

Religion in Nordic Politics as a Means to Societal Cohesion

An Empirical Study on Party Platforms
and Parliamentary Debates 1988–2012

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Abstract

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In this study, I address the relationship between religion and politics in the Nordic countries, 1988–2012, against a background of increasing religious diversity alongside more or less continuous relationships between church and state. My aim is to analyse possible changes in the way religion is referred to by Nordic parliamentary parties, and in the way these parties use religion as a means to societal cohesion. I use theories on religious change and on the motives for using religion in politics to discuss a possible re-emergence of religion in politics, with the help of concepts such as functional differentiation, glocalisation and politicisation. I apply different forms of content analysis in a mixed-methods approach, using both substantial and functional definitions of religion. The thesis is based on four articles published or accepted for publication in peer-reviewed international journals: First, a study on religion in Nordic party platforms from around 1988, 1998 and 2008. Second, a study on religion in Danish, Norwegian and Swedish parliamentary debates, 1988/89, 1998/99 and 2008/09. Third, a study on the role of the majority churches in the final Nordic parliamentary debates on same-sex unions 1989–2012. Fourth, a study on Danish and Norwegian parliamentary debates on the wearing of veils among judges and policewomen in 2009. The major findings are that the references to religious diversity in party platforms and parliamentary debates have increased, which leads to a more complex understanding of the religious cleavage in politics, and that right-wing populist parties in particular politicise religion to achieve political influence. Furthermore, human rights have been increasingly used to address religious diversity as a political issue. I interpret these findings as continuous use of religion for societal cohesion in Nordic politics, through a model of different forms of politicisation using the concepts civil religion, human rights and nationalism. The thesis contributes to a better understanding of the religious cleavage, politicisation of religion, the impact of globalisation on the political debate about religion and changes as well as continuity regarding the use of religion in Nordic politics.

Keywords: Religion, politics, Nordic, Scandinavia, church, diversity, secularisation, globalisation, politicisation, cleavage, civil religion, human rights, nationalism, right-wing populist, privatised religion, content analysis, mixed methods

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To Maria, Alva, Linn and Arild

List of Articles

This thesis is based on the following articles, which are referred to in the text by their Roman numerals.

- I Lindberg, Jonas. 2013. 'Religion in Nordic Party Platforms 1988-2008', *Nordic Journal of Religion and Society* 26(2):121-139. <http://tapir.pdc.no/pdf/NJRS/2013/2013-02-2.pdf>
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- IV Lindberg, Jonas. Forthcoming. 'Values and Veils in Danish and Norwegian Parliamentary Debates', accepted for publication in *Religion & Gender*.

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1. Introduction

The Nordic countries have been internationally known as welfare utopian on the basis of ideals of equality and as being highly secularised, tolerant and peace loving (Damgaard 1992b:19; Ingebritsen 2006:2; Arter 2008:170-172). However, in recent years, international news media have also echoed a number of violent events that may be associated with tensions over diversity and religion. The publication of the so-called Mohammad cartoons in the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* in 2005 caused violent reactions internationally among Muslim groups (Arter 2008:293; Larsson 2009:4). In 2010, a suicide bombing took place in central Stockholm involving an Iraqi-born man with the motive of stopping ‘the war against Islam’ and, in 2011, a self-professed Norwegian-born Knight Templar officer killed 69 Labour Party youth because of the multicultural ambitions of their party (Amble 2012; Ravndal 2012).

To better understand if such events are isolated actions or part of a major change, there is a need to study the general development in the Nordic countries, an important part of which, I suggest, is the relationship between religion and politics. In this thesis, the focus is more specifically on possible changes in how the Nordic parliamentary parties handle issues of religion in party platforms and parliamentary debates, in a situation where religious diversity increases.¹

The main research problem here is what purpose religion may serve for the Nordic parliamentary parties within the timeframe: as an element in party identity, in *realpolitik* and/or as a main contributor to societal cohesion? By ‘party identity’, I mean religion as part of the values of single political parties or families of parties, as presented mainly in party platforms. By ‘*realpolitik*’, I mean the way religion is used in day-to-day politics in order to achieve political goals, as it is referred to in parliamentary debates in this case. By ‘contributor to societal cohesion’, I mean the way religion is used to legitimise politics and to contribute to the unification of the cultural and political dimensions of a nation-state at a core level. I will argue that all three elements are relevant in understanding how religion is used by the Nordic parliamentary parties and for what purpose. With ‘use’ I mean direct

¹ In Appendix 1, I list all of the Nordic parliamentary parties that are part of the empirical studies in this thesis.

political benefits and with ‘purpose’ I mean the *underlying* long-term motive.

