is also dependent on data availability. The starting year – 2007 – marks the first year when survey questions regarding religious affiliations were began to be asked in a way comparable to the latest SOM-surveys. Before 2007, the survey questions were not posed in a way that makes it possible to discern people with a Muslim affiliation or an affiliation that is neither Muslim or Christian. The ending year – 2016 – marks the last year with available data at the time of undertaking the research. This means that the time period comprises of the latest available ten-year period at the time of data selection.

The foundation of Religion-Data 2007-2016 are the replies to the survey question, "Are you affiliated with any church, religious organization, or religion?" Respondents could answer "Church of Sweden", "Other Christian Church/organization", "I am a Muslim" and "religious organization/community that is neither Christian or Muslim" along with the reply alternatives "No", "Yes, but I have not attended religious service/religious meetings during the past 12 months" or "Yes and I have attended a religious service/religious meeting during the past 12 months". The set-up of the survey question meant that all respondents could consider the four answers: "Church of Sweden", "Other Christian church/organization", "I am a Muslim" and "religious organization/community that is neither Christian or Muslim". To not be affiliated to any religion had to be marked with a "no". This set-up enabled people to reply that they have multiple religious affiliations (for example "Church of Sweden" and "other Christian church/organization"). The answers to these questions is the basis of the main comparison categories of the report:

- Affiliated with the Church of Sweden
- Affiliated with a Swedish minority church
- People with Muslim affiliation
- People that are affiliated with a religion that is neither Christian or Muslim
- People that claim no religious affiliation

The survey question, "Are you affiliated to any church, religious organization, or religion?" is posed every year in the SOM-surveys from 2007 to 2016, but not in each separate mailing sent out during this time. For example, in 2007, the SOM-survey was undertaken with two separate survey mailings (called SOMI and SOMII). Both SOMI

Survey mailings included in Religion Data 2007-2016

Survey	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
SOM I	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	.	.	.
SOM II	X	X	X	.	.	.
SOM III			X	X	X	X	X	X	.	.
SOM IV								.	.	.
SOM V									X	X
SOM VI										.

Comment: the criteria for adding a survey mailing to the data set was to add the survey question "Are you affiliated with any church, religious organization, or religion?" to the mailing.

Legend: x=included data, . = not included data. Shaded (pink) cells denote that the mailing was not done during this year.

and SOMII were based on representative selections of Sweden’s population. Out of these two, only SOMI contained a question regarding religious affiliation. This means that results from SOMI were added to Religion-Data 2007-2016 for the year 2007. The table on the previous side presents an overview over data included in the longitudinal data set of 2007-2016.

As shown in the table of survey mailings included in Religion-Data 2007-2016, the number of mailings with questions about religious affiliation vary over time. In 2007 and 2008, the survey question was a part of one out of two mailings. However, in 2011, 2012 and 2013, when the survey question was posed in three out of three survey mailing. This variation means that more people were asked about affiliation in 2011-2013 compared to 2007-2008.

Number of responders and Reply frequency in Religion Data 2007-2016

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Totalt
Number of responders	1667	1598	1582	1682	1531	1524	1644	1694	1739	1650	
Reply frequency (%)	61	57	52	59	56	55	52	53	54	52	
Number of responders			1657	1702	1597	1631	1706				
Reply frequency (%)			55	61	58	58	54				
Number of responders					1592	1591	1628				
Reply frequency (%)					57	57	52				
Number of responders, total	1667	1598	3239	3354	4720	4746	4978	1694	1739	1650	29385
Reply frequency	61	57	54	61	57	57	52	53	54	52	56

Comment: *the number of respondents corresponds to the total number of respondents for each survey mailing. The number of respondents (reply frequency in percent) is calculated from the number of people offered the possibility to participate in each survey mailing.*

Source: the SOM-surveys 2007-2016.

Details enumerating how many people that replied to the survey questions are presented in the table of numbers and shares of respondents in Religion-Data 2007-2016. As shown in the table, the number of replies range from just over 1,500 (in 2008) to almost 5,000 (2013). The strategies for selection that the SOM-institute used to find respondents however avoids the impact of respondent numbers on representativeness and the possibilities of generalizing across the entire population.

That the survey question regarding religious affiliation only was posed in one survey mailing in certain years has impact on how results may be presented. This report does

not show results based on less than ten survey responses. In the year 2008, 2.5 percent of respondents claimed a Muslim affiliation and 1.2 percent stated that they have an affiliation that is neither Muslim or Christian. This result is in line with the year before and after 2007, but in real numbers the shares represent 35 respective 16 people. Making comparisons within these groups would likely lead to the number of people in the comparison categories dropping below ten. Hence, the surveys from Religion-Data 2007-2016 are computed into five-year intervals and at times results for the entire ten-year period are shown.

One advantage of the five-year periods is that they create evenly sized survey groups. This is because the five-year period 2007-2011 encompasses nine survey mailings, which is identical to the five-year period 2012-2016.

In this context, I have chosen to comment on what is specific to the production of Religion-Data 2007-2016. Religion-Data is based on SOM-surveys and methodology reports from these bring up subjects like differences in reply frequency between genders, people of different ages and in between city and country. For updated and relevant information regarding this, the web page of the SOM-institute comes warmly recommended: <https://som.gu.se/>.

Specific Analyses based on SOM surveys 2015-2016

The last, analytical chapter of the report (Religious Affiliation and Social Cohesion) is completed by an analysis based exclusively on the SOM-surveys from 2015 and 2016. The limited scope is due to the inclusion of the survey question “To which extent do you feel affinity with the following groups in Swedish society?” in the same mailing as the survey question regarding religious affiliation. The analyses based on this more limited material (2015-2016) are more uncertain than those based on a greater selection, because the comparison categories are smaller.

The Religious Landscape of Sweden

– Affinity, Affiliation and Diversity in the 21st Century

What does religious practice and faith look like in today's Swedish society? This report draws the contour lines of religious diversity in Sweden, focusing on the main religious affiliations and how these groups differ in terms of gender, age, education and income. The report also discusses relations between religion and social cohesion in Sweden.

The Religious Landscape of Sweden – Affinity, Affiliation and Diversity during the 21st Century is a report authored by Erika Willander, PhD, Researcher in Sociology at Uppsala University.



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