The development of funeral practise in Denmark

Emma-Marie Vitskov Jørgensen,

Studie-/eksamensnummer?:

Cultural Data Science

Date: 05-01-2023

Characters:

## Abstract

?????

Keywords**:** *secularization; funeral; marriage*

## Introduction/Goal

* *Introduce your thesis or research question. Specify the motivation for developing your research project, and introduce its cultural relevance and significance. Alert the reader to what is coming.*

Funerals has traditionally been spun into religious faith and connected to religious institutions, and religion can be an important tool for coping with death and the lose of someone loved (source). Denmark is a fairly secularized country when looking a people’s non existing belief in God and in their poor attendance to church in their every day (kilde). Has this effected which institution people choose to be handle their funeral? In this project I will investigate the Danish funeral trends through the past 15 years. I expect that there has been an increase in the number of civil funerals, and I base this hypothesis on the secularization theory and the theory of singularization I modern Denmark. I also expect there to be an increase in the number of funerals held by religious institutions which isn’t the Danish national church, while the number of “traditional” funerals held by the national church has decreased. The project is relevant because funerals both mirror and shape the way people interpret and cope with death and how professionals such as nurses and social health care assistants take care of the dying and the mourning. If the funerals are brought into a new (non)religious framework, the way people understand and cope with death and loss will change, and so will the conversation about death and grief, and the way professionals have to talk about death and grief with the dying and the mourning (Walter 2015, 133).

## 1.2 Problems and Background/Context

* *Give the formulations of (cultural, historical, social, technical, etc.) problems to be solved by the project and role of the different digital tools in achieving the aims of the project*
* *Provide (historical, cultural, technical) context for your project and introduce the background and related work in literature (cite or list relevant literature on the research problem; list other scripts and software in this area etc.)*

*Secularization* can be defined in several ways, but in this project, I refer to the process where the institutional church loses its power and religion and the supernatural is vanishing from the public sphere (Walter 2015, 138). When it comes to funerals, there are two kinds of secularization going on in Europe: institutional secularization and cultural secularization. The first means, that the funerary practice is being removed from the religious institutions and symbols. The second means that religious symbols and rituals loses its power when it comes to ascribing meaning to death and loss (De Spiegeleer 2019, 174). Through the 19th century the civil funerals have also been a used by freethinkers as a tool to stand up against the power of the church and demonstrate against the way the church handled death and the dying (ibid, 179). Secularization of funerary practice can also be considered from a market perspective. When the monopoly of the church is weakened, other institutions both religious and civil become its competitors. From the 21st century humanist and independent celebrants began taking care of funerals and offering a more life-centered and not faith specific type of funeral (ibid, 182).

The question is whether the secularization of funerary practice is present in Denmark like in many other European countries and how, if so, it can be characterized. The secularization of funerary practice points towards a non-religious understanding of life and death. Therefore, it seems obvious to think that there could be a rise in civil funerals in Denmark, because Danes reports a low belief in God and a poor engagement in religious practice in their everyday life (source). But Denmark is different than the European countries from the theory above, because of the Scandinavian paradox. This means, that despite the lack of religious belief and attendance to church service, 73,2% of the Danes are members of the national church on January 1st, 2022 (folkekirken.dk). Many Danes also likes to attend church for Christmas and feel connected to the Christian heritage of Denmark, they feel as culture Christian (Mauritsen 2022, page). You can say that when it comes to belief and everyday religious practize, the Danes are very secular, but when it comes to the economically support of the church and the support of the church by the state, Denmarks isn’t that secular. Maybe funerals have become part of Danish culture Christianity and hasn’t been separated from the national church, because it is a tradition that people feel is a part of the cultural heritage?

I will answer the question by analyzing a data set from Danmarks Statistik containing the number of funerals in Denmark from 2006-2021. The funerals are separated into four categories of funerals with some sort of priest from the national church, a group of funerals held by another religion or by a free church, and a group of civil funerals which had no clerical influence. I will clean and filter the data set in RStudio to be able to visualize the development of different funeral types through the years in a line chard to make comparison easier between the different funeral types (civil, national church, other religion/free church).

It is worth noting that in Denmark most cemeteries belong to the national church (source) and there are very strict rules about burial outside of cemeteries e.g. on privat ground (source), but it is possible to get a funeral conducted by a religious expert from another religion or another Christian institution even though your coffin or urn ends up on one of the cemeteries of the national church. Therefore, a civil funeral can take place on the cemetery of a Christian church, and it will still be counted as civil.

Religion as coping 🡪 the best coping on the long basis. But secular schema is also a schema. And the religious schema can’t explain many church funerals when the Danes are generally not believing.

## 1.3 Software Framework

I make this project on my MacBook Air (2015) computer which is 6,5 years old, has X GB RAM and runs macOS Monterey (12.5.1) operating system. I installed the desktop version of R (xxx) and RStudio (xxx). The repository containing all data, scripts etc. can be accessed through GitHub.

## 1.4 Data Acquisition and Processing

* *List and cite all sources of data used in this paper*
* *Details of data extraction, filtering and preparation. Attach or link to processing scripts where relevant.*

I found both of my data sets on Danmarks Statistik. The first one contains the number of religious and civil funerals in Denmark from 2006-2021, and the second is a data set about the number of people who have signed out of the Danish national church from 2007-2022 (Danmarks Statistik). It isn’t possible to link directly to the data sets, but they can be found by following the link in the bibliography, clicking on xx and selecting yy and zz. The data sets could be downloaded directly from the website as excel files, and these files can be found in the “data” repository. I converted the files into the .csv format, before loading them into RStudio, where all the cleaning was made. My processing of the data consists of cleaning, filtering and visualizing the data, and all this processing is part of my main script which is made as an RMarkdown file. I filter the data to create three Explain the filtering.

## 1.5 Empirical Results (Implementation for technical projects)

* *Provide and explain the results of your investigation, illustrated with figures where essential and relevant. Discuss lessons learnt, counts, statistics, maps or other outcomes (product of your script ~slides, map, outline, timeline…)*
* *Briefly comment on* 
  + *1) the main elements of your digital workflow, highlighting decision-making bottlenecks and your decisions (e.g. why did you decide to alter spelling in DK data and how you did it)*
  + *2) functions/tricks you found useful and wish to promote or credit. Remember that the technical tasks should not clutter/interfere with your historical/cultural narrative and data analysis (unless your project is about developing a technical pipeline)*
* *For 'technical pipeline' projects: provide a guided tour of your pipeline to facilitate its reproducibility, explaining your choices, clarifying dependencies, and referring to the scripts/tools you compiled in Github. You can provide the full annotated script, such as rmarkdown, only if it is easily readable and demonstrates /documents all major functions and decisions behind them.*

## 1.6 Critical evaluations

* *Evaluation of the results in the context of available data sources (representativeness, reliability, etc.) and research premise and your original assumptions/expectations.*
* *Brief evaluation of the digital tools, the learning process, time on task, vis-à-vis the final product.*
* *For 'technical pipeline' projects: Provide a comparison with other state-of-the-art software if any exists for the same task* ***(****kindly cite relevant work, scripts, etc.****)***

Future perspectives:

* It could be nice to compare with the funeral trends in another country
* Compare with other church activities to see if funerals stand out.

## 1.7 Conclusions

## *Summarize the achieved goals and highlight the most important lessons learnt while working on the project.*

## 1.8 References

* *At least 5 are required, both domain-based literature as well as references to digital tutorials or internet resources consulted.*

**Domain-specific litterature**

Danmarks statistik: <https://www.dst.dk/da/Statistik/emner/borgere/folkekirke/kirkelige-handlinger>

De Spiegeleer, Christoph (2019), “Secularization and the Modern History of Funerary Culture in Europe”, Trajecta,  [Volume 28, Issue 2](https://www.aup-online.com/content/journals/07788304/28/2), Dec 2019, p. 169 - 201

Folkekirken.dk, ”Folkekirkens medlemmer”. Available at: <https://www.folkekirken.dk/om-folkekirken/folkekirken-i-tal/medlemmer> [accessed 1st of December 2022]

Mauritsen, Anne Lundahl (2022), “Irreligiøsitet, kristendom og levet kulturreligion: En kvalitativ analyse af individuelle og kollektive identiteter” *Religionsvidenskabeligt Tidsskrift* 73, 5-18, <https://doi.org/10.7146/rt.vi73.127161>

Walter, Tony (2015), ”Secularisation”, In: *In: C.M. Parkes & W. Young, eds Death and Bereavement Across Cultures, London: Routledge, 2nd edn, 2015, pp. 133-148.*

Andersen, Peter, Jakob Erkmen & Peter Gundelach (2019), ”Udviklingen i ikke-religiøsitet”, i Frederiksen, Morten (red.) *Usikker modernitet – danskernes værdier fra 1981-2017*, Hans Reitzels Forlag, 231-264

Crystial L. Park, 2005, "Religion as a Meaning-Making Framework in Coping with Life Stress"University of Connecticut

Reckwitz, Andreas (2017), [*Singulariteternes samfund: om modernitetens strukturændringer*](https://euc-word-edit.officeapps.live.com/content/enforced/68571-LR11402/Reckwitz%20-%20uddrag3.pdf?_&d2lSessionVal=beyFvN6Z0dhisHAYLq0luIgJH&_&d2lSessionVal=beyFvN6Z0dhisHAYLq0luIgJH&_&d2lSessionVal=beyFvN6Z0dhisHAYLq0luIgJH&_&d2lSessionVal=beyFvN6Z0dhisHAYLq0luIgJH), København, Hans Reitzels Forlag, 19-32, 93-108   
(28 sider -- ikke tilgængelig online)

Park, C. L. (2005). Religion and meaning. *Handbook of the psychology of religion and spirituality*, *2*, 357-379.

Vail, K. E., Rothschild, Z. K., Weise, D. R., Solomon, S., Pyszczynski, T., & Greenberg, J. (2010). A terror management analysis of the psychological functions of religion. *Personality and Social Psychology Review,*14(1), 84-94. [https://doi.org/10.1177/1088868309351165](https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1088868309351165)

## **Digital tutorials and internet resources.**

GeeksforGeeks. *How to Split Column Into Multiple Columns in R DataFrame?* Available at: <https://www.geeksforgeeks.org/how-to-split-column-into-multiple-columns-in-r-dataframe/> [accessed 23th of November 2022], last updated January 12 2022

NNK, SparkBy{Examples}. *How to Remove Column in R?*. Available at: <https://sparkbyexamples.com/r-programming/remove-column-in-r/> [accessed 22th of November 2022], August 23 2022.

Stackoverflow, *Add row to a data frame with total sum for each column*. Avaliable at:

<https://stackoverflow.com/questions/4946873/add-row-to-a-data-frame-with-total-sum-for-each-column>

Stack overfloew, *Plotting wide format data using r ggplot [duplicate]*. Available at: <https://stackoverflow.com/questions/52789537/plotting-wide-format-data-using-r-ggplot> [accessed 4th December 2022], last updated November 2018

Data mentor, *Saving a Plot in R*. Available at: <https://www.datamentor.io/r-programming/saving-plot/> [accessed 5th December 2022]

Statology, *How to Round Numbers in R (5 examples).* Available at: <https://www.statology.org/round-in-r/> [accessed 5th December 2022], last updated July 21 2021.

## Required Metadata

### Table 1 – Software metadata

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Nr** | **Software metadata description** | ***Please fill in this column*** |
| S1 | Current software version | *for example R 1.1, RStudio 1.1.24c.* |
| S2 | Permanent link to Github repository where you put your script or R project | *example :* [*https://github.com/combogenomics/DuctApe/releases/tag/DuctApe-0.16.4*](https://github.com/combogenomics/DuctApe/releases/tag/DuctApe-0.16.4) |
| S3 | Legal Software License | *List one of the approved licenses, e.g. Creative Commons 4.0; see Week 6 lecture recordings for more* |
| S4 | Computing platform / Operating System | *for example Linux 18.04, OS X, Microsoft Windows 10,...* |
| S5 | Installation requirements & dependencies for software not used in class | *You need to have Python 3.6 installed* |
| S6 | If available Link to software documentation for special software | *Example* [*http://mozart.github.io/documentation/*](http://mozart.github.io/documentation/) |
| S6 | Support email for questions | [202004214@post.au.dk](mailto:202004214@post.au.dk) |

### Table 2 – Data metadata (use the template below or create your own metadata table)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Data sets** | | |
| **Nr** | **Metadata description** | ***Please fill in this column*** |
| D1 | funerals\_messy | * What: Funerals with and without a priest in DK from 2006-2021: * unit: number (antal) * From: Danmars statistik * Buried is both buried in coffin and in urn * Further notes on source: “Alle tal i denne tabel stammer fra Kirkeministeriet. Antal fødte, døde og vielser stemmer ikke med Danmarks Statistiks andre tal” (danmarks statistik) * The numbers are for the whole country of Denmark |
|  | funeral\_clean | The clean and analyze ready version of funeral\_messy |
|  | funerals\_LessRows |  |
|  | funerals\_LessColumns |  |
|  | total\_all\_types |  |
|  | total\_all\_types2 |  |
|  | total\_all\_types\_long |  |
| **Variables/values** | | |
| **Nr** | **Metadata description** | ***Please fill in this column*** |
| V1 | Registered\_Deaths | The total amount of registered deaths in Denmark. |
| V2 | PastoralPriest\_ParishChurch |  |
| V3 | PastoralPriest\_OtherChurch |  |
| V4 | OtherPriest\_ParishChurch |  |
| V5 | OtherPriest\_OtherChurch |  |
| V6 | FreeChurch\_OtherReligion |  |
| V7 | Civil\_Funeral | Civil funerals. Funerals held with no sort of clerical influence (no priest, no church etc.). |
| V8 | Church\_Marriage | Christian marriages. Marriages held by a priest in a church. Church marriages is in the Danish national church (is it?) |
| V9 | Civil\_Marriage | Civil marriages. Marriages held with no sort of clerical influence (no priest, no church etc.). |
|  | Married\_Abroad |  |
|  | undisclosed | The marriage authority is unknown by Danmarks Statistik. This can be due to the fact that one of the persons doesn’t live in Denmark. |