The changing character of the Nordic countries from a more or less mono religious setting to a more or less multi religious one is an important side of the setting here. As a contemporary example, the major Swedish rock band Kent, in their 2014 hit song *La Belle Epoque*, lets its home country describe itself in a number of different statements, including: ‘I am mosques and cathedrals, I am the Bible and the Qur’an’ (Kent.nu 2014, my translation). Such phrases may reflect an increasing awareness of the presence of Islam in contemporary Sweden, while the political discourse on Islam has increasingly over time also come to focus on the Islamic values that cannot be accepted in Swedish society (Cato 2012). A similar theme is visible in Swedish journalist Lena Sundström’s (2009) description of the major tensions that she perceived between native Danes and immigrants while living for three months in Denmark in Spring 2009. Her full-length multi-award-winning feature focuses on how, in her opinion, the policies of the right-wing populist Danish People’s party affect Danish attitudes towards Muslims in particular. Some of the events that she describes in her book are echoed in the parliamentary debates that I analyse in Articles II and IV. In Article I, I also address the increasing references to religious diversity, in this case, in party platforms.

The other important side of the religious setting is that while there is change there also is continuity, particularly in the relationship between the Evangelical Lutheran majority churches and the Nordic states (Kühle 2011). Membership figures are slowly decreasing in these churches and the Finnish, Swedish and Norwegian majority churches have, to different degrees, all been disestablished, while the Danish and Icelandic majority churches continue to be closely tied to the state. In the cases of disestablishment, this does not however mean that the majority churches are treated the same as other religious denominations but, instead, continue to have a privileged position in relation to constitution and financing (Kühle 2011). In that sense, the Nordic countries may be described as highly secularised but yet not completely secular countries. In Article III, I particularly address the relationship between church and state and when I refer to ‘traditional institutional religion’ through the thesis that should mainly be understood as a reference to the kind of religiosity that the majority churches represent.

With the label ‘majority church’, it is also important to discuss how ‘majority’ may have come to be understood as ‘normality’, with the consequence that other denominations and religions in this case may have been understood as foreign and/or an exception to such normality, an issue that I will return to particularly in relation to nationalism in Chapter 2 (Sigurdson 2009:21).

One people, one nation – and one religion?

From the setting of this thesis, I will now return to the research problem, which is what purpose religion may serve for the Nordic parliamentary parties within the timeframe: as an element in party identity, in *realpolitik* and/or as a main contributor to societal cohesion. As I will show next, it is a problem closely related to the basis for democracy. Therefore, the thesis is based in two research traditions: the discussions on nation and democracy within political science and the discussions on religion and societal cohesion within sociology of religion. In that sense, it is also a sign of what may be perceived as an increasing porosity between religion and politics, which will be visible through the thesis.

The possibly close relationship between religion and politics needs to be explained and a starting point may be the concept of democracy, because democracy presupposes a limit or border between those who belong to the people, in ancient Greek *demos*, and those who do not (Petersson 2009:143-145). So far, humanity has never experienced a *demos* including all people in the world. Instead, people are classified by state citizenship, nationality, which is dependent on where you are born, which nationality your parents have or if you apply for citizenship and are accepted.

This leads to ‘the *demos* problem’, of what it takes to constitute a *demos*, as one of the fundamental dilemmas for democracy (Petersson 2009:143). Some theories focus on the needs of the individual and claim that a thin layer of culture with common rights and obligations is enough. Other theories, such as communitarian orientations, focus on the needs of society and claim that democracy needs a thick layer instead, with common values and a strong sense of community (Petersson 2009:148). These two views represent two different political traditions and, thereby, two approaches towards the mission of a political movement: one which represents societal cohesion in diversity and one which represents societal cohesion through homogeneity (Petersson 2009:150). I assume that the *demos* problem is even more complex today because, historically, democracies were small and homogenous groups while today’s large-scale democracies have to face the challenges of large and heterogenic societies (Petersson 2009:148).

An approach to discussing the *demos* problem is to use the three concepts of *ethnos*, state and nation (Petersson 2009: 148-150; Schnapper 1994). *Ethnos* means the common culture, language, traditions and religion of a people and state means the political and administrative power of a geographical territory. Nation is an entity somewhere in between the other two concepts, meaning that an individual in practice may live in a nation but be neither part of the (majority) *ethnos* nor the state, in which case she or he is not a citizen. To some political orientations such separations are undesirable, as I will outline in the section on nationalism in the next chapter.

As part of the process of nation building, religion has been used to legitimise the power of different kinds of rules and divisions between who is included and who is not. From a contemporary European point of view, the tolerance towards Christianity by Emperor Constantine I (272–337 AD) that eventually led to the establishment of Christianity as the one state religion of the Roman Empire is a central point in such constructions of legitimisation (Sigurdson 2009:199-203). This form of relationship between state and religion has been coined caesaropapism as an expression of how the political control of religion is used to legitimise political rule and to sanctify economic oppression and the given system of stratification (Casanova 1994:49).

A further step was taken with the peace of Augsburg in 1555 and the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, where the principle *cuius regio, eius religio* was established (Sigurdson 2009:41). It meant ‘whose realm, his religion’ – in practice, the ruler decided which religion her or his adherents should follow as a way of exercising control over religion and the people. This principle was enforced due to the tensions that arose as a consequence of the Reformation and the establishment of Protestant churches alongside the Catholic Church.

However, such principles can only work as long as religious and theological issues can be considered as having authority in society. As I will show next, Christianity has in general gradually lost influence, particularly in Western European societies. As a consequence, such use of Christianity was, as a first step, replaced with the principle of the nation or *cuius regio, eius natio*, which I will return to in the next chapter in the section on nationalism (Schmitt 2010:104).

Religious change

The religious change that I indicated in the previous section needs to be further explained. As I understand it, this change is a consequence of changes in society as well as within religion itself, but the scientific interpretation has also changed, as I will show here and in the next chapter.

In traditional societies, such as in medieval Europe, religion has been claimed to function as a ‘sacred canopy’, which means that the entire socio-cultural world is incorporated in one religious cosmology (Berger 1967). In this way, religion contributes, for better or worse, to simplifying the world, to ruling out contingency, to supporting and sustaining classifications and backing the current social practices and traditions (Sinding Jensen 2011:37).

However, a religious change has taken place over time, not least in Western Europe, that has most often been referred to as the process of secularisation. A common perception of that process has been that religion decreases in importance as a result of modernisation and eventually will even disappear (e.g. Berger 1967; Wilson 1966; Bruce 2011). Karel Dobbelaere (1981; 2002) has claimed that secularisation can be separated into three dimensions:

the societal, the organisational and the individual. José Casanova (2001b:13.788), analyses secularisation in a similar way and defines it as the result of three different and disparate propositions: (1) the differentiation of secular spheres from religious institutions and norms, (2) the decrease in religious belief and religious practice and (3) the privatisation of religion or restriction of religion to the private sphere; I will next further explain all of these three.

First, following Casanova's model, functional differentiation is claimed to be the result of the emergence of modern societies, with higher concentrations of populations. As a consequence, increased competition has in turn caused increased demand for specialisation in work life or, in Émile Durkheim's (1933) terms, the division of labour. The theory of functional differentiation has been further developed by scholars such as Niklas Luhmann. In his systems theory, modern societies have become so complex that they necessarily have been divided into different social systems, such as law, economy and religion (Luhmann 1982). If religion once functioned as a sacred canopy (Berger 1967), it has now lost its role in society as a common contributor of values and legitimisation.

Second, a substantial amount of data shows a decrease in religious belief and religious practice, particularly in its traditional forms of Western Christianity (Casanova 2001b:13.790; Norris and Inglehart 2004:24-25; Bruce 2011). Meanwhile, Peter Berger (1999:2) has claimed that large parts of the world are still 'as furiously religious as ever'. In order to explain this discrepancy, Casanova (2001b:13.790) claims that the decrease in religious belief and practice in Western Europe may be the result of a self-fulfilling prophecy. Social movements and political parties have adopted the Enlightenment critique of religion, to become vehicles of a process from tradition to modernity, from religion to secularity (cf Woodhead 2009).

Third, as a consequence of functional differentiation, as it is understood in Luhmann's systems theory, religion has become a private matter to anyone but religious professionals. The reason is claimed to be that each system interprets reality by its own distinctions, in this case between religious and secular, which causes a division between laymen and professionals (Luhmann 1982).

The privatisation of religion may also have accelerated through general pietistic trends, processes of individuation and by the reflexive nature of religion (Casanova 2001b:13.791). However, according to Casanova (1994) religion has become increasingly de-privatised since the late 1970s once formerly state-oriented religious denominations accepted a confinement to civil society and then re-enter the public sphere from the private sphere in order to contribute, not least, through emphasising the importance of core values in society.

Casanova's notion of a de-privatisation of religion is one of many contemporary claims of a return of religion into the public sphere or to have

become more visible in society, in different ways. One prominent example is how religion has been claimed to re-emerge into politics or to become re-politicised (e.g. Asad 2003:1, Madeley 2003b:2; Foret and Itçaina 2012:3). Whether religion re-emerges or gets politicised is a matter of who the principal actor is. With an explicitly religious actor, such as the representatives of a church, religion can be said to re-emerge into, in this case, politics, which is not the focus of this thesis. With a non-explicitly-religious actor, such as a political party, religion gets politicised (Kingdon 2011:198). In the latter case, religion then becomes a means to political influence (Robertson 1991). I particularly address this use of religion in Article II.

Furthermore, the process of functional differentiation may not be as one-directional as once was thought. One reason may be the notion of performance, according to which religion may contribute to other subsystems to solve problems that are unsolved there (Luhmann 1982:238-242). Majority churches of the Nordic kind may also continue to function as 'public utilities' in the sense that they are expected to be available at the point of need to the population at large, despite changed relationships between church and state (Davie 2006:251). I particularly address this issue in Article III.

The discussions on religious change and the use of religion in society and in particular in politics are of central importance in this thesis and I will therefore elaborate upon them in the next chapter, particularly in the section entitled 'From a sacred canopy to a sacred narrative of secular progress'. Before then, I will further introduce the research context in relation to societal core values, religious landscape, immigration and political developments.

Research context

In this thesis, I will study the use of religion in politics and religious change in a Nordic context, meaning Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden as part of the NOREL project.² Besides possible increasing tensions between religion and politics, which I referred to in the introduction to this chapter, these countries are in general terms an interesting object of study in relation to religion due to a seeming paradox between a low degree of individual traditional Christian beliefs and a high degree of membership and participation in baptisms, church weddings and funerals in the majority churches (Bäckström, Edgardh Beckman and Pettersson 2004:86-87).

The Nordic countries are also easily comparable due to a number of similarities in basic societal characteristics, including core values, welfare model, religious profile, immigration and an overview of the party political devel-

² The NOREL project has been conducted by Professor Inger Furseth and has engaged some 20 researchers, including two PhD students, 2010-2014. For a final report from the project, see Furseth forthcoming.

opment. I will outline these in this section and highlight relevant differences between the countries.

According to an analysis of the World Values Survey, the Nordic countries are taking an extreme position globally when it comes to the level of secular-rational values and self-expression values (Inglehart and Welzel 2010: 553-554). This means that these countries have moved further than any other country in the world from traditional- and survival-focused values to what may be perceived as contrasting 'modern' values. Such core values also distinguish the universalistic Nordic welfare system that promotes equality of status, where all citizens are endowed with similar rights in 'solidarity of the nation' (Esping-Andersen 1990:25). As part of this, gender equality can also be said to be integral to Nordic citizenship (Ellingsæter and Leira 2006:7). These values have been used to enable the relatively small Nordic countries to be agenda-setting internationally as 'moral superpowers' or 'norm entrepreneurs' by engaging with conflict resolution (Ingebritsen 2006:2). However, this reputation has been tarnished in recent years because of increased difficulties with the transition to becoming multicultural societies, not least in Denmark (Arter 2008:335).

The Nordic 'value profile' is also visible in relation to religiosity. Turning back to the analysis of the World Values Survey, only three percent of the population in secular-rational countries such as the Nordic ones say that God is very important in their lives, and church attendance is low in international comparison (Inglehart and Welzel 2010:553; Pettersson 2006:250; Pettersson 2008:34-38). However, Ole Riis (1989:143-144) has possibly captured Nordic religious identity when characterising it as 'protestant humanism'. His point is that values such as individual human rights, self-fulfilment, individual expansion and the continuation of the networks of kinship and friendship are based on Christian values and traditions (cf Hervieu-Leg er 2000). In that sense, Christianity can also be claimed as contributing to the modern structuration of society in countries like the Nordic ones.

As part of that picture, the Nordic countries continue to have long-standing relationships between the states and Evangelical Lutheran majority churches. The Finnish majority church was already disestablished in 1919, while, since then, the state has retained a close relationship to it and the minor Finnish Orthodox church (K ari inen 2011:155-157). The Swedish majority church was disestablished in 2000 but still holds a privileged position in terms of legislation and financing compared to other religious denominations (Pettersson 2011). The Norwegian majority church was disestablished in 2012 but, like its equivalents in Finland and Sweden, it retains privileges, not least in legislation, compared to other religious denominations (Botvar and S jborg 2014:236). Meanwhile, the Danish and Icelandic majority churches continue to be closely tied to the states (K hle 2011).

The membership figures are decreasing in all of the majority churches, while they can still be claimed to be at high levels, ranging from 67.5 per-

cent in Sweden to 79 percent in Denmark (Markkola and Naumann 2014:1). In a similar way, a majority of the populations participate in religious rituals such as baptisms, weddings and funerals (Bäckström, Edgardh Beckman and Pettersson 2004:92). With the Nordic welfare model that I referred to earlier in this section, it is also relevant to mention the renegotiated role of the majority churches as providers of welfare alongside other actors in society (Markkola and Naumann 2014:12; Bäckström and Davie 2010). I will particularly address this approach to the role and use of religion in Article III.

Parallel to the process of both continuity and change in relation to the majority churches, religious diversity has also increased in the Nordic countries, due largely to immigration (Kühle 2011:208). Today, about 13 percent of the population in Sweden was born abroad, about 10 percent in Iceland, about 8 percent in Denmark and Norway and about 4 percent in Finland (Norden 2013). Swedes and Icelanders show among the most positive attitudes towards immigrants compared to other nationalities in Europe, based on six questions related to immigration in the European Social Survey (Blom 2006:23-29). The populations in the other three Nordic countries vary more in their attitudes, depending on the specific question, and Danes and Finns are particularly negative towards immigrants from poor countries outside Europe, according to the survey results.

Finally in this section, I will turn to the party political development and especially in relation to religion. The Nordic countries are stable democracies with long-standing parliaments as their national legislative assemblies, and have been characterised by a five-party model throughout the greater part of the 20th century (Arter 2008:51-71). The parties were created alongside four cleavages that have been analysed by Seymour Lipset and Stein Rokkan (1967). According to their theory, the Reformation in the 16th century and the Enlightenment in the 18th century created a cleavage between centre and periphery, which means between urban elites and regional interests, and between church and state or rather between religious and secular groups. In the 19th century, two additional cleavages developed through the Industrial Revolution: the economic class cleavage between owners and workers and the urban and rural cleavage between industrial entrepreneurs with an interest in free markets and land owners who preferred protectionism. Of these four cleavages, the economic class cleavage has the strongest impact and fits best with the traditional left-right spectrum.

In the Nordic five-party model, the left wing was constituted by a strong social democratic party with a communist or left socialist party and the right-wing by a conservative party with a liberal and an agrarian centre party. However, towards the end of the 20th century, new groups of parties such as right-wing populist (Denmark, Norway and Finland, in Sweden since 2010), Green (Finland, Sweden and Iceland), Feminist (in Iceland) and Christian Democratic (Denmark, Finland and Sweden, in Norway since 1933) entered the different parliaments (Arter 2008:101-132). Through these develop-

ments, new issue-areas, such as immigration and environmental issues, were added to the classical political cleavages (Stubager 2000). As a result, party competition has intensified in these multi-party systems (Damgaard 1992c:199; Green-Pedersen and Krogstrup 2008:611-614).

In the Gustafsson study (1985) on religious change in the Nordic countries, 1938-1978, Ole Riis (1985:34) claimed that religion was considered to be a 'non-issue' in Danish politics and by that he meant that all parties quietly agreed on the importance of keeping an open majority church and religious tolerance. Nevertheless, the religious cleavage was visible in that study as a divider between the left wing and the right wing, which is also visible in other studies, as I will show next.

Most obviously, the Nordic Christian Democrats have developed as a reaction towards what was perceived as increasing secularisation of society and have their roots in revival movements, which makes them differ from their continental equivalents and their roots in political Catholicism (Arter 2008:123-128; Madeley 2000:34-35; Madeley 2012:117-121). Conservative parties have traditionally promoted the national churches, with criticism of popularising tendencies, while centre-right parties have endorsed church traditions as well as criticised High-Church tendencies, and liberal parties, particularly in Sweden, have historically been linked to minority church movements and have taken an anti-clerical stance (Sundback 2000:57-59; Arter 2008:123). The right-wing populist parties were originally seen as counter-poles, not least to the Christian Democratic parties due to their neo-liberal demands for relaxation of restrictive censorship and alcohol laws, but have in recent years developed a focus on cultural Christianity in opposition to Islam in particular (Madeley 2000:35; Lindberg 2011).

Parties on the left wing have traditionally taken a more critical standpoint towards religion than have parties on the right (Sundback 2000:57-59). However, the Nordic social democratic parties in particular have changed their view over time into seeing the majority church as part of the welfare system with an understanding of common values (Riis 1985:26; Sundback 1985:71; Pétursson 1985:114; Lundby 1985:157-158; Ahlbäck 2003:172; Fridolfsson et al 2009:177).

Next, I will turn to the aim and research questions of the thesis.

Aim and research questions

In the introduction to this chapter, I referred to increasing religious diversity and possible tensions between religion and politics as well as a Nordic paradox with a high degree of individual secularisation and more or less established majority churches. In that context, I outlined the main research problem as what purpose religion may serve for the Nordic parliamentary parties within the timeframe: as an element in party identity, in realpolitik and/or as a main contributor to societal cohesion.

To address the research problem, I pose the following aim of the thesis: to analyse possible changes in the way religion is referred to by Nordic parliamentary parties 1988-2012 and in the way these parties use religion as a means to societal cohesion.

To reach the aim, I will pose two overarching research questions, of which the first is related to the purpose of religion as an element in party identity and in *realpolitik* as stated in the research problem:

1) Does the way Nordic parliamentary parties refer to religion change between 1988 and 2012 and, if so, in what way?

This question is directly aimed at the empirical studies in the four articles. Theoretically, the question is related to discussions on religious change from traditional interpretations of the secularisation thesis to contemporary claims of a de-privatisation or re-emergence of religion in politics that I introduced earlier in this chapter. Furthermore, the first question is empirically related to the development of increasing religious diversity and both change and continuity in the relationship between states and majority churches in the Nordic countries. The question will be answered with the help of the research questions in each article, which I will also specify here (by ‘political parties’ in these questions I mean parliamentary parties, which is understood by the given context in each article):

In Article I, ‘Religion in Nordic Party Platforms 1988-2008’, I pose four questions:

a. Does the number of issue-areas related to religion increase or decrease over time in Nordic party platforms?

b. Does the connection between religion and other political issues, such as national identity, foreign policy, and human rights, change during this period?

c. How do the political parties view the positions of the majority churches and do they change over time?

d. What differences can be observed between the political parties in their approach to religion?

In Article II, ‘Politicisation of Religion in Scandinavian Parliamentary Debates 1988-2009’, I pose four questions:

a. Does the number of speeches and debates with references to religion change?

b. Does the percentage of references to different keyword clusters and issue-areas related to religion change?

c. Does the percentage of problematisation of religion change?

d. Do right-wing populist parties act differently from other political parties in relation to religion?

In Article III, ‘Renegotiating the Role of Majority Churches in Nordic Parliamentary Debates on Same-sex Unions’, I pose three questions:

a. To what degree are the majority churches referred to in the final Nordic parliamentary debates on registered partnership and same-sex marriage?

b. In what way are the majority churches used as authorities in these debates?

c. In what way and by which parties is civil union referred to as an alternative to the double track system in these debates?

In Article IV, 'Values and Veils in Danish and Norwegian Parliamentary Debates', I pose one question:

a. What kinds of values are invoked in the reasons given to defend or criticise the possibility of the wearing of veils among state officials?

The second overarching research question is related to the purpose of religion as a main contributor to societal cohesion in the research problem:

2) Which patterns are discernible in the way Nordic parliamentary parties use religion between 1988 and 2012, in terms of weak or strong politicisation for the purpose of homogeneity or in diversity, and what may this tell us about changes in the use of religion as a means to societal cohesion?

I use this question to discuss the results from the first research question. In the process, I choose to assume that the creation of a demos is necessary for establishing a democracy. I also recognise that, historically, religion has been used to strengthen societal cohesion in terms of the solidarity of the nation and political legitimacy, as I referred to earlier in this chapter and will develop further in the next chapter.

In the contemporary Nordic situation, with a possible paradox between individual secularisation and more or less established majority churches, I will discuss whether traditional institutional religion (in this case represented by the majority churches) continues to be used as a main contributor to societal cohesion, if it has been replaced with another solution to that assumed need, or if no such solution seems to be sought-for anymore.

Definitions

Before I proceed any further into this thesis, I need to define two major concepts: religion and politics.

Religion

The task of defining religion can be described as an ongoing struggle among scholars of religion. Much effort has been put into constructing a universal definition that may encompass religion as a whole in all times and places (Beyer 2006:2). Most commonly, religion is defined in two different ways, either in a substantial or a functional sense (Furseth and Repstad 2005:28).

Substantial definitions focus on what religion is and usually have some form of transcendent or supra-empirical aspect as a central factor. Functional definitions focus on what religion does, such as what social or psychological purpose it serves, with no necessary central reference to transcendence (Beyer 2006:4).

However, there is more to the definition of religion than that, as religion is also a social phenomenon that varies in meaning across time and place (Beckford 2003:2-7). Individuals, groups, organisations and institutions attribute certain meanings to the notion of religion and, as James Beckford (2003:4) puts it:

[Religion] does not have agency. Rather, it is an interpretative category that human beings apply to a wide variety of phenomena, most of which have to do with notions of ultimate meaning or value. /.../ As such, the category of religion is subject to constant negotiation and re-negotiation. Its meaning must therefore be related to the social contexts in which it is used.

In that sense, religion may continue to be a cultural resource, despite processes of religious change such as functional differentiation, which I will return to more in Chapter 2, and at the same time, religion may also have become more contentious and controversial (Beckford 1999:24; Beckford 2003:3). While religion has, to a high degree, lost its former points of anchorage in religious denominations and states, at least in Western Europe, it continues to have the potency to be a vehicle of social change, challenge and conservation, according to Beckford (1989:170-172).

The definition of religion has consequences for areas such as politics as it may be a crucial component in the creation, distribution and application of social power (Beyer 2006:6). Religion may continue to symbolise ultimate meaning, infinite power, supreme indignation and sublime compassion (Beckford 1989:171). How we define religion may also implicate how we define who 'we' and local or global 'others' are (Beyer 2006:6). The possible uses of religion in politics are numerous, such as to glorify a nation in a form of banal civil religion (Repstad 2009:200).

In this thesis, I will use both substantial and functional definitions of religion, but for different parts of it and for different purposes. In the four empirical studies (Articles I, II, III and IV), I explicitly or implicitly use a substantial definition of religion to find what is perceived as 'religion' in the material to be able to operationalise it. I understand religion there as beliefs, language, symbols, activities and institutions that are being used to regulate the cleavage between the empirical and supra-empirical perceptions of reality (Hill 1973:42-43). This definition of religion primarily corresponds to the first overarching research question.

The second overarching research question is more related to a functional definition of religion. In Durkheim's (1976:419) view, the idea of society is

the soul of religion and his definition of religion is a combination of substantial and functional elements: Religion is a uniform system of beliefs and forms of practice related to holy matters and that unites everyone that adheres to it to a moral community called a church (Durkheim 1976:47). While I appreciate the effort to combine a substantial and a functional definition of religion, there are obvious difficulties with Durkheim's definition. First, while religion might have come out as a uniform system in early twentieth-century France it is much harder to define it in such way today, including the strictly Christian reference to the religious community as a church. Second, with the wider uses of the concept of religion, that I have outlined here with references to Beyer (2006) and Beckford (1989; 2003), a functional definition of religion today needs to be wider as well.

A more contemporary approach to a functional definition of religion is taken by Linda Woodhead (2011). According to her, three main uses of religion are currently dominant: religion as belief/meaning, as identity and as structured social relations. However, she proposes a taxonomy for the social scientific study of religion of five major classes: religion as culture (belief, meaning, cultural order, values, discourse, ideology, mystification, tradition and memory); identity (community-creating, boundary-forming, identity-claim, and organised belonging); relationship (social relations, super-social relations and experience); practice (ritual, embodiment, quotidian practice and popular or folk religion); and power ('compensator', 'capital', resources, economy, politics and status and recognition at different levels). My intention here is to use these categories as part of my analysis, especially as three of the categories are relevant in relation to my studies on the use of religion in politics: religion as culture, identity and power. If three out of five contemporary categories of religion can be easily related to politics, then it should not come as a surprise if the studies in this thesis actually point to a profound relationship between religion and politics.

As my use of a functional definition of religion builds upon the results from using a substantial definition, it is fair to say that in practice I use a combination of these two different ways to define religion. As I referred to in Durkheim's (1976:47) definition of religion, such an approach may well be coherent and it may also be fruitful if it fits with the contemporary context (cf Furseth and Repstad 2005:31). In this case, my combination allows for me to find religion in a traditional understanding of the concept, while it also allows me to compare such understanding of religion functionally with similar concepts, such as nationalism and human rights doctrines.

With Beckford (2003:28-29), I would finally like to add that while I here will treat religion as a social construction, that is not a statement on whether or not the divine supernatural power, upon which a religion may rely, in fact exists. That is a completely different story.

Politics

Just like religion, politics is a concept with many definitions. The concept of politics may include (a) policies backed by the legally binding authority of government, (b) actions that involve a decision or choice among viable options, (c) the sort of considerations or motives participants invoke in selecting among different options, (d) the way that decision making affects the interests or values of the population and to what degree such effects are intended or not, (e) the extent of decisions in terms of number of people or length over time, (f) the extent to which the traditions of a people recognise an action as one that a public voice may or may not legitimately be involved in, and (g) the extent to which an act or policy becomes an issue of groups with differing views about it (Connolly 1993:12-13).

As I aim this thesis at the use of religion in party politics, the most relevant of these aspects may in particular be (a) policies backed by the legally binding authority of government and (d) the way that decision making affects values of the population and to what degree such effects are intended. Aspect (a) is more or less self-explanatory due to the given context of party politics and parliamentary debates and aspect (d) may be related to the possible political use of religion as contributor of (core) values in society, which I will return to in the next chapter. Aspect (f), that the extent to which the traditions of a people recognise an action as one that a public voice may or may not legitimately be involved in, is also interesting in relation to religion, given the view that religion may be considered as a private matter, as I will return to in the next chapter. That aspect will not affect the definition of politics here, but is at least relevant to bear in mind on a general level of a discussion of the use of religion in politics: when religion is considered to be appropriate in politics and when it is not.

With these two or possibly three prioritised aspects of how politics may be defined in relation to the use of religion, I choose to understand politics, or more specifically political interactions, as ‘predominantly oriented toward the authoritative allocation of values for a society’ (Easton 1965:50). In this, I understand values as either being material, related to conditions such as economy and natural resources, or non-material, related to conditions such as norms on what is beneficial or destructive for society.

The primary actors here are the Nordic parliamentary parties and their representatives in Parliament, as I will expand on in Chapter 3. Here, I choose to understand a political party as ‘a team of men [sic] seeking control over the governing apparatus by gaining office in a duly constituted election’ (Downs 1957:25). When I refer to political parties in general I use the term ‘political parties’ and when I refer more specifically to the political parties in parliament I use the term ‘parliamentary parties’.

Previous research

Religion and politics is a vivid field of research internationally. In Casanova's (1994:3) view, the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979, the growth of the Solidarity movement in Poland with its association with the Catholic church, the revolution in Nicaragua and other political conflicts in Latin America with its active contribution by the Catholic church and the re-emergence of Protestant fundamentalism in American politics, all have contributed to an increasing visibility of and interest in the role and use of religion in politics (cf Beyer 2007:105).

Whether or not this should be considered a return of religion in politics has been discussed by a number of scholars, including Beckford (2010), Toft, Philpott and Shah (2011) and Foret and Itçaina (2012). Here, I will give an account of a number of scholarly studies on religion and politics and expand on those that I find most relevant in relation to my thesis.

Two major international contributions are the *Routledge Handbook of Religion and Politics*, edited by Jeffrey Haynes (2009) and *Religion and Politics*, edited by John T S Madeley (2003c), both of which give a broad perspective on different religions and countries in relation to issues and areas such as states, legislation, security, development and identity. Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart (2004) use case studies on religion and politics to discuss the most influential traditional secularisation theories. In more specific studies, the impact of the September 11 events in the USA in 2001 on the debate on religion and conflicts (Lincoln 2006), the controversies over Islam in Western Europe (e.g. Scott 2007) or the continuing influence of Christianity in British party politics (Steven 2011) are discussed and analysed.

In the Nordic countries, the major study on religious change 1938-1978 that was conducted by Göran Gustafsson (1985) has already been mentioned. In general terms, he and his colleagues (Dahlgren 1985; Lundby 1985; Pétursson 1985; Riis 1985; Sundback 