



# Denominational Drift

Investigating the Uneven Effects of Secularism on Christian Denominations

# Introduction

As a Christian from the Anglican denomination, I was interested in the growth and decline of religiousness especially as in the last census Christianity no longer held the absolute majority.<sup>1</sup> It had been decreasing for several decades and I was interested in why this had been the case. After looking into the census data, I noticed that secularism affected each denomination differently, with a large decline in Anglicanism but a much lower decline in Catholicism despite Catholicism often being the most targeted of Christian denominations for discrimination.

This led to the focus question of this Personal Interest Project (PIP), "Why secularism may affect different denominations differently". This explores how the macro level influence of secularism, through meso level institutions, affects the micro level of religious affiliation. I hypothesise that secularism causes a decrease in the larger denominations such as Catholicism and Anglicanism as there are no longer benefits of being affiliated with those religions and they experience conflicting beliefs with secular ideas causing individuals to move away from them.

Therefore, for the cross-cultural component, I compared different denominations of Christianity. The main denominations I compared were Catholicism, Anglicanism, and Pentecostalism as they are significant denominations in Christianity, with Catholicism and Anglicanism being the largest denominations and Pentecostalism having a unique belief system and rapid growth<sup>2</sup>. I also looked at Non-Denominational Christianity as I received responses from this denomination in my questionnaire, and it experienced the most growth in the last censuses.

To investigate this, I would need to identify the affiliation of individuals in their denomination along with the reasons behind their identity as it would demonstrate how external factors may influence people into following different denominations.

A close-ended questionnaire was useful for identifying the individual's religious identity, beliefs, attendance, and importance. It would further help to identify some reasons for their denomination depending on the demographic of people of a certain denomination such as

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Religious affiliation in Australia*, ABS, 4 July 2022 <<https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/religious-affiliation-australia>>. [Accessed 16 November 2022]

<sup>2</sup> Melton, G., Britannica, 2023, <<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Pentecostalism>> [accessed 20 July 2023]

age, education level, gender, ethnicity, and media usage. The closed-ended questionnaire was effective at gathering trends in certain demographics. Another important aspect would be the religiosity of individuals which is difficult to quantify.<sup>3</sup> Fernando Lozano splits it into three categories of attitudes, beliefs, and practices<sup>4</sup> and by using all three qualities it would allow for more reliable data.

An open-ended questionnaire was effective for identifying the motives behind individuals' choices to change denominations, allowing for insight into the micro level experiences that would cause these changes. This helps to identify why certain denominations would be encouraged or discouraged and what some denominations offer that allow it to grow, due to or despite secularism.

In addition, statistical analysis of census data was also useful to identify trends between denominations and certain demographics which confirms correlations found in the closed-ended questionnaire.

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<sup>3</sup> F. Lozano, *The rise of secularism and its economic consequences*. IZA World of Labor 2017: 384 doi: 10.15185/izawol.384. sec. 5, <<https://wol.iza.org/articles/the-rise-of-secularism-and-its-economic-consequences/long>> [accessed 11 November 2022]

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

# Log

I started by using secondary research to learn the details of my topic and to narrow down what I wanted to focus on in my PIP. I looked at the past PIP topics to get a better understanding of what I would be writing and what topics other students had researched, which led to analysing secularism. I gained an understanding of secularism through secondary research allowing me to be more specific with my topic. Originally it was about the impact of secularism on Christianity, however, the topic was too broad, so I focused it further by looking at how different denominations are affected by secularism differently due to the disparity of decline I found from the Census, such as Catholicism which decreased by 4% compared to Anglicanism with a 20% decrease<sup>5</sup>.

After choosing a topic and gaining an expansive understanding of the topic, I began working on my questionnaire, to find out why people may change denomination. However, I was struggling to get an adequate number of responses, so it became quite difficult to get any relevant data. Fortunately, since it was an open-ended questionnaire, the responses I was getting were quite detailed although this came at the cost of quantity. These responses were useful for finding micro level experiences that helped to improve my understanding of the reasons people had for changing denominations.

While I waited for the responses to come in, I performed more secondary research on the topic to gain a greater understanding of it. I also began a statistical analysis of census data to see what trends there were between aspects of denominations and their growth, mostly percentage growth. I looked at the general trend of denominations since 1954 which helped to see how the rate of change for many denominations had been shifting with Anglicanism, Catholicism, and Pentecostalism decreasing heavily in the 2010s as did Christianity. I also looked for other correlations such as between growing denominations and the proportion of migrants.

I then decided to release another questionnaire as my first questionnaire did not target people leaving Christianity which would be a significant group for this research as with the fast decline of Christianity came a fast growth of people with no religion so many Christians would have left religion entirely. Therefore, this would be important to see which

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<sup>5</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Religious affiliation in Australia*, ABS, 4 July 2022 <<https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/religious-affiliation-australia>>. [Accessed 16 November 2022]

denominations have followers that have left religion entirely. However, this questionnaire also did not get many responses and so had limited usefulness for my PIP.

Overall, my secondary and primary research helped provide a significant number of trends and statistics, creating a large amount of information to work with, and forming an argument for this PIP. However, much of the research was also quite ineffective for the PIP providing little to no value for the PIP, either due to a lack of reliability and validity or being irrelevant to this PIP topic.

# Central Material

Australia is a secular state,<sup>6</sup> however since its founding, the culture of Australia had been tremendously influenced by Christianity until recently due to its sharp decline,<sup>7</sup> caused largely by secularism. Secularism is an evolutionary change that began in the Reformation and Age of Enlightenment in the 16<sup>th</sup> century<sup>8,9,10</sup> and is still occurring today, becoming a larger part of society replacing the religious institutions that used to uphold society.<sup>11,12,13,14</sup> This is reflected in legislative changes, such as the legalisation of same-sex marriage, abortion, or euthanasia, which goes against religious ideas.<sup>15,16</sup> However, secularism does not affect all religions equally and even different groups within Christianity experience a vast range of impacts. Secularism can be defined as the separation of religion from the state<sup>17</sup> and

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<sup>6</sup> Barker, R., *Is Australia a secular country? It depends what you mean*, The Conversation, 14 May 2015, <<https://theconversation.com/is-australia-a-secular-country-it-depends-what-you-mean-38222>> [accessed 12 November 2022]

<sup>7</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Religious affiliation in Australia*, ABS, 4 July 2022 <<https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/religious-affiliation-australia>>. [Accessed 16 November 2022]

<sup>8</sup> *Protestant Reformation is RESPONSIBLE for Secularism w/ Suan Sonna*, [Podcast], interview with Suan Sonna, Pints with Aquinas, 2021, <[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=facdb5A9LG4&ab\\_channel=PintsWithAquinas](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=facdb5A9LG4&ab_channel=PintsWithAquinas)> [accessed 31 October 2022]

<sup>9</sup> S. Grant, *The census shows Australians are becoming less religious but why have we chosen to live without God?*, ABC News, 3 July 2022, <<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-07-03/census-religion-christianity-no-religion-god/101201640>> [accessed 1 November 2022]

<sup>10</sup> N. Keddie, *Secularism & its discontents*, Daedalus, On Secularism & Religion, Summer 2003, p. 15 [accessed 9 November 2022].

<sup>11</sup> *Classical Secularisation Theories* [online video], Professor Linda Woodhead, MASSOLIT, 2021, <[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FX\\_E8rao96l&ab\\_channel=MASSOLIT](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FX_E8rao96l&ab_channel=MASSOLIT)> [accessed 18 November 2022]

<sup>12</sup> M. Ghosn, *Melto D'Moronoyo: Can religion survive amid rising secularisation*, The Catholic Weekly, 12 September 2022, <<https://www.catholicweekly.com.au/melto-dmoronoyo-can-religion-survive-amid-rising-secularisation>> [accessed 17 October 2022]

<sup>13</sup> N. Keddie, *Secularism & its discontents*, Daedalus, On Secularism & Religion, Summer 2003, p. 16 [accessed 9 November 2022].

<sup>14</sup> A. B. AbdulRahim, *The Impact of Secularism on Religious Beliefs and Practices*, Journal of Islam in Asia (E-ISSN 2289-8077), Vol. 7, No. 1, 163, 2010, p. 158. <https://doi.org/10.31436/jia.v7i1.41>

<sup>15</sup> S. Grant, *The census shows Australians are becoming less religious but why have we chosen to live without God?*, ABC News, 3 July 2022, <<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-07-03/census-religion-christianity-no-religion-god/101201640>> [accessed 1 November 2022]

<sup>16</sup> D. Smith, *Most Australians don't identify as Christians — why, and what does this mean for our politics?*, ABC News, 30 June 2022, <<https://www.abc.net.au/religion/david-smith-christianity-and-the-australian-census/13953748>> [accessed 2 November 2022]

<sup>17</sup> "Secularism." Google Dictionary. 2022. <https://www.google.com/search?q=secularism+definition> [Accessed 8 November 2022].

core institutions,<sup>18</sup> decreasing religiosity<sup>19</sup>, a belief system of atheism,<sup>20</sup> or the replacement of religion with science, rationality, and technology<sup>21</sup>. These variations and ambiguity often create confusion when referring to secularism but, in this PIP, secularism will refer to the separation of religion from the state and core institutions<sup>22</sup>. With this understanding of secularism, it is also important to understand the differences between each denomination of Christianity to know why secularism may affect them differently. Within Christianity, there are different groups called denominations, each with slightly different beliefs and values which dictate the different traditions and methods used mostly in the church, but it also affects how adherents live out their day-to-day lives. However, not all denominations are experiencing this sharp decline<sup>23</sup> and so the focus question of this PIP is “why secularism may affect different denominations differently?”.

I have chosen Catholicism, Anglicanism, and Pentecostalism due to their significance in Christianity in Australia and their differing values, with Catholicism and Anglicanism being the largest two denominations, with Anglicanism tripling the third largest denomination<sup>24</sup>. Pentecostalism was also chosen due to its unique set of beliefs and values and explosive growth in the last few decades<sup>25,26</sup>. Catholicism differs from other denominations in that their basis of Doctrine being both the Bible and Church officials<sup>27</sup> as well as “doctrinal emphasis

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<sup>18</sup> A. B. AbdulRahim, *The Impact of Secularism on Religious Beliefs and Practices*, Journal of Islam in Asia (E-ISSN 2289-8077), Vol. 7, No. 1, 163, 2010, p. 161. <https://doi.org/10.31436/jia.v7i1.41>

<sup>19</sup> *Sociology: Understanding and Changing the Social World*, University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing, 2016, p. 662.

<sup>20</sup> J. M'Cann, *The Death of Secularism Slain by Science, Philosophy & Morality*, London: Simkin, Marshall and co., 1871.

<sup>21</sup> A. B. AbdulRahim, *The Impact of Secularism on Religious Beliefs and Practices*, Journal of Islam in Asia (E-ISSN 2289-8077), Vol. 7, No. 1, 163, 2010, p. 161. <https://doi.org/10.31436/jia.v7i1.41>

<sup>22</sup> S. Kettell, *Secularism and Religion*, Oxford Research Encyclopedias, 25 January 2019, sec. 3, para. 5, <<https://oxfordre.com/politics/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.001.0001/acrefore-9780190228637-e-898>> [accessed 10 November 2022]

<sup>23</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Religious affiliation in Australia*, ABS, 4 July 2022 <<https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/religious-affiliation-australia>>. [Accessed 16 November 2022]

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Melton, G., Britannica, 2023, <<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Pentecostalism>> [accessed 20 July 2023]

<sup>26</sup> D. Smith, *Most Australians don't identify as Christians — why, and what does this mean for our politics?*, ABC News, 30 June 2022, <<https://www.abc.net.au/religion/david-smith-christianity-and-the-australian-census/13953748>> [accessed 2 November 2022]

<sup>27</sup> Fairchild, *Compare Major Beliefs of 7 Christian Denominations*, 9 March 2020, <https://www.learnreligions.com/comparing-christian-denominations-beliefs-part-1-700537> [accessed 13 July 2023]



on the atonement”<sup>28</sup>. This is contrasted with Anglicanism, which is a stem of Protestantism, so, unlike Catholicism, they believe the Bible is the only source of truth.<sup>29</sup> Further, Anglicanism differs in their belief around salvation being by faith only, whereas Catholicism believes that it is through Baptism<sup>30</sup>. Pentecostalism is part of the renewal movement, which is also a stem of Protestantism, with an emphasis on the individual's personal experience with God, focusing on his presence in their daily lives<sup>31</sup>.

This research has found that secularism’s effect on each denomination is profoundly diverse, by influencing values on a macro level which has mostly caused a decline in many denominations but has also created growth in others that better adhere to these values. As secularism causes many religious institutions to be replaced with secular institutions, denominations that rely on these institutions for influence and power lose value, but denominations that possess other functionality<sup>32</sup> can maintain a rise. In addition, secularism causes a shift in identity leading to denominations mostly made up of individuals that joined to fit the Australian identity to decline. Furthermore, secularism has caused a shift in values due to its influence over institutions causing people’s values to conflict with their denomination’s values so denominations with values more similar and accommodating of secular values will experience more growth.

Using functionalist theory, religion serves society by giving meaning and purpose, social unity and stability, social control, physiological and psychological wellbeing, and motivation for work and positive social change.<sup>33</sup> Therefore, with a more secular society, many of these roles are replaced by secular institutions so people no longer need religious institutions

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<sup>28</sup> Wax, Quick Guide to Christian Denominations, 7 April 2022. <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/trevin-wax/quick-guide-christian-denominations/> [accessed 13 July 2023]

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Fairchild, Compare Major Beliefs of 7 Christian Denominations, 9 March 2020, <https://www.learnreligions.com/comparing-christian-denominations-beliefs-part-1-700537> [accessed 13 July 2023]

<sup>31</sup> Hutchinson, M. (2012). "Healers: James William Wood and Colonial Religious Innovation". Academia. Cited in Wikipedia, 'Pentecostalism in Australia' [website] [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pentecostalism\\_in\\_Australia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pentecostalism_in_Australia) [accessed 18 July 2023]

<sup>32</sup> P. Hughes (2011). Why some churches decline while others grow. Pointers: Bulletin of the Christian Research Association, 21(4), p. 2. <https://search.informit.org.ezproxy.sl.nsw.gov.au/doi/10.3316/informit.756959752322600>

<sup>33</sup> *Sociology: Understanding and Changing the Social World*, University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing, 2016, pp. 642-643.



causing a decline in religion overall.<sup>34</sup> On a macro level, secularism has caused an evolutionary change<sup>35</sup>, gradually shifting the values and understandings of Australian society, with ideas such as egalitarianism, civil liberties, individualism, urbanisation, consumerism, materialism, tolerance, self-esteem, and egoism influencing individuals' perceptions, beliefs, and values<sup>36</sup>. This causes the gradual secularisation of many institutions<sup>37</sup>, reducing the number of religious institutions which allow for socialisation and control mechanisms that previously ensured the continuity of the belief system. But with these institutions being removed, these control mechanisms are no longer needed for continuity which caused the change away from the belief systems of Christianity that used to hold the power and authority of these institutions, and towards more secular institutions. This is prevalent in the institution of schools, which no longer have as many religious teachings<sup>38</sup> with much greater support for secular ideas such as individualism and science as a means of understanding. An example of the impact on a micro level is demonstrated in an SBS interview, where a former Christian, Lisa Qiu, "started using science more to answer questions"<sup>39</sup> which demonstrates how many adults are relying on science to provide truth over religion, replacing the role of religion for truth with science. Therefore, individuals are socialised into gaining more secular values and understandings rather than religious ones. Thus, it creates conflicting messages within individuals between their meso level belief system and the macro level society.

However, denominations that create other purposes, such as fulfilling spiritual needs, will experience more growth, as individuals will pick denominations that adhere to their personal needs or at least are less inclined to remain in denominations that do not.<sup>40</sup> Therefore, with the belief system becoming more of an inconvenience to attend especially as they disagree

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<sup>34</sup> Inglehart, *Why is religion suddenly declining?*, Oxford University Press [Web Blog], 7 December 2020, <<https://blog.oup.com/2020/12/why-is-religion-suddenly-declining/>> [accessed 8 November 2022]

<sup>35</sup> N. Keddie, *Secularism & its discontents*, Daedalus, On Secularism & Religion, Summer 2003, p. 15 [accessed 9 November 2022].

<sup>36</sup> A. Lingier and W. Vandewiele, The Decline of Religious Life in the Twentieth Century. *Religions*. 2021; 12(6):388. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12060388>.

<sup>37</sup> AbdulRahim, A. B., *The Impact of Secularism on Religious Beliefs and Practices*, Journal of Islam in Asia (E-ISSN 2289-8077), Vol. 7, No. 1, 2010, pp. 157-177. <https://doi.org/10.31436/jia.v7i1.41>

<sup>38</sup> A. Lingier and W. Vandewiele, The Decline of Religious Life in the Twentieth Century. *Religions*. 2021; 12(6):388. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12060388>.

<sup>39</sup> L. Feng, Faith no more: Why young Australians are rejecting religion, SBS News, <<https://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/faith-no-more-why-young-australians-are-rejecting-religion/ej39zjcz8>>. [accessed 24 June 2023]

<sup>40</sup> P. Hughes (2011). Why some churches decline while others grow. Pointers: Bulletin of the Christian Research Association, 21(4), pp. 2-3. <<https://search.informit.org.ezproxy.sl.nsw.gov.au/doi/10.3316/informit.756959752322600>>

with it and so individuals are likely to leave to follow a denomination they find more value in, usually after being introduced to a new denomination by friends or after a location change.<sup>41</sup> This is seen in a survey of the United States of America which shows that 29% of leavers leave their denomination due to conflicting opinions<sup>42</sup> which may be relevant as Australia is highly influenced by the USA due to globalisation. Furthermore, these statistics are consistent with my questionnaires, showing that 28% of respondents changed denominations due to disagreements with the current teaching, changing for belief-related reasons.<sup>43</sup> In my other questionnaire, individuals are unaffiliated often due to their low level of importance for religion which was mostly prevalent in Catholicism.<sup>44</sup> However, in the American survey most left due to no longer believing in it and never feeling importance for it to begin with, which are both larger than conflicting beliefs,<sup>45</sup> which suggests that many individuals leave religion entirely due to having a low level of significance for it but would switch denominations due to conflicting beliefs as they continue to hold the importance of religion. In addition, Pew Research found that around 18% of Australians view religion as important, and even among Christians only 27% view it as important,<sup>46</sup> supporting the argument that few individuals value religion, suggesting that people are quickly leaving the belief system that they used to follow due to the increase in socio-economic development causing a redundancy in religion. This suggests that the value of religion has decreased, with greater egalitarianism, and affiliation will soon follow.

Conversely, denominations which focus on the individual experience are attractive to the values of the post-modern society as reflected in the renewal movement, the most significant

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<sup>41</sup> Questionnaire On People Changing and Joining Denomination, Question 2, Conducted January 2023.

<sup>42</sup> Jones, Robert P., Daniel Cox, Betsy Cooper, and Rachel Lienesch. "Exodus: Why Americans Are Leaving Religion – and Why They're Unlikely to Come Back." *PRRI*. 2016. <http://www.prri.org/research/prri-rns-poll-nones-atheist-leaving-religion/>. [accessed 30 June 2023]

<sup>43</sup> Questionnaire On People Changing and Joining Denomination, Question 2, Conducted January 2023.

<sup>44</sup> Questionnaire On People Leaving, Changing and Joining Denomination, Question 3, Conducted January 2023.

<sup>45</sup> Jones, Robert P., Daniel Cox, Betsy Cooper, and Rachel Lienesch. "Exodus: Why Americans Are Leaving Religion – and Why They're Unlikely to Come Back." *PRRI*. 2016. <http://www.prri.org/research/prri-rns-poll-nones-atheist-leaving-religion/>. [accessed 30 June 2023]

<sup>46</sup> Pew Research Center, June 13, 2018, The Age Gap in Religion Around the World. [accessed 22 June 2023]

one in Australia being Pentecostal, seen heavily in America and reflected in Australia.<sup>47</sup> These generally Charismatic churches appeal to secular societal norms, especially attracting young individuals who are in search of spirituality<sup>48</sup>, by encouraging individuals to have their spiritual journey and focusing on the experience that individuals receive at church appealing to ideas of individualism as they seek to live for themselves. Charles Taylor suggests a “massive subjective turn of modern culture”<sup>49</sup> at around the 1960s with the Baby Boomer generation, which encourages people to follow a life based on doing what they feel like doing and achieving a sense of authenticity rather than the notion before the cultural turn of fulfilling one's role given to them in a society<sup>50</sup>. The main reason for this is that individuals no longer saw the need for social stability which is offered by many conservative and traditional denominations due to the exploding economy and quality of life improvements, which links back to how higher-income countries have less of a need for a God.<sup>51</sup> This further reflects the large growth in new individual-focused denominations such as Pentecostalism whilst more conservative churches such as Anglicanism have been receiving massive decrease<sup>52</sup>. Therefore, as religion still has a purpose in satisfying spirituality, a denomination like Pentecostalism, which offers an enjoyable experience, allows them to gain more members than churches that lack these aspects,<sup>53</sup> allowing for growth as individuals do not see it as entirely unnecessary or outdated. As seen as younger people are generally more open to change and are searching for spirituality<sup>54</sup> they are more likely to join Pentecostalism. Considering that most individuals leaving their beliefs are also younger people so denominations that can negate this loss by appealing to a younger audience experience a

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<sup>47</sup> P. Hughes (2011). Why some churches decline while others grow. Pointers: Bulletin of the Christian Research Association, 21(4), pp. 2-4. <<https://search.informit.org.ezproxy.sl.nsw.gov.au/doi/10.3316/informit.756959752322600>>

<sup>48</sup> T. Folkins, (2020), Anglican Journal, vol. 149, no. 1, General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada, Churches may shrink but will survive in our secular age, says philosopher Charles Taylor.

<sup>49</sup> C. Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity*, Harvard University Press, 1992 cited in P. Hughes (2011). Why some churches decline while others grow. Pointers: Bulletin of the Christian Research Association, 21(4), p. 2. <<https://search.informit.org.ezproxy.sl.nsw.gov.au/doi/10.3316/informit.756959752322600>>]

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> A. Lingier and W. Vandewiele, The Decline of Religious Life in the Twentieth Century. *Religions*. 2021; 12(6):388. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12060388>.

<sup>52</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Religious affiliation in Australia*, ABS, 4 July 2022 <<https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/religious-affiliation-australia>>. [Accessed 16 November 2022]

<sup>53</sup> P. Hughes (2011). Why some churches decline while others grow. Pointers: Bulletin of the Christian Research Association, 21(4), pp. 1–8. <<https://search.informit.org.ezproxy.sl.nsw.gov.au/doi/10.3316/informit.756959752322600>>

<sup>54</sup> T. Folkins, (2020), Anglican Journal, vol. 149, no. 1, General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada, Churches may shrink but will survive in our secular age, says philosopher Charles Taylor.

shallower decline. Further by engaging with a younger audience, Pentecostal denominations create growth or at least reduce their decline. Pentecostal churches reflect this focus on younger people in its low average age of 32.27 years<sup>55</sup>. In addition, peers and family were the most common responses for why people joined or changed denominations at 23% and 21% respectively<sup>56</sup> suggesting that by encouraging younger people to join, it helps expand growth as they can now invite their peers. This allows churches with certain demographics to gain more of those demographics as people of similar nature are likely to stay together. However, these aspects also mean that denominations that support these areas are more likely to receive backlash and lose members as they are more prone to disagreements with more conservative members.

Secularism has also caused a shift in religious identity in Australia causing individuals who were only affiliated to fulfil this identity to leave as it is no longer a part of the Australian identity. This is confirmed by research that Australians do not and have not held importance for religion despite being affiliated, as the importance for religion among religiously affiliated Australians is "relatively low with women who have a religious affiliation rating religion's importance to them at just a 5.5 and men a 4.8 (both of which are marginally higher than 14 years ago – 5.4 for women and 4.5 for men)".<sup>57</sup> Christianity once was a part of the Australian identity as many Australians affiliated to fit this identity however saw it as unimportant. As such, when this aspect of the Australian identity is lost, mainstream denominations of Catholicism and Anglicanism especially would have seen a massive decline as they have many individuals who see religion as unimportant are now leaving. Research also finds that younger generations have lost religious affiliation,<sup>58</sup> with the gap in affiliation being among the most in the world at a 23% difference<sup>59</sup> despite a similar number of younger Australians and older Australians viewing religion as important at 18%,<sup>60</sup> suggesting that older generations are still affiliating with their parents' religion despite not showing the

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<sup>55</sup> Census Data on Age and Denomination Affiliation

<sup>56</sup> Questionnaire On People Changing and Joining Denomination, Question 1, Conducted January 2023.

<sup>57</sup> Trounson, A., *Losing Our Religion*, University of Melbourne, <<https://pursuit.unimelb.edu.au/articles/losing-our-religion>>. [accessed 24 June 2023]

<sup>58</sup> Singhal, P., *Religion in decline in Australian schools*, The Sydney Morning Herald. <https://www.smh.com.au/education/religion-in-decline-in-australian-schools-20180806-p4zv7b.html>>. [accessed 24 June 2023]

<sup>59</sup> Pew Research Center, June 13, 2018, The Age Gap in Religion Around the World. [accessed 22 June 2023]

<sup>60</sup> Pew Research Center, June 13, 2018, The Age Gap in Religion Around the World. [accessed 22 June 2023]

importance of it, but younger generations are even further from their religion and so do not feel any need to affiliate with it, along with social pressures encouraging secular beliefs in institutions like school<sup>61</sup>. My questionnaire demonstrates this idea with an individual who left Christianity stating it was due to not feeling strongly about it.<sup>62</sup> Therefore, the lack of importance for religion may arise due to people identifying with Christianity to fit into the Australian identity but due to secularism causing a shift of identity, people no longer feel strongly for Christianity.

Anglicanism is a prime example of this as it originates from The Church of England with Australian Anglicans often being English due to this connection. Being Christian used to be a significant part of the Australian identity so with a large population coming from England and The Church of England being a significant part of English culture, Australians would have identified with Anglicanism.<sup>63</sup> However, this led to a sense of unimportance for their belief system which is the leading reason for people to leave Christianity<sup>64,65</sup>. Therefore, it is likely that due to secularisation and an influx of migration, since the migrant percentage and the percentage born overseas in a denomination correlate strongly with its growth<sup>66</sup>, that the Australian identity shifted away from this idea and so many people left Anglicanism due to it becoming redundant. Therefore, explaining why Anglicanism is one of the fastest-declining denominations<sup>67</sup>.

In addition, secularism causes a shift in influence in social institutions causing people's values to conflict with certain denominations. Secularism holds a large amount of influence on institutions, most significantly educational and professional institutions. Consequently, secularism influences individuals towards more secular values which often conflict with

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<sup>61</sup> L. Feng, Faith no more: Why young Australians are rejecting religion, SBS News, <<https://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/faith-no-more-why-young-australians-are-rejecting-religion/ej39zjcz8>>. [accessed 24 June 2023]

<sup>62</sup> Questionnaire On People Leaving, Changing and Joining Denomination, Question 3, Conducted January 2023.

<sup>63</sup> Shearer, C., Number of Australian Anglicans falls by 580,000 in five years: Census 2016. The Melbourne Anglican. 18 June 2017. <https://tma.melbourneanglican.org.au/2017/06/number-of-australian-anglicans-falls-by-580000-in-five-years-census-2016/>

<sup>64</sup> Jones, Robert P., Daniel Cox, Betsy Cooper, and Rachel Lienesch. "Exodus: Why Americans Are Leaving Religion – and Why They're Unlikely to Come Back." *PRRI*. 2016. <http://www.prri.org/research/prri-rns-poll-nones-atheist-leaving-religion/>. [accessed 30 June 2023]

<sup>65</sup> Questionnaire On People Leaving, Changing and Joining Denomination, Question 3, Conducted January 2023.

<sup>66</sup> Census Data on Migration and Denomination Growth

<sup>67</sup> Longitudinal Census Data on Denomination Affiliation

religious values such as ideological conflicts of individualism conflicting with collectivism<sup>68</sup> or political conflicts with ideas of same-sex marriage and abortion<sup>69</sup>. As secular institutions became the dominant institution, religious institutions, and values have lost their purpose and importance due to modernisation reflecting Max Weber's idea that modernisation leads to secularisation<sup>70</sup>.

The decline in religious teachers and the development of a more secular curriculum in the institution of schools has also impacted young individuals in public schools as schools socialise them into secular norms rather than religious norms.<sup>71,72</sup> This is evidenced by schools in Australia becoming more secular with a greater focus on science as a source of understanding over religion. Historically, science and Christianity have had clashes such as Charles Darwin's 1859 theory of human evolution.<sup>73</sup> So as students are educated to adopt secular worldviews in both religious and non-religious schools, it is likely that the religious aspect of the schools is undermined by the ideas of truth in the syllabus. However, Catholicism would not be as affected by this due to the abundant Catholic schools in Australia. Catholic schools have likely helped Catholicism reduce decline as they only lost 6% of their adherents which is significantly less than Anglicanism which lost 20%,<sup>74</sup> explaining how Catholicism has not declined as much despite receiving a large amount of discrimination and prejudice against<sup>75</sup>. Germany demonstrates this as when they removed mandatory religious education, then a decrease in both religiousness and openness to religion

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<sup>68</sup> Hughes, P. (2011). Why some churches decline while others grow. *Pointers: Bulletin of the Christian Research Association*, 21(4), pp. 2-3. <<https://search.informit.org.ezproxy.sl.nsw.gov.au/doi/10.3316/informit.756959752322600>>

<sup>69</sup> Smith, D., Most Australians don't identify as Christians — why, and what does this mean for our politics?, ABC News, 30 June 2022, <<https://www.abc.net.au/religion/david-smith-christianity-and-the-australian-census/13953748>> [accessed 2 November 2022]

<sup>70</sup> Classical Secularisation Theories [online video], Professor Linda Woodhead, MASSOLIT, 2021, <[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FX\\_E8rao96I&ab\\_channel=MASSOLIT](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FX_E8rao96I&ab_channel=MASSOLIT)> [accessed 18 October 2022]

<sup>71</sup> A. Lingier and W. Vandewiele, The Decline of Religious Life in the Twentieth Century. *Religions*. 2021; 12(6):388. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12060388>.

<sup>72</sup> A. B. Abdul Rahim, *The Impact of Secularism on Religious Beliefs and Practices*, *Journal of Islam in Asia (E-ISSN 2289-8077)*, Vol. 7, No. 1, 2010, pp. 164-172. <https://doi.org/10.31436/jia.v7i1.41>

<sup>73</sup> Pew Research Center, Dec. 13, 2016, *Religion and Education Around the World*. Chapter 7. How religion may affect educational attainment: scholarly theories and historical background.

<sup>74</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Religious affiliation in Australia*, ABS, 4 July 2022 <<https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/religious-affiliation-australia>>. [Accessed 16 November 2022]

<sup>75</sup> Tonti-Filippini, N., *Religion in a Secular Society*, Australian Human Rights Commission, 2011.



followed.<sup>76</sup> Therefore, by having these schools, it is likely that it reinforces the beliefs of those who are Catholic and creates opportunities to convert non-Catholic individuals to Catholicism. It would also align with Taylor's idea that younger people are searching for spirituality due to secularism encouraging individualism which would cause students at Catholic schools to be more likely to join Catholicism.<sup>77</sup> Further, it may also suggest that churches with a younger demographic can attract these younger people through peers and connections, which would reflect my questionnaire results which showed 23% of people joined their denomination due to friends encouraging them to do so. In addition, this can be seen as the percent of a denomination born overseas correlated to the percent growth of the denomination<sup>78</sup>, which suggests that individuals born in Australia are less likely to join a denomination than individuals who have migrated due to the differing socialisation of the individual. Therefore, secularism has caused the institution of schools to socialise individuals under secular norms which leads to a decrease in affiliation in denominations that oppose these norms.

This enables secularism to create an increase in value for freedom which allows people to leave and change the denomination. With increased use of technologies such as information and communication technology (ICT) as well as social networking sites (SNS), people are becoming increasingly likely to believe it is acceptable to choose one's religion,<sup>79</sup> suggesting that the value of individualism, which is seen in secularism, is encouraged more through ICT and SNS. Taylor theorised that young people are searching for a belief system that fits them and their beliefs and understandings are shaped by everyone's socialisation,<sup>80</sup> which explains why individuals are leaving most Christian denominations. Interestingly individuals who use ICT and SNS are more likely to accept syncretistic beliefs<sup>81</sup>, the combination of two or more beliefs, suggesting that people may create new belief systems based on their personal beliefs

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<sup>76</sup> Woessmann, L., Zierow L. and Arold, B., *Religious education in school affects students' lives in the long run*. CEPR VoxEU, 3 March 2022, <<https://cepr.org/voxeu/columns/religious-education-school-affects-students-lives-long-run>> [accessed 21 June 2023]

<sup>77</sup> T. Folkins, (2020), Anglican Journal, vol. 149, no. 1, General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada, Churches may shrink but will survive in our secular age, says philosopher Charles Taylor.

<sup>78</sup> Census Data on Migration and Denomination Growth

<sup>79</sup> P. K. McClure (2016). Faith and Facebook in a Pluralistic Age: The Effects of Social Networking Sites on the Religious Beliefs of Emerging Adults. *Sociological Perspectives*, 59(4), 818–834. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0731121416647361>.

<sup>80</sup> T. Folkins, (2020), Anglican Journal, vol. 149, no. 1, General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada, Churches may shrink but will survive in our secular age, says philosopher Charles Taylor.

<sup>81</sup> P. K. McClure (2016). Faith and Facebook in a Pluralistic Age: The Effects of Social Networking Sites on the Religious Beliefs of Emerging Adults. *Sociological Perspectives*, 59(4), 818–834. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0731121416647361>.



and values. Therefore, explaining why many denominations with growth have adopted aspects of modern societal norms such as Pentecostalism which appeals to these individual-focused norms<sup>82</sup>. As society embraces individualism, individuals find greater freedom over which belief system that they align with and experience greater exposure to more belief systems, causing the likelihood of individuals to change denomination to increase. My questionnaire supports this idea as it reveals how many people change denomination after being invited, often by friends, to visit their denomination, allowing them to decide between the two denominations that they tried and choosing the one which aligns better for them<sup>83</sup>. Further, my questionnaire also suggests that people are not affiliating with any denomination as they disagree with traditional denominations<sup>84</sup>, having their own interpretations which differ from all other denominations. The rapid growth of non-denominational Christianity demonstrates this as in the 2021 Census they experienced the most growth of 12% and have been expanding even faster than Pentecostalism, since they have been a group on the Census in the early 2000s<sup>85</sup>. Hence, through SNS and ICT, social values shift to promote changing religions or denominations allowing them to search for belief systems that best suit them which Taylor suggests many young people are doing.<sup>86</sup> As such, people do not identify with any denomination as every individual has slightly differing beliefs and values so no belief system would be able to cater for all of them causing people to affiliate as non-denominational Christians as their beliefs do not align with any one denomination although they agree with the core teaching of Christianity.

Additionally, secularism causes conflicting beliefs of morality which leads to dissent from the denominations with arguments and often lead to people leaving. As such, secular ideas often go against many ideas of traditional conservative denominations such as Anglicanism

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<sup>82</sup> P. Hughes (2011). Why some churches decline while others grow. Pointers: Bulletin of the Christian Research Association, 21(4), pp. 2-4. <<https://search.informit.org.ezproxy.sl.nsw.gov.au/doi/10.3316/informit.756959752322600>>]

<sup>83</sup> Questionnaire On People Changing and Joining Denomination, Question 1, Conducted January 2023.

<sup>84</sup> Questionnaire On People Changing and Joining Denomination, Question 1, Conducted January 2023.

<sup>85</sup> Longitudinal Census Data on Denomination Affiliation

<sup>86</sup> Folkins, T., (2020), Anglican Journal, vol. 149, no. 1, General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada, Churches may shrink but will survive in our secular age, says philosopher Charles Taylor.

and Catholicism<sup>87,88</sup>. Therefore, conflict arises between the two beliefs and, due to the reduced power of religious institutions, there is a growing amount of support for secular beliefs which dominate society. An example of this is in the legislative institution becoming more secular with the legalisation of same-sex marriage<sup>89,90</sup> which goes against traditional Christian values. Further, even within Anglicanism these issues are controversial and lead to conflicts between dioceses revealing the impact that secular forces have on this denomination causing many conflicts in the values that groups believe as many other dioceses view the Sydney diocese "as hopelessly conservative and out of line with the mainstream."<sup>91</sup> These controversies arise due to these ideas previously working as an effective institution for helping societies to experience growth, with bans on abortion and same-sex marriage encouraging procreation, however, this need has been replaced by modern technology<sup>92</sup> in accordance with functionalist theory. Therefore, secularism contests these ideas being necessary and so the role of religion as a source of truth and morality becoming less important, causes individuals to feel that conservative denominations like Anglicanism are outdated and unnecessary<sup>93</sup>, leading them to lose interest and leave.

In addition, secularism creates ideas of feminism and egalitarianism which cause conflicts with Christianity. Ebaugh had a theory that due to the growth in opportunities for women, many women no longer are religious as they can now access jobs that are better than the ones offered by the church, specifically the Catholic Church<sup>94</sup>. Historically religious women were

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<sup>87</sup> Grant, S., The census shows Australians are becoming less religious but why have we chosen to live without God?, ABC News, 3 July 2022, <<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-07-03/census-religion-christianity-no-religion-god/101201640>> [accessed 1 November 2022]

<sup>88</sup> A. Lingier and W. Vandewiele, The Decline of Religious Life in the Twentieth Century. *Religions*. 2021; 12(6):388. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12060388>.

<sup>89</sup> Grant, S., The census shows Australians are becoming less religious but why have we chosen to live without God?, ABC News, 3 July 2022, <<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-07-03/census-religion-christianity-no-religion-god/101201640>> [accessed 1 November 2022]

<sup>90</sup> Mannheim, M., Census 2021 data shows Australians are less religious and more culturally diverse than ever, ABC News, 28 June 2022, <<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-06-28/census-2021-data-shows-a-changed-australia/101177152>> [accessed 3 November 2022].

<sup>91</sup> Koziol, M., 'Crisis point': the Anglican church is riven by worse divisions than ever before. The Sydney Morning Herald. 20 October 2019. <https://www.smh.com.au/national/crisis-point-the-anglican-church-is-riven-by-worse-divisions-than-ever-before-20191018-p531ym.html> [accessed 7 July 2023]

<sup>92</sup> Inglehart, *Why is religion suddenly declining?*, Oxford University Press [Web Blog], 7 December 2020, <<https://blog.oup.com/2020/12/why-is-religion-suddenly-declining/>> [accessed 8 November 2022]

<sup>93</sup> AbdulRahim, A. B., *The Impact of Secularism on Religious Beliefs and Practices*, Journal of Islam in Asia (E-ISSN 2289-8077), Vol. 7, No. 1, 2010, pp. 157-177. <https://doi.org/10.31436/jia.v7i1.41>

<sup>94</sup> Lingier, A. and Vandewiele, W. The Decline of Religious Life in the Twentieth Century. *Religions*. 2021; 12(6):388.

given more education, social mobility, and status, being respected in those societies. However, after the 1960s opportunities for women grew resulting in the lack of incentive for women to follow these religions as the opportunities outside of religion exceeded those within. However, critics such as Stark and Finke, have suggested flaws within this theory, such as statistics that show that religious men declined at the same rate as women but if people were religious for the economic benefits, women should have declined faster according to this theory.<sup>95</sup> However, feminism and egalitarianism may be more prevalent in Pentecostalism as research suggested that it may be women who are mostly leaving due to underrepresentation and abusive leadership, although not enough research has been conducted to confirm.<sup>96</sup> Therefore, suggesting that feminism and egalitarianism may influence conflicts with Christianity which leads to people leaving.

Conversely, opposing secular norms may create growth as a significant portion of people would prefer traditional denominations, mainly Catholicism, as it holds true to its beliefs and values. One theory explains that Catholic religious life declined because of the *Lumen Gentium 40* where the Council declared “all the faithful of Christ of whatever rank or status, are called to the fullness of the Christian life and to the perfection of charity”<sup>97</sup> in 1964 as it “nullified the basic ideological foundation for eighteen centuries of Roman Catholic religious life”<sup>98</sup> suggested initially by Wittberg<sup>99</sup>. Finke and Starke argue that this event caused many people to feel that the efforts they put in to attain a religious life were no longer worth it as the benefits of status and respect were lost,<sup>100</sup> suggesting that people want continuity in their belief systems. This demonstrates how many people seek continuity in their belief system and want to remain in one which remains true to its beliefs and values, as reflected in my questionnaire with 28% of individuals changing denomination that more accurately explains

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<sup>95</sup> Lingier, A. and Vandewiele, W. The Decline of Religious Life in the Twentieth Century. *Religions*. 2021; 12(6):388. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12060388>.

<sup>96</sup> Shorter, R. C., Riches T., *We're told Pentecostal churches are growing, but they're not any more. Is there a gender problem?*, The New Daily, <  
<https://thenewdaily.com.au/life/2023/02/27/pentecostal-church-gender-numbers/>> [accessed 25 June 2023]

<sup>97</sup> Lingier, A. and Vandewiele, W. The Decline of Religious Life in the Twentieth Century. *Religions*. 2021; 12(6):388. Pg 11. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12060388>.

<sup>98</sup> Wittberg, Patricia. 1994. The Rise and Decline of Catholic Religious Orders: A Social Movement Perspective. Albany: The State University of New York Press. Cited in Lingier, A. and Vandewiele, W. The Decline of Religious Life in the Twentieth Century. *Religions*. 2021; 12(6):388. Pg 11. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12060388>.

<sup>99</sup> Lingier, A. and Vandewiele, W. The Decline of Religious Life in the Twentieth Century. *Religions*. 2021; 12(6):388. p. 11. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12060388>.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

the Bible<sup>101</sup>. Therefore, as Catholicism has mostly maintained its beliefs, many individuals maintain their beliefs in Catholicism despite discrimination<sup>102,103</sup> reducing the decline they experienced. This would therefore suggest that there is a significant group of individuals who want their denomination to maintain its beliefs and oppose secular values, however, with denominations often trying to incorporate secular values, this may cause them to leave.

Therefore, this research has found secularism's effect on each denomination to be profoundly diverse, causing some denominations to experience rapid decline, such as Anglicanism, whilst enabling other denominations to grow expansively, as seen in Non-denominational Christianity. Secularism has shifted the social landscape of Australian society, changing the values and influences of individuals causing many denominations to experience a decline but also allowing some denominations who are better suited for the new values to experience growth.

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<sup>101</sup> Questionnaire On People Changing and Joining Denomination, Question 2, Conducted January 2023.

<sup>102</sup> Tonti-Filippini, N., *Religion in a Secular Society*, Australian Human Rights Commission, 2011.

<sup>103</sup> Ghosn, M., Melto D'Moronoyo: Can religion survive amid rising secularisation, The Catholic Weekly, 12 September 2022, <<https://www.catholicweekly.com.au/melto-dmoronoyo-can-religion-survive-amid-rising-secularisation>> [accessed 17 October 2022]

# Conclusion

Christianity is seen to have a sharp decline in Australia due to the changing social landscape, with changes such as secularism and growing technologies, but these impacts do not treat all denominations equally, due to an enormous number of variables and circumstances.

However, at a macro level, societal values and understanding have shifted by influencing individuals on a micro level through meso level social institutions which causes conflict between them and their belief system leading to dissent. Therefore, denominations that align better with social norms generally perform better than those that go against them.

I hypothesised that secularism causes a decrease in the larger denominations such as Catholicism and Anglicanism as there are no longer benefits of being affiliated with those religions but rather, secular norms conflict with their beliefs and values causing individuals to move away from them. This was proven true as secularism does cause conflicting beliefs and a shift in identity which has led to the decrease in both Anglicanism and Catholicism.

However, there are many other aspects and variables which play a significant part such as Catholic schools which allows Catholicism to maintain control mechanisms ensuring continuity in socialisation, reducing decline. Further, it is not only larger denominations that experience this but almost all denominations see these conflicts as secularism shifts away from Christian values.

The triangulation of qualitative and quantitative research methods helped me to form a greater argument using micro level experiences, meso level interactions and macro level trends. My questionnaires revealed why people on a micro level choose to leave their denominations, revealing that many of them change denominations due to conflicting beliefs and leave Christianity due to a lack of importance for it. It also allowed me to gain an understanding of what kinds of changes people generally make, such as moving from Catholicism to Anglicanism. My statistical analysis and secondary research helped to back this up with trends confirming that people do leave due to conflicting beliefs and a lack of importance. Further secondary research helped me to find similar surveys and interviews which complemented my primary research reinforcing my arguments. My content analysis helped me to analyse reasons for people to leave Pentecostalism, focusing on many individuals' stories of leaving their church, however, this was not useful as they often referred to a specific church in America.

Through this PIP, I have learned about how many topics in society and culture are much more complicated than they may seem, with many variables which all have impacts, as well as biases that make it impossible to create a simple explanation for anything in society and culture. For example, many of the articles I had to read often had a heavy bias either supporting the shift away from religion or strongly going against it. In addition, I found that every theory has flaws and exceptions, suggesting the complicated nature of this topic and how the complexity of people's behaviours cannot easily be captured in a single theory.

## Annotated Resource list:

### Content analysis

#### **r/Ex-Pentecostal content analysis**

My qualitative content analysis of Ex-Pentecostal threads from Reddit was aimed at finding why people might leave Pentecostalism. This involved viewing the posts and observing the main reasons that people gave for leaving Pentecostalism. It was quite common for many members to post stories of their experiences with Pentecostal churches which were often cult-like and traumatic for a lot of them. Another significant portion was about how they were hypocritical and abusive of members which would tie into the traumatic stories and cult-like experiences. This would suggest that many of the members leave Pentecostalism due to abusive and hypocritical leadership. This research however would be biased as everyone in the community would have left Pentecostalism and have a negative view on them, given as it is a community for people to share stories about why they left the denomination. Further, most of the stories reflect experiences at United Pentecostal Church which is an American church, and these experiences are likely church based rather than denomination based so it may not accurately reflect why people leave Pentecostalism in Australia, therefore this content analysis had a very limited usefulness for my PIP.



# Questionnaire

## **Questionnaire On People Changing and Joining Denomination. Conducted January 2023.**

My first questionnaire showed the common reasons for people to change or remain in their denomination. I got feedback from my teacher first to ensure that the questions were ethical and made sense. I then sent it out as a pilot study to my family members to ensure the clarity and effectiveness of the questions in providing me with the response I was seeking. I then distributed it through social media platforms of Reddit, Facebook, and Christian forums. It was focused on finding individuals who had changed denominations and the reasons why they did so. The questionnaire was only able to get 48 responses which made it difficult to extrapolate trends and data, however as it was open-ended, I was still able to get an adequate amount of value out of it. However, often the answers I found did not have as much detail as

I would want them to. Further, there was a large bias towards Anglicanism as most of the people I reached out to would have been in this denomination. It found that the most common reasons for people to join their religion are due to friends inviting them as well as the beliefs of the denomination aligning with them. Further changing denominations were found to be commonly due to the beliefs of the denomination or location of the church. Further, the questionnaire found that it was often the beliefs that were the most important aspect of an individual's church and improvements for their church were mostly about truth and outreach. With all these responses the common idea that people find to be important for their decision of which denomination to follow is their beliefs and whether they believe in what the denomination teaches. Otherwise, convenience with friends and location is also very important for people to go to the denomination they want to go to. The questionnaire demonstrates an adequate amount of usefulness as it provides examples and helps to reinforce the ideas from my secondary research.

## **Questionnaire On People Leaving, Changing and Joining Denomination. Conducted January 2023.**

This Questionnaire was designed to also include individuals who had left their denomination, as this may provide insight into how some denominations may be losing more members to no religion rather than to other denominations affecting their rate of decline. I distributed this questionnaire through the social media platforms of Facebook, Reddit, and Discord. Although, this questionnaire got fewer responses than the last one at 21 responses and the quality of the responses was worse. This made it difficult to gain anything from this

questionnaire. Most respondents showed that they had become religious due to parents following it but most of them have found that they do not feel strongly about it and so therefore no longer consider themselves as part of their religion. However, this questionnaire did not get many responses so the reliability of it is quite poor, and of the people I sent it out to, my close friends are most likely to fill it out and would probably make up most of the responses so it would be skewed towards a younger audience which would explain why most of them follow the belief system of their parents. This questionnaire was less useful than the first one due to the very few responses and the lack of detail in the answers, however, it still provided a significant amount of insight and could be used a few times. I could have improved it by making more questions easier to answer by making them multiple choice as the number of useful responses would have increased.

# Statistical Analysis

## **Longitudinal Census Data on Denomination Affiliation**

Anglicanism reached a plateau in the late 1960s and this continued until the 2010s when it began experiencing a sharp decline. Catholicism however experienced growth until the 2010s, overtaking Anglicanism in the 1980s before also declining although not as rapidly as Anglicanism. Pentecostalism has seen a sharp growth from the 1980s to the late 2010s when it too began to plateau. This would suggest that in the 2010s a transformative change may have occurred causing a decline in all three denominations at around the same time, which is extremely useful for my PIP in showing how secularisation has similarly affected all of them, that is causing a decrease in affiliation but also this rate of decrease differs for each denomination. The validity of this data is exceptional as the Census has detailed documentation on the methodology used to gather data and provides accurate data as it is a mandatory survey for all Australians.

## **Census Data on Migration and Denomination Growth**

Comparing the percentage of denominations that are migrants and the percentage that are born overseas with the percentage growth of each denomination, both at a correlation coefficient of 0.81. This would suggest that there is an influence of migration on the growth of denominations, however, when comparing the percentage growth without migrants it is still roughly the same, having a correlation coefficient of 0.98 with the percentage growth with migrants, suggesting that the migrants do not create the growth in the denomination but rather the appeal to migrants and other cultures creates growth. This is significantly useful for my PIP as it shows how migration affects denominations' growth with individuals born overseas likely making up most of the growth for denominations. This data has astounding validity as the Census provides detailed information on its methodology and samples the entirety of Australia making it accurate for extrapolating trends.

## **Census Data on Age and Denomination Affiliation**

Comparing the average age of each denomination, averaging the lower bound of 10-year groups, with the growth of each denomination yielded a correlation coefficient of -0.76 suggesting that denominations with younger demographics tended to grow more than older denominations and that denominations that appeal to younger audiences perform better than those that do not. This is significantly useful for my PIP in providing evidence as to how denominations that appeal to younger audiences perform better. This data has immense

validity as the Census is generally a reliable and valid source of information as it has transparency in methodologies and surveys the entirety of Australia.

### **Census Data on Location and Denomination Affiliation**

Comparing percentages in certain locations and the percentage growth of denominations. Greater Sydney showed strong correlation coefficients of 0.80 which is likely to be due to its large population. This data was not useful as it does not provide much insight into helping the PIP and is likely caused by a factor unrelated to secularism. The validity of this data is great as the Census has detailed documentation on the methodology used to gather data and provides accurate data as it is a mandatory survey for all Australians.

### **Census Data on Children and Denomination Affiliation**

Comparing the average number of children and the percentage of growth of the denomination, interestingly showed a negative correlation coefficient of -0.78 suggesting that denominations with more children decline more than those that have fewer children. This may suggest that targeting younger individuals is far more effective at creating growth than having children and that having more individuals with no children or unable to, likely due to singleness, have greater growth as these factors showed a correlation coefficient of 0.78 and 0.74 respectively. This is useful for my PIP in showing how having more children is generally worse for the growth of the denomination; however, I could not find a reason for this. The reliability and validity of this data are pronounced as the Census has detailed documentation on the methodology used to gather data and provides accurate data as it is a mandatory survey for all Australians.

## Book

**M'Cann, J., *The Death of Secularism Slain by Science, Philosophy & Morality*, London: Simkin, Marshall and co., 1871.**

M'Cann's main argument is that morality, science, and philosophy disprove the idea that atheism and secularism, as the "denial of the existence of a deity", can work. He further suggests that secularism is immoral and selfish focusing only on personal benefits. However, its usefulness is poor as the article is highly outdated. He has extreme biases against secularism suggesting that it was not promoted by society and was feared even in the late 1800s. This book is not useful for my PIP as it is very old which makes it much less relevant to the modern day, but it does show how secularism was interpreted and viewed over a hundred and fifty years ago. The author also does not talk much about the causes or impacts of secularism, nor does it describe it, so it is not useful for much.

***Sociology: Understanding and Changing the Social World*, University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing, 2016, pp. 633-666.**

The book suggests that through functionalist theory, religion works as a social institution and control mechanism by bonding societies, maintaining continuity of social unity and peace but also creating conflicts and inequality on a macro level. On a micro level, it gives people identity and a sense of belonging. Further, the chapter shows how religious organisations can range in size, ecclesia are churches that are formally part of the state and denominations are churches that operate mostly independently. It also shows how developing countries generally have a higher religiousness which may suggest that religion is an idea for developing countries. This book defines secularism as "the weakening of importance of religion in a society" and suggests that religion has been declining since the industrial revolution. In addition, it suggests that secularism has caused religious conservatism out of fears that America was becoming too secularised which has created conflict between the two. The chapter has profound reliability as it uses an extensive number of academic sources to back up its arguments. The chapter has immense reliability as the book would have been reviewed for publishing. The chapter is useful in providing information on religion's role and trends in society which may suggest how secularism may impact society as religion loses a lot of its power. Further, it provides information into how people have tried to identify the extent of the reduction in religiousness and impacts of secularisation, mainly religious conservatism to try to maintain religious power. Although it does not show much about secularism as the separation of State and church.

**Excerpt from Robert Alun Jones. *Emile Durkheim: An introduction to Four major works*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications. Inc., 1986., pp. 115-155.**

This article suggests that religion is a symbol of a society created to uphold permanence and identity within the society, maintaining control and togetherness by creating rites that define the society. He further suggests that science and religion are thus similar in nature as they create stability and objectiveness within a society. This excerpt has satisfactory reliability as it does source some other researchers and demonstrates the thought process and research methods Durkheim used to get to the results and conclusions. Further, the author is a professor, and he describes the works of Emile Durkheim who is a well-known and established sociologist. The validity is excellent as it details all the methods and reasonings for the decisions made. This excerpt has mediocre usefulness as it describes the purpose of religion as a device used to bond societies which would be removed or need to be replaced in a secular society.

**McCrindle, *Faith and Belief in Australia*, McCrindle Research Pty Ltd. 2017.**

This survey reveals many statistics on how religion, mainly Christianity, has changed in recent years, showing many statistics about demographics about how people follow religion.

This was useful as a source for statistics and helped me to gain inspiration for my questionnaire using similar questions but more targeted to see differences in demographics between denominations. This research has substantial reliability, using a large sample size of 1023 to gain detailed insight. It has adequate validity, explaining the methodology and objectives, although it has a bias towards Christianity and is published by the same company that wrote it reducing reliability.

## Blog

**Inglehart, *Why is religion suddenly declining?*, Oxford University Press [Web Blog], 7 December 2020, <<https://blog.oup.com/2020/12/why-is-religion-suddenly-declining/>> [accessed 8 November 2022]**

The blog suggests that religion has declined due to increased technology meaning that high birth rates, which many religions are focused on, are no longer needed so, with less importance on fertility, individual choice rises which correlates with functionalist theory as the evolutionary change arises from religion failing due to modern technology and symbolic interactionist theory as people's values for fertility has declined due to technology and therefore their beliefs shift to reflect that. Another reason may be due to the association of religion with right-wing politics or the scandals of Catholic priests. The blog also suggests that religious countries also have higher corruption and murder rates although that may be because they are poorer countries. The blog has satisfactory validity as it demonstrates adequate amount of evidence with many sources that it uses to form its conclusions. The blog has strong reliability as the author is a professor of political science and the blog is published by a university, so it has probably been reviewed giving it a better reliability and validity. This article is useful for identifying factors that lead to a decrease in religiosity which is a definition of secularism. These factors would be significantly useful for my PIP as it explains why people are losing religiosity which provided insight into why some denominations may not experience this.

**Calhoun, *How does religion matter in Britain's secular public sphere?*, The London School of Economics and Political Science [Web Blog], 17 June 2016, <<https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/how-does-religion-matter-in-britains-secular-public-sphere/>> [accessed 12 November 2022]**

The article shows how religion played a large part in British history although now there is a question of whether Britain is truly a Christian country due to the low level of religious affiliation. Britain still has faith schools and Anglican Bishops in the House of Lords, so it is technically still a Christian Country. Religious ideas can further be useful for bringing insight and the author believes that adding other religions into politics could benefit the country. This blog has strong validity as it sources the evidence used for its points. It also has adequate reliability as the author is director of a constituent college and the blog would have been reviewed before publication. The article is not useful for my PIP as it shows how Britain is



formally a Christian country although there are rising ideas that it may not be due to the reduced levels of religious affiliation, which is not very relevant to my topic.

**Luecke, Why do some churches grow while others decline?, What Happened to Our Church?, [Web Blog], 15 May 2019, <https://whathappened.church/blog/why-do-some-churches-grow-while-others-decline-2/> [Accessed 19 January 2023]**

Donald McGavran suggests that people become believers in groups suggesting that people "like to go to church with others like themselves." Further, the article suggests that people will lose ethnic loyalty after the third or fourth generation suggesting that churches that rely on ethnic loyalty will not last long and need a new approach for growth. The author concludes that it is leadership and unique aspects of the church which may attract new members but ultimately what causes the church growth is luck. This article has great reliability as the author has a PhD, and although he does have a bias towards Christianity this does not affect the conclusions he makes very much. It also has satisfactory validity as he uses a substantial amount of evidence, such as using many historical events to back up his points. This article is useful as it shows why some churches may have experienced more growth, mainly luck being an important factor, as well as ethnic loyalty and the homogenous principle that people go to church with people like them.

**Frazer, *11 reasons churches lose momentum and decline*, Biblical Leadership, [Web Blog] 3 May 2017, <https://www.biblicalleadership.com/blogs/11-reasons-churches-lose-momentum-and-decline/> [accessed 19 January 2023]**

This article finds that many churches often decline due to poor leadership where a lack of vision, purpose, evangelism, organisation, risk, foundation, target demographic, hospitality and encouragement all lead to a loss of members. This article has limited use as it can show where an individual church may lose members and if a denomination were to lack focus on these aspects this may lead to loss of followers, but this is not caused by secularism. This article has poor reliability and validity as it neither shows where the conclusions come from nor backs up its arguments with other sources. It is focused on helping to identify why some churches decline and so it has a bias towards helping churches to grow.

**Grow a Healthy Church, *7 Reasons Churches Stop Growing and Decline Into Impotence* <<https://growahealthychurch.com/churches-stop-growing/>> [accessed 19 January 2023]**

Each church will have an optimum size determined by its target audience, leadership, and connection. Further, focusing too much on growth can cause a decline which likely being is

seen in individualistic churches, along with focus being misdirected away from the main doctrine of Christ. This causes churches to become less hospitality pushing away individuals, as well as comfort in size causing less risk-taking which is why newer churches tend to experience greater growth before plateauing. This article has mediocre validity as there is little information about the author or where the data and ideas come from. It does have adequate reliability as the website seeks to help churches grow and so would be focused on accurately identifying issues. This article has limited usefulness in my PIP as it does provide reasons as to why some churches may decline or plateau which may reflect the growth of some denominations whose management has not helped with growth such as deviating from the main beliefs and understandings of Christianity or trying to create mega-churches may push people away, but this does not tie into secularism very much.

**Fairchild, *Compare Major Beliefs of 7 Christian Denominations*, 9 March 2020,**  
**<https://www.learnreligions.com/comparing-christian-denominations-beliefs-part-1-700537> [accessed 13 July 2023]**

This article describes the main differences between 7 Christian denominations: Anglican / Episcopal, Assembly of God, Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Roman Catholic. This was massively helpful for showing the key differences and characteristics of Anglicanism and Catholicism such as their differing ideas on what they use for the basis of their doctrines and beliefs, and how salvation is achieved. This allowed for these areas to be contrasted and helped to see the characteristics which differentiate denominations leading to different impacts of secularisation. This article shows aspects of reliability in the way it has quotes from significant texts which certain denominations believe in to show the values and understandings of that denomination. Further, the author is a Christian minister and so is likely to know these ideas well.

**Wax, *Quick Guide to Christian Denominations*, 7 April 2022.**  
**<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/trevin-wax/quick-guide-christian-denominations/> [accessed 13 July 2023]**

This article describes what several different denominations are like and their distinctive characteristics of them. This was massively useful for gaining a better understanding of the characteristics of and differences between Catholicism and Anglicanism. This article has adequate reliability as it does source the books which contain the main doctrine of each denomination.

## Interview

**Folkins, T., (2020), Anglican Journal, vol. 149, no. 1, General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada, Churches may shrink but will survive in our secular age, says philosopher Charles Taylor.**

In this interview Charles Taylor suggests that religion and spirituality are taking different forms and that younger people will go through a phase of searching for a religion, unsure of what religion they want to follow but seeking spirituality. This concern for searching is not recognised by churches and this causes the people to feel unaccepted and therefore leave.

This is due to a spiritual restlessness from a lack of purpose which causes individuals to search for it. This interview has substantial reliability as Charles Taylor is a well-known philosopher and has studied these ideas. It has considerable validity as the ideas and conclusions are explained. This article is significantly useful for my PIP as it provides information on how young people are searching for a religion and do not feel accepted in the church, this would suggest that people are looking for a denomination that would align with their values and understanding which is very useful for my PIP.

***Protestant Reformation is RESPONSIBLE for Secularism w/ Suan Sonna, [Podcast], interview with Suan Sonna, Pints with Aquinas, 2021,***  
**<[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=facdb5A9LG4&ab\\_channel=PintsWithAquinas](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=facdb5A9LG4&ab_channel=PintsWithAquinas)>**  
**[accessed 31 October 2022]**

This podcast suggests that secularism came from Protestantism as the Reformation breaks traditions which caused a lack of universal authority within the church, so wars started to break out between different beliefs which caused people to tolerate different beliefs to avoid deaths, which correlates with functionalist theory as the church failed to bring unity and therefore was replaced by a secular government, as well as conflict theory as the many wars and conflicts caused these changes, fighting over the limited authority the Catholic church had. This meant that there was never a settlement on what Christianity should be nor a need for such an agreement. Thus, causing a loss of sacramental reality and therefore secularism to tolerate all religious beliefs. This interview has mediocre reliability as it focuses on what Taylor suggests is the cause of secularism but does not source many other researchers. Further, the interviewee is a university student and has a bias towards Christianity. However, the interviewer is an author, and the interview may have been reviewed. The validity is adequate as there is an explanation of how the conclusions are found. This interview is useful

for describing the cause of secularism because of the reformation, which has limited usefulness to my PIP as it does not explain how secularism affects religion.

## Journal Article

**Di Marco, G. et al., The Effect of Values and Secularism on Attitude towards Pre-Implantation Genetic Diagnosis of Embryos, Social Sciences, 7, 2018, 216.**

Values of secularism are seen to be correlated with opinions on pre-implantation genetic diagnosis which is reflected in social values of self-transcendence and conservatism as individuals who pursue universal welfare want the law and religion to be separate but those who have traditional values want religion to dictate the law. This article has considerable validity as it uses other sources and describes the methods taken in detail, however, the article relies heavily on correlations which may not necessarily prove the conclusions they made.

The reliability is strong as there are four authors who all are part of departments in universities and the article was published as part of an article and so would have been reviewed. The article has limited usefulness as this is not very relevant to my topic, however, it does suggest that the shift in values and conflicts between these new values with traditional values has caused greater secularism and thus a shift away from religion and traditional religious values.

**Tonti-Filippini, N., *Religion in a Secular Society*, Australian Human Rights Commission, 2011.**

This article defines a secular society as one which can operate without God in politics, another idea is that it refers to a society that is mostly non-religious, and a third idea is a society that follows secularism as a belief system. It then describes the modern idea of secularism as a society without God in politics that allows all religions to be equal, synonymous with pluralism. However, public morality is a necessity for a society as it is a basis for public social institutions as it sets norms, rights, respect, and freedom. Therefore, public debate should allow free expression and not exclude any perspective but consider the insight they may bring. The Australian constitution protects religious freedom under section 116, but this is to reduce the state's power, not religion and allows neutrality to ensure that churches receive impartial and equal treatment. However, many politicians say that church officials should not partake in politics which prohibits the free exercise of religion. Further Christians are often associated with fundamentalism and ignorance, and these ideas are also used by the media to slander opinions that go against public opinion which is also discriminatory as it denies the right to free speech. All perspectives need to be heard so that society can find values that will help society regardless of where these values originate. A bigoted version of secularism that excludes religion takes away the freedom of thought and

expression. Secularism as a belief and worldview works similarly to other religions and is not neutral, therefore it should be treated equally with other beliefs. Giving secularist views an exclusive right to be heard takes away rights to freedom of thought and expression, destroying the values of democracy. This article has strong reliability as it uses extensive amounts of evidence and sources for its arguments. Further, it is written by an associate dean with a PhD which adds to its credibility. The author and institute would have a bias towards religion and Catholicism. The article has excellent validity as it explains the evidence and how it leads to his conclusions. The article is useful in supplying information towards the effects of secularism as it can be misused to cause discrimination and break freedoms but also the benefits of secularism in allowing for these freedoms and rights but not help much with my PIP, with its only use being that it shows how discrimination has increased although it is unlikely to cause people to leave as the author demonstrates how he perseveres with his beliefs despite it.

**Keddie, N., *Secularism & its discontents*, Daedalus, On Secularism & Religion, Summer 2003, pp. 14-30 [accessed 9 November 2022].**

The article describes the history of secularism in its origin and how the movement developed. Further, the articles explain that developments in science, education and technology have caused growth in secularism which leads to modernisation. Secularism has also caused the rise of fundamentalism which has caused conflicts between secularists and fundamentalists. Nationalism rose to replace religion as a bonding agent and communal identity as it allowed equal rights and ensured secularism. This follows functionalist theory as religious institutions fail to adhere to modern ideas of inclusion and, therefore, are replaced. Secularism also led to movements such as Marxism. Secularism has had doubts and mixed success due to the wars and the performance of economic systems in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Fundamentalist movements have therefore risen as a reaction to secularism as it creates laws that threaten traditions they wish to uphold. Recently these anti-secularist movements have been rising, whilst secularist ones have been declining. Along with the end of communism, many problems arising from secularism have caused a strengthening in anti-secularist movements. This would suggest that secularism too is failing to incorporate all people and, according to functionalist theory, may be replaced if it remains unable to. Secularism is a slow evolutionary change that has and will see many conflicts with religion. This article has adequate reliability as it uses a lot of sources and evidence to back up its arguments, although some of the details were not sourced, making its reliability harder to check. Further, the author is a professor of history, and the

article is published by an organisation that would check validity and reliability. The validity is strong as it does explain where the conclusions of the article arise from and the information it uses to draw these conclusions. This article was somewhat useful as it provides in detail the history, causes and effects of secularism, providing information on secularism that helped with my PIP's context.

**Kettell, S., *Secularism and Religion*, Oxford Research Encyclopedias, 25 January 2019. [accessed 10 November 2022]**

This article shows how secularism came from scholars who believed modernity would decrease the relevance of religion and post-war secularism rose but recently religion maintains high influence and the idea of "the return of religion" has grown. Secularism is neutrality in the State, and impartial towards religious affairs, meaning that State and religion are separate. However, there is often conflict between secularism and religion which stems back to their etymology. There is also ambiguity in its definition which creates further issues. Secularism comes in many forms categorised between "hard" and "soft", or "exclusivist" and "inclusivist". Exclusivist secularism seeks to remove religion from public institutions, examples are France and the US. Inclusive secularism permits all religions in public institutions such as India. The arguments for exclusivist secularism are that: it is more universal to use secular reasoning, increases freedom, removes unfair privileges, and prevents discrimination whilst maintaining morality. Arguments against exclusivist secularism are that: it is restrictive and discriminatory, causes people to hide their true beliefs, prevents contributions that could benefit society, causes extremism due to resentment, is not truly neutral, and does not truly have a basis for reason. Currently, there is a division and many conflicts between secularism and religion which is only growing. This article has strong reliability as it cites a lot of evidence that is used for its arguments. Further, the author works at a university department and the article is published by Oxford University Press which would review the article and improve validity and reliability. This article is somewhat useful as it demonstrates the forms of secularism and the main reason for and against exclusivist secularism demonstrating the positive and negative effects arising from secularism.

**Lozano, F. *The rise of secularism and its economic consequences*. IZA World of Labor 2017: 384 doi: 10.15185/izawol.384. <<https://wol.iza.org/articles/the-rise-of-secularism-and-its-economic-consequences/long>> [accessed 11 November 2022]**

This article suggests that religious participation leads to socio-economic benefits by reducing risk-taking, creating a social safety net, and promoting traits such as cooperation, honesty,



and work ethic. However, socioeconomic growth also causes a decline in religion. Pluralism improves the quality of religious services by creating competition, whereas state religions cause worse services but more participation. However, religion is often vague and difficult to measure making it hard to draw an accurate correlation. This article has excellent reliability as the author uses a lot of sources and statistics to create his arguments. Further, it is published by an organisation that would review it and create stronger reliability. In addition, the author is a professor with a PhD in economics. The validity is adequate as it explains where the data is coming from and how conclusions are made although these correlations are not necessarily conclusive which the author acknowledges. This article is useful for showing how religion has an impact on economic growth, which has mediocre usefulness in my PIP. It was also useful for suggesting aspects that would affect religiousness and how religiousness can be measured through many aspects. Although it could be used to show why there may be gaps that are not filled by secularism in society which would suggest why religion persists, as it can fulfil these roles of promoting ideas that help socioeconomics.

**AbdulRahim, A. B., *The Impact of Secularism on Religious Beliefs and Practices*, Journal of Islam in Asia (E-ISSN 2289-8077), Vol. 7, No. 1, 2010, pp. 157-177.**

This article describes the history of secularism and how it has affected Islam. Secularism came from Martin Luther which caused a division between Catholicism and Protestantism which led to the separation of politics from religion to reduce conflicts. Secularism could also have come from the conflict between science and religion, and during the Enlightenment, as many philosophers suggested that religion prevents progress therefore it should be banned from public spheres. In the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, it was suggested that interference with religion reduced progress but in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, many advocated for the removal of religion entirely. Secularism comes from the Latin word "saeculum" which referred to "worldly things" but was later defined as the belief that state and core institutions should be separate from religion. Other definitions suggest it is an ethical or belief system, or the replacement of religion with science, rationality, and technology. Secularism reduces the value of nature, weakens traditional authority, and causes a change in values. It also reduces morality in youth as it can influence them to think more secularly by suggesting that religious morals are outdated. Secularism has a large impact on the social institution of school and education which influences youth by promoting certain methods of knowledge, especially science whilst suggesting that religious methods of knowledge, such as revelations, are invalid. Secularism removes religion from core institutions and public spheres, suggesting that

people, not God, should govern themselves and that religion is a private matter for individuals on a micro level, not for a macro level society. However, secular morals have the problem of not being fully agreed upon and not having a perfect method of enforcement or reward. This article has profound reliability as it uses evidence. Further, the author is a professor of human science, and it is published by a university which would help with reliability as it would be proofread. Further, it has adequate validity with satisfactory explanations for its points which are sourced and verifiable, however, it does suppose some ideas and certain behaviours are immoral, but it does acknowledge this by saying that it is immoral in the author's religion. The author has a large bias towards the Islamic faith and the publisher is also Islamic suggesting a large Islamic bias which is reflected in the article. The article is somewhat useful as it provides an extensive and detailed history of secularism and identifies many possible but more importantly it shows a lot of the effects and influences secularism has over religion and Islamic society through changing of values in institutions that socialise the next generation in a more secular way causing them to think more secularly.

**Hichy, Z., et al., The Role of Secularism of State on the Relationship Between Catholic Identity, Political Orientation, and Gay Rights Issues. Journal of Homosexuality, vol. 62, no. 10, 2015, pp. 1359-1373.**

This study found that secularism has a mediating effect on religiosity and political position with gay rights as those with greater religiosity and right-wing political orientation reject secularism as they want the law to reflect religious ideas, therefore rejecting gay rights and same-sex marriage. In this study, secularism is defined as the separation of the State and religion or the removal of religion from government. The study focuses on Italian Catholics to see the effect that religiosity and political orientation has on gay rights and secularism. The paper has substantial validity as it explains the methodology and conclusions it draws. The paper has considerable reliability as it has an extensive number of sources to build up its background information and a detailed description of the methods used to get to their results. Further, it is written by four people, three with PhDs and one with a master's degree. It is also published in a journal which would suggest greater reliability. The journal and article have a slight bias towards gay rights. This paper is somewhat useful as it provides a small background on secularism but does not go into detail. It investigates how secularist beliefs can impact political ideas but not how secularism can impact beliefs so it would not have much use in my PIP.

**Das, A., Secularism, family ties and loneliness: A multilevel longitudinal study of ten European societies, Social Science Research, Vol. 101, 102619, 2022.**

This study found that secularism does not have an impact on family or loneliness contrary to what some Conservative Western groups may suggest. The study has excellent reliability as it used an extensive number of resources used to explain the reasons behind the study focus and methods, the author is an associate professor. It also strong validity as it had substantial explanations for the conclusions and methodology. Further, it used a longitudinal study of multiple societies to compare levels of secularism and family ties which would provide more valid results. In addition, the study has been revised multiple times which would suggest a greater reliability and validity. The study has mediocre usefulness as it shows that secularism may not have a great effect on individuals as it does not influence family, which would be relevant for showing how secularism may not affect individuals much. However, the study provides an adequate way to measure secularism by analysing data from multiple countries which may be useful in my Interest Project.

**Paul, Gregory. (2005). Cross-National Correlations of Quantifiable Societal Health with Popular Religiosity and Secularism in the Prosperous Democracies. Journal of Religion and Society. 7.**

This study found that acceptance of evolutionary science correlates negatively with religion and that more secular countries have lower levels of societal dysfunction. Religious countries are also seen to have lower life expectancies and more homicides. Abortion rates also correlate with the religiosity of a country. This study has strong validity as it uses a lot of data from censuses to draw correlations between the religiosity of countries and general statistics. The reliability is mediocre as the author, Gregory Paul is predominately a palaeontologist and demonstrates a heavy bias against religiosity which may skew data. The validity is excellent as it explains where the data comes from and how conclusions are made. This study had limited usefulness for my PIP although some of these correlations do help such as how the acceptance of evolutionary science negatively correlates with religiosity, which would help to show how many institutions of schools may discourage people from religion.

**Hughes, P. (2011). Why some churches decline while others grow. Pointers: Bulletin of the Christian Research Association, 21(4), pp. 1–8.**

This paper focuses on the works of Paul Heelas and Linda Woodhead in their findings that churches that appeal more to modern societal values of individualism would thrive more, as seen in patterns of the commercialisation of religious practices and statistics of religious

growth, which is partially seen in Australia. Hughes also looks at other theories which cover a similar topic. This paper was massively useful as it compiled several theories which were very relevant to my topic and show how Australia partially followed these trends observed mostly in the United States of America. The article has outstanding validity as it explains the research of Heelas and Woodhead along with other critics of their work, summarising the papers which address these topics and then comparing their results with results in Australia explaining how they show some similarity. It also has satisfactory reliability as the author cites all his sources and has an adequate number of qualifications, being a professor. He also has a bias towards Christianity.

**Grim, B. (2009). Pentecostalism's Growth in Religiously Restricted Environments. *Society*. 46, pp. 484-495.**

This article identifies that the Neo-Charismatic Third Wave of Pentecostalism has been growing differently, being able to grow in religiously restricted environments whilst the other branches or Renewalist movements are unable to. The three branches: Pentecostals, Charismatics and Neo-Charismatics, have been seen to grow faster than other groups of Christianity. These groups emphasise the visible power of the Holy Spirit in daily life and are generally more popular outside of the Western world. This article has excellent reliability as the author is an experienced writer and the article utilises a lot of data. It also has outstanding validity as it explains his conclusions effectively. This paper is somewhat useful as it provides information into the main aspects of Renewalist movements and Pentecostals which have been seen to grow at a rapid rate, providing insight into factors that would benefit a denomination's growth.

**Lingier, A. and Vandewiele, W. The Decline of Religious Life in the Twentieth Century. *Religions*. 2021; 12(6):388.**

The paper identifies a few theories for the decline of religious life, focusing on Catholicism. The first theory is the theory of the cycle of growth and decline, where religious institutions will grow and then die off before adapting and growing again. The next theory is that societal processes of secularisation, professionalisation and secular opportunities for women have caused its decline. Here the paper explains that there is an extensive number of factors that have all been found to affect religiousness. The paper then suggests an Ecclesial theory that suggests that religious life declined due to the breakdown of hierarchy in the church. Another theory is the Theological theory although this is only seen in the Dutch which suggests that as the supernatural became doubted, the idea of giving up this world was no longer important.

The paper also critiques each of these theories, noting that most theories neglect the theological and spiritual aspects of religion. This paper has immense reliability as it details many works of other scholars and the theories they have presented, citing an expansive number of sources to show the advantages and disadvantages of each theory. Further Lingier is a doctoral researcher, and it is published by a university, although it is a Catholic university and so would have biases towards that. The paper is profoundly useful for suggesting several theories for why religious life has declined which is very similar and often follows the same reasoning as to why people stop following religion, which my PIP is about.

**McClure, P. K. (2016). Faith and Facebook in a Pluralistic Age: The Effects of Social Networking Sites on the Religious Beliefs of Emerging Adults. *Sociological Perspectives*, 59(4), 818–834.**

This article found that digital technology of Social Networking Sites (SNS) has caused young adults to believe it is acceptable to choose one's religion, which would have effects on large religions in the past as they no longer are pressured to follow their parents' religion. Further, the article suggests that they also are more accepting of people practising multiple religions and syncretistic beliefs and practises which would suggest that it is likely for religions to merge with other religions as well as secular ideas. This article has an outstanding usefulness as it provides insight into how SNS has caused people to be more pluralistic and accept other religions allowing for more diverse religions which may take on secular ideas to appeal more to a secular market. The article has excellent validity and reliability as it utilises the National Study of Youth and Religion as well as Peter Berger's theory of pluralism to create its conclusions.

## Legal Document

### **Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act 1900 (Cwlth), s. 116**

This section shows how Australia is constitutionally secular as this section explicitly bans the creation of law establishing a state religion, bans the prohibition of free exercise of religion, and bans religious tests for public jobs. This section is useful for my PIP as it shows how Australia is secular in its constitution, being constitutionally secular since the Federation.

## News Article

**O'Siadhail's, M., *Questioning values of secularised mid-Atlantic culture*, The Irish Times, 10 October 2022, <<https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/2022/10/10/ritereason-questioning-values-of-secularised-mid-atlantic-culture/>> [accessed 17 October 2022]**

Many individuals pray despite identifying as non-religious which suggests that people instinctively follow many religious ideas. He describes how the idea that religion is opposed to reason is a common association that is not exactly true. The article has mediocre reliability as it sources surveys and data to argue points, however, the author is a poet but has been educated at university. The article would also have been reviewed for publishing improving reliability. The article has some usefulness as it does not describe much about the values of secularism, but it is useful in suggesting how irreligious secularism may not be entirely possible as people are instinctively religious, suggesting symbolic interactionism as people follow religious belief systems despite the society being secular, and it would be important to investigate why people would follow their beliefs despite secularism.

**Ghosn, M., *Melto D'Moronoyo: Can religion survive amid rising secularisation*, The Catholic Weekly, 12 September 2022, <<https://www.catholicweekly.com.au/melto-dmoronoyo-can-religion-survive-amid-rising-secularisation>> [accessed 17 October 2022]**

The article talks about the difficulties of religious believers in secularism as it creates hostility towards religious individuals and how a sense of community and morality is lost due to secularisation. This article is mediocre reliability as it uses few sources to back up its evidence although it does use some external sources. Further, the author is a principal of a college, but the author and the publisher would have large biases for Catholicism. The article is somewhat useful in explaining some of the impacts of secularism on religious groups as it creates the idea that religion is irrational and primitive, and the opinions of religious individuals in seeing negative impacts of secularism. This would show how secularism discriminates against religious, which may discourage them from religion, but also suggests that people still retain their beliefs despite this.

**Morris, B., *King Charles, defender of faith: what the monarchy's long relationship with religion may look like under the new sovereign*, The Conversation, 21 September 2022, <<https://theconversation.com/king-charles-defender-of-faith-what-the-monarchys-long-relationship-with-religion-may-look-like-under-the-new-sovereign-190766>> [accessed 19 November 2022]**

This article shows how Prince Charles is protecting the national churches and suggests how a religious state can cause discrimination. However, with the rising amount of secularism globally, considerations to change some titles and secularise the UK have risen. The article has adequate reliability as it sources most of its information for its arguments. Further, the author is an honorary senior research associate, and the article would have been reviewed before publishing. The article is not very useful as it describes how the UK has many religious ties, but it does show some impacts of a religious state which may be solved through a secular state.

**Grant, S., *The census shows Australians are becoming less religious but why have we chosen to live without God?*, ABC News, 3 July 2022, <<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-07-03/census-religion-christianity-no-religion-god/101201640>> [accessed 1 November 2022]**

The recent census has shown the macro level evolutionary change of Christianity as it continues to decline. The article suggests that individualism has replaced religion, and further explains how secularism came from religious wars which led to the Age of Reason as people broke away from tradition causing a value on liberalism and individualism, reflecting conflict theory. This has caused dechristianisation as the church loses political powers, along with scandals also reducing authority in the church. This break from traditionalism is seen to cause consumerism and a lack of purpose and belonging. However, it also causes more traditional groups to rise to try to bring back religion and on a global scale Christianity is growing in more developing countries. This article has satisfactory reliability as it sources several researchers and statistics to create its arguments. Further, the author is an award-winning journalist who used to be also a vice chancellor at Charles Sturt University. It has substantial validity as it explains how the statistics form its conclusions. The article would have also been reviewed before publication improving reliability and validity. The article has some usefulness as it demonstrates the main causes of secularisation and some of the impacts of secularisation in an adequate amount of detail.



**Smith, D., *Most Australians don't identify as Christians — why, and what does this mean for our politics?*, ABC News, 30 June 2022, <<https://www.abc.net.au/religion/david-smith-christianity-and-the-australian-census/13953748>> [accessed 2 November 2022]**

The Census shows that less than 50% of Australia identify as Christian. However, the number of Christian practises has only slightly declined which suggests that it is mostly uninvolved Australians who no longer identify with their parents. Irreligious affiliation has been growing and this has caused political changes that move away from traditional values, such as abortion, marriage, and euthanasia laws. The reliability of this article is satisfactory as a lot of the information is sourced and the author is an associate professor. This article has some usefulness as it shows the political implications of secularism and how it has caused people to no longer identify as religious.

**Mannheim, M., *Census 2021 data shows Australians are less religious and more culturally diverse than ever*, ABC News, 28 June 2022, <<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-06-28/census-2021-data-shows-a-changed-australia/101177152>> [accessed 3 November 2022].**

Census shows less religious identity and more migrants. Christianity has declined below 50% and has been decreasing since 1966. This may be partially due to migration but mostly a shift towards atheist and secular beliefs. Marriages have also been dropping which may be a result of this shift and same-sex marriages have been recorded due to secularism. This article has immense reliability as its information is a description of census data which is a trustworthy source of information. Further, it uses well-known sources, and it would have been reviewed before publishing, improving reliability as well. The article is useful for my PIP as it shows trends in Australia that may correlate to each other and provide insight into the effects or causes of secularism.

**Barker, R., *Is Australia a secular country? It depends what you mean*, The Conversation, 14 May 2015, <<https://theconversation.com/is-australia-a-secular-country-it-depends-what-you-mean-38222>> [accessed 12 November 2022]**

There are three differing definitions of secularism suggested by Charles Taylor, the removal of religion from public institutions, the reduction in the macro level of religiosity, and the removal of religious privilege ensuring equality of all beliefs whether religious or irreligious.

Australia is the third idea due to section 116 of the constitution but not the other ones as Australia funds religious institutions and has a high level of religious affiliation. However as of recently, Australia may fit into the second idea as Christianity no longer has an absolute

majority, but it is still greater than any other religion, including no religion. This article has excellent validity as it explains all the reasoning behind its conclusions. The article also has outstanding reliability as it sources all the information used for its arguments, the author is a lecturer at The University of Western Australia and the article was checked before publishing. The article has mediocre usefulness as it identifies the definition of secularism and explains how Australia is or is not secular depending on which definition is used which helps to show how Australia is secular, although it does not provide much detail.

**Leppert, R. and Fahmy, D., *10 facts about religion and government in the United States*, Pew Research Center, 5 July 2022, <<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2022/07/05/10-facts-about-religion-and-government-in-the-united-states/>> [accessed 12 November 2022]**

This article shows how America is quite secular as many Americans believe that religion should not interact with government and many laws and legal decisions have removed religion from public institutions. The validity of this article is adequate as it uses surveys conducted by a well-established organisation to demonstrate its points. The reliability is adequate as it was created by a well-established organisation although the authors' qualifications are not very high. The article may have some usefulness as it demonstrates statistics on how secular the American government is and public opinion on secularism in America which may parallel with Australia, although generally most of the information is irrelevant for Australia and therefore not useful.

**Trounson, A., *Losing Our Religion*, University of Melbourne, <<https://pursuit.unimelb.edu.au/articles/losing-our-religion>>. [accessed 24 June 2023]**

There has been a large drop in the number of people affiliated with Christianity, most significantly in the 15–44-year age group. This is likely due to the already low level of importance that Australia holds for religion with a rating out of ten being 3.7 for women and 3 for men, and even among those with a religious affiliation, this is 5.5 for women and 4.8 for men. This number has increased from 5.4 and 4.5 for women and men respectively, which may suggest that many of the people leaving do not hold much value for religion. This article is therefore significantly useful as it shows how younger Australian are generally dropping in affiliation but more importantly that Australians hold a low level of importance of religion, even those who are affiliated. Further, the importance for those affiliated has increased which may suggest that many of those who are leaving already had a low level of importance for religion. This article has satisfactory reliability using mostly data from the HILDA survey

from the University of Melbourne with quotes from researchers from the University of Melbourne. It has considerable validity as it explains how the data creates its conclusions.

**Feng, L., *Faith no more: Why young Australians are rejecting religion*, SBS News, <<https://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/faith-no-more-why-young-australians-are-rejecting-religion/ej39zjcz8>>. [accessed 24 June 2023]**

This article shows how young Australians “are turning their back on religion”. It interviews a few individuals who have left their religion. Both individuals saw their previous religion as a lie and saw their religion as an unimportant part of their lives that was forced on them, suggesting that people will leave their belief system based on a degree of truth and importance. This article holds some usefulness for my PIP in providing factors that influence people to leave their religion which may hold relevance in reflecting how people change denominations, but this is unlikely to be the case. Therefore overall, the article does not help much with the PIP due to a focus on leaving rather than changing the denomination. This article has significant reliability using interviews and expert analysis to reinforce their arguments, and substantial validity as it explains how these interviews lead them to their conclusions.

**Singhal, P., *Religion in decline in Australian schools*, The Sydney Morning Herald. <https://www.smh.com.au/education/religion-in-decline-in-australian-schools-20180806-p4zvtb.html>>. [accessed 24 June 2023]**

This article shows how Australian school students are becoming more likely to identify with no religion even at Catholic schools a large decrease in those who identify as Christian has been observed. Where in 2011, 10% of Catholic school students identified themselves as having no religion whereas in 2016 this was 14%. In government schools, this was 38% in 2011 and 45% in 2016, and in independent schools, this was 24% in 2011 and 31% in 2016. This article has adequate validity and reliability using Census data to identify these trends which is generally considered a reliable source of data as well as quotes from social researchers to help explain reasons why and implications. This article is useful for identifying how the trend that school students experience, which is significantly relevant to my PIP as it shows how the institution of schools has been shifting due to secularism.

**Pew Research Center, Dec. 13, 2016, *Religion and Education Around the World*. Chapter 7. How religion may affect educational attainment: scholarly theories and historical background. [accessed 22 June 2023]**

This article details how religion has affected education historically. For Christianity in Western countries, religion set up education due to either the Protestant Reformation or the Second Reformation but has encountered conflicts between the two as science conflicts with Christianity. Most notably there was the clash between Galileo Galilei and the Roman Catholic Church, as well as religious leaders and Charles Darwin's 1859 theory of human evolution. This article has reliability with an expansive number of sources and detail as well as being published by Pew Research Center which is a well-established research company. It has strong validity as it details the methodologies used for their surveys. This article has reasonable usefulness for my PIP in providing information on how education may cause a decline in Christianity due to conflicts with science.

**Pew Research Center, Feb. 17, 2010, *Religion Among the Millennials Introduction and Overview* [accessed 22 June 2023]**

This article shows how younger generations show a lower level of religiousness with lower levels of affiliation, the importance of religion, fewer religious activities, and generally lower conviction to religious ideas. This article has mediocre usefulness as it talks about American trends which may not necessarily reflect Australian trends, which is not seen in another Pew Research article. The article has significant reliability in using statistics from a range of different sources to better provide a more accurate article, however as mentioned before these trends do not necessarily reflect Australia and it is very likely that they do not making this article not very useful for my PIP. The article's validity is considerable as it shows the methodologies for their research.

**Woessmann, L., Zierow L. and Arold, B., *Religious education in school affects students' lives in the long run*. CEPR VoxEU, 3 March 2022, <<https://cepr.org/voxeu/columns/religious-education-school-affects-students-lives-long-run>> [accessed 21 June 2023]**

This article shows how religious education in schools does affect individuals' religiosity as seen when Germany removed compulsory religious education religiosity decreased, from 52% to 49%. It also has the effects of changing perceptions and norms towards more secular ideas rather than religious ones, such as gender norms, marriage, and children. Further, the article has outstanding reliability as Woessmann is the Director of the Economics of

Education and Professor of Economics at the University of Munich, with many awards and qualifications. Zierow and Arold are both Postdoctoral researchers so the reliability of the article is strong with many sources and statistics from well-established sources. The validity is also adequate as it explains how they came to these conclusions. This was quite useful for my PIP as it shows how education influences people although it uses Germany as an example which may not reflect Australia.

**Pew Research Center, June 13, 2018, The Age Gap in Religion Around the World.  
[accessed 22 June 2023]**

This article shows how whilst Australia has one of the largest gaps in religious affiliation between adults over 40 and those younger than 40, in terms of importance the difference in religiousness is roughly the same. The article shows that 43% of adults younger than 40 have religious affiliation compared to the 66% of those older than 40. However, these numbers are profoundly higher than the 17-18% of Australians who believe religion is important, do weekly worship and have a daily prayer. The article also details trends that may correlate to what makes people more religious, generally better socio-economic development, entailing less sickness and death, and leads to less religiousness. This article, therefore, shows a profound level of importance for my PIP as it provides details into how most Australians do not see religion as important but affiliate with it, likely due to family ties or friends. Further, the article shows why religion has likely decreased in Australia, namely improved living standards. This article has immense validity as it details all the questions and methodologies used to get the data that it uses for its conclusions. Further, it has substantial reliability as it would have been checked.

**Rose, E., Religion in Australian schools: a historical and contemporary debate, 24 August 2017. <<https://this.deakin.edu.au/society/religion-in-australian-schools-an-historical-and-contemporary-debate>> [accessed 22 June 2023]**

This article shows how Australia has many religious schools with 30% of all schools being affiliated with a religion and 94% of private schools, compared to Sweden with 2% and the USA with 10%. These schools are predominantly Christian. Victoria has the Education Act founded on the idea that schools are "free, secular and compulsory". Further, there are often conflicts about what the purpose of education is and whether it should be religious. This article is somewhat useful for my PIP as it shows how Australia has many religious schools and in Victoria, education is legally secular, but this is overall not very useful for my PIP as it does not show how the schools may impact religious affiliation. It has adequate reliability as

it sources all the information it provided. It has quality validity as it explains how the statistics lead to its conclusion.

**Shorter, R. C., Riches T., *We're told Pentecostal churches are growing, but they're not any more. Is there a gender problem?*, The New Daily,**

**<<https://thenewdaily.com.au/life/2023/02/27/pentecostal-church-gender-numbers/>>**

**[accessed 25 June 2023]**

There is often a belief that Pentecostal affiliation is increasing but this is not the case. The Census reports a 2% decrease from 2016 to 2021, most of which was from individuals aged 15-34. Many of the people leaving Pentecostalism are women which may suggest that it is due to sexual abuse or underrepresentation in leadership. However, more research is needed to ensure this. This article has significant usefulness for showing why Pentecostalism has decreased which is important for my cross-cultural component. The article has great reliability as it cites a wide range of sources such as statistics and quotes to create strong evidence for its points. It also has immense validity as it explains how the conclusions are formed and nuances, such as the need for more research.

**Jones, Robert P., Daniel Cox, Betsy Cooper, and Rachel Lienesch. "Exodus: Why Americans Are Leaving Religion – and Why They're Unlikely to Come Back." *PRRI*.**

**2016. <http://www.prri.org/research/prri-rns-poll-nones-atheist-leaving-religion/>.**

**[accessed 30 June 2023]**

This article describes why many Americans leave their religion, most significantly 60% of them were due to no longer believing and 32% were due to their family not being religious. Further 29% was due to negative religious teachings, which would refer to conflicts in belief.

This article is useful for showing several trends that correlate with why religion has been declining in America which may reflect the nature occurring in Australia, giving it a mediocre usefulness for my PIP. This article has outstanding reliability by using survey data to reinforce their arguments and point out trends. Further one of the authors holds a Ph.D. which improves reliability. It has excellent validity as it explains how conclusions are formed from these statistics.

**Shearer, C., Number of Australian Anglicans falls by 580,000 in five years: Census 2016. The Melbourne Anglican. 18 June 2017.**

**<https://tma.melbourneanglican.org.au/2017/06/number-of-australian-anglicans-falls-by-580000-in-five-years-census-2016/> [accessed 7 July 2023]**

This article reveals how Anglicanism has seen a massive decline using Australian Bureau of Statistics data. It then provides several quotes by experts suggesting that it is likely due to a sense of Christian tradition in Australian identity which is gradually being lost, especially considering that far fewer people participate in their church. This article is helpful for my PIP in showing how and why Anglicanism has experienced a large decline in the past years. The article has exceptional reliability as it uses ABS data and quotes from a range of individuals to show findings. It has adequate validity as it explains where these quotes and statistics come from. It would have a strong bias for the promotion of Anglicanism.

**Koziol, M., *'Crisis point': the Anglican church is riven by worse divisions than ever before*. The Sydney Morning Herald. 20 October 2019. <https://www.smh.com.au/national/crisis-point-the-anglican-church-is-riven-by-worse-divisions-than-ever-before-20191018-p531ym.html> [accessed 7 July 2023]**

This article shows how the Anglican church is divided due to their different opinions on controversial topics, arguing whether to make concessions to the secular world's ideals or insist on strict Biblical ideals. This article is helpful to my PIP in showing how the Anglican church is experiencing divisions in its diocese due to the social pressures to conform to secular society. This article has significant reliability as it uses quotes from numerous people to back up its arguments. It has considerable validity as it explains well how it forms conclusions from these quotes.

**Marsh, A., *Could A More Individualistic World Also Be A More Altruistic One?* NPR. 5 February 2018. <https://www.npr.org/sections/13.7/2018/02/05/581873428/could-a-more-individualistic-world-also-be-a-more-altruistic-one> [accessed 12 July 2023]**

This article describes how individualism is on the rise across the world. It suggests that the increase is "due mostly to increasing socio-economic development, including higher incomes, more education, urbanization, and a shift toward white-collar jobs." This rising prosperity is however often conflated with selfishness due to its inverse being collectivism. However, countries which do value individualism are often still generous. This may be due to collectivist cultures only helping those who are close to them in the group which places less value on those outside the group whereas individualist societies will focus on all people. This

is useful for my PIP in providing information on why individualism is rising. This article has strong reliability as it shows where the data they used comes from. Further Marsh is an associate professor of psychology adding to the reliability of the article. It has great validity as it explains how the data may suggest the conclusions the author suggests.



## Video

***Classical Secularisation Theories* [online video], Professor Linda Woodhead,  
MASSOLIT, 2021,  
<[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FX\\_E8rao96I&ab\\_channel=MASSOLIT](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FX_E8rao96I&ab_channel=MASSOLIT)>  
[accessed 18 October 2022]**

Comte suggests that religion is an institution that is no longer necessary due to scientific discoveries. Durkheim suggests that God is a symbol of society that helps societies to be bonded, working as a control mechanism, however, in a larger society, law and contracts work better to bind society and therefore religion is no longer needed, following the idea of functionalist theory. Weber suggests that rationalisation has caused organisations to be more bureaucratic to increase efficiency which kills the magic-like nature of religion. The reliability of this video is substantial as it refers to other much more well-known individuals. It has satisfactory validity as the author is a professor and the video is part of a lecture in an organisation so the video would have been reviewed. The video was useful for identifying the general ideas around secularism and the theories on the causes that create secularism, which helped my PIP by giving me an understanding of why secularism occurred.

***The impacts of secularism* [Online Video], Ammar Hariz Bin Aman, Ammar Hariz,  
<[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3U3kqq3bTFg&ab\\_channel=ammarhariz](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3U3kqq3bTFg&ab_channel=ammarhariz)>  
[accessed 4 November 2022].**

This video describes how secularist and religious ideas are influenced by the social institution of media and ICT as well as the moral impacts it has as certain behaviours are allowed and banned due to secularism. The video has poor reliability as most of the information is not sourced but it does have some examples and ideas. Further, the creator has little qualification, and it can be published freely and easier with no editing or review. It has mediocre validity as it briefly explains how conclusions are formed. The video is not useful for my PIP, but it does identify examples of the effects of secularism and the influences which affect secularism, however, it does not have much reliability, validity, or detail in its explanations.

*The Necessity of Secularism / Steven Kettle / TEDxWarwickSalon* [Online Video], Steven Kettle, TEDx Talks,

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vR8Oon4Cqs8&ab\\_channel=TEDxTalks](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vR8Oon4Cqs8&ab_channel=TEDxTalks)

[accessed 4 November 2022]

The speech shows that religion and secularism have had many conflicts, with arguments about whether religion is effective for society. This is because religion is a social institution that provides a group identity about the most important aspect of life and death, binding a society together. However, this identity also creates boundaries and divisions which is why putting religion into government causes conflict. Kettle suggests that secularism would help to solve religious conflict as it allows freedom and space for all to co-exist. This speech has excellent validity as it sources the information used to form its arguments and explains the logic behind it. The speech has substantial reliability as the speaker is an associate professor and journal editor. There are some biases present as he suggests that blasphemy laws and religious states are bad. This article has some usefulness as it shows some effects of a religious government and the impacts of secularism as it allows freedom from religion and freedom of religion.

## Website

**Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "secularism". Encyclopedia Britannica, 9 Sep. 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/secularism>. [accessed 8 November 2022]**

Secularism is a movement away from otherworldly things. In the Middle Ages, there was a strong sense of religiousness which in the Renaissance caused more interest in human culture and this world. Modern history is often viewed as being antireligious and antichristian, but some theologians have suggested that there are opportunities in the world to share Christianity in secular society. This article has mediocre reliability as it has a few editors, whose qualifications are just editors of the Encyclopaedia Britannica, but almost no citing. It has poor validity as it does not explain where the information comes from. The article is somewhat useful as it shows an idea of secularism and how it comes from the Renaissance which has also caused an evolutionary change away from religion, following symbolic interactionist theory as people no longer view a need for religion due to the increased interest in human culture. However, the article does not provide much detail into these causes.

**France Diplomacy, *Secularism and Religious Freedom* [Website], <<https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/coming-to-france/france-facts/secularism-and-religious-freedom-in-france-63815/article/secularism-and-religious-freedom-in-france>> [accessed 12 November 2022].**

France seeks to treat all religions equally banning them from the public sector in 1905. This has caused a ban on religious attire in schools. The article has outstanding reliability as it uses the Constitution and explains what this means. The article has considerable validity as it is published on a government site although the author is not mentioned. This article has some usefulness as it shows how secularism works in France and how it has been ratified.

**Australian Bureau of Statistics. "Australian Standard Classification of Religious Groups." ABS, 2016, <<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/classifications/australian-standard-classification-religious-groups/latest-release>> [Accessed 16 November 2022].**

The article describes how the Census discerns what is and is not a religion. Further, it also shows the different levels of religious groups and how different religions are classified. This is quite useful for my PIP as census data will be a significant part of identifying trends of religions and denominations, so this article helps to define religions and denominations. The validity and reliability of this document are high as it is published by the Australian Bureau

of Statistics which is a well-established source of statistics in Australia and is transparent about its methodologies.

**Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Religious affiliation in Australia*, ABS, 4 July 2022**  
**<<https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/religious-affiliation-australia>>. [Accessed 16 November 2022]**

This article shows key changes in religious affiliation. The data shows the evolutionary change of Christianity which has been declining quickly since 1971 and no religion is rising at a similar rate suggesting that Christians are moving to no religion. The change in affiliation with Christianity of different ages is seen to have a very similar shape, although lower, than the religious affiliation in 2016 although at 10-25 years, the decrease is significantly greater.

The larger denominations have seen a massive decline whilst non-denominational Christianity has interestingly seen large growth. The large religions excluding Christianity have shown massive growth, especially Hinduism, Islam, and Sikhism. No religion is demonstrated to be most popular around 20-30 years of age, declining before and after these years, although there is a peak at 0 years of age that declines to about 15 years of age and this would represent the parent's affiliation of individuals around 25 years older. The reliability of this article is excellent as the data described is sourced from the Australian Census which is well-established, and the article is published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics which has adequate reliability. It also has outstanding validity as it details the methodology used to get the data, with the updates to its questions and form being available. This article is massively useful for showing the extent of the decline in religious affiliation and areas where the decline is focused as certain denominations have seen more decline than others, and some have even seen growth. It also shows where correlations may lie with changing migration or age, which are not seen to be present.

**Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Cultural diversity: Census*, ABS, 2021.**  
**<<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/people-and-communities/cultural-diversity-census/2021#data-download>> [accessed 18 November]**

This data shows religious affiliation for broad groups by State and age, narrow groups by year, year of arrival and ancestry, and religious groups by year. This would demonstrate the changes in religions, denominations and groups, and aspects that may correlate such as migration and age. This data has outstanding reliability as they are provided by the Australian Census which is a well-established government survey of high reliability. It also has great validity as it details the methodology used to get the data, with the updates to its questions

and form being available. This article is massively useful for my PIP as it will be used for correlations between certain demographics and growth or decline as well as helping with the cross-cultural areas.

**National Church Life Survey, *Change in weekly attendance by denomination: 1991 to 2016*, NCLS, 2016. <<https://www.ncls.org.au/infographics/change-in-weekly-attendance-by-denomination-1991-to-2016/>> [accessed 16 November]**

This data shows how church attendance has shifted from 1991 to 2016, with a sharp decrease in Catholicism and mainstream protestants but Pentecostal churches have experienced a significant amount of growth since 1996. This data has satisfactory reliability as it is a relatively large survey, taking data from a wide number of churches. It also has mediocre validity as it details where the results come from. Although there would be a bias towards Christianity this would not have a substantial impact on the results. The data was useful as it demonstrates how church attendance in mainstream denominations has seen a trend going down, but other denominations have demonstrated growth prompting this study.

**Australian Bureau of Statistics. *Schools*. ABS, 2022, <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/education/schools/latest-release>. [accessed 25 June 2023]**

These statistics reveal that Catholic schools are becoming more popular and increasing in the number of people who are intending almost twice as fast, percentage-wise, than Government schools. This may suggest that Catholic schools do not have much influence, although 20% of students attend Catholic schools so they may influence those 20% to become Christian but other influences have caused greater decreases in Catholicism overall. These statistics have extraordinary reliability as the Australian Bureau of Statistics and Census are official and legal procedures. It also has exceptional validity as it details the methodology used to get the data, with the updates to its questions and form being available. This article is significantly useful as it provides information about how Catholic schools have been growing despite the decline in Christianity which may be a reason why Catholicism did not decline as much as Anglicanism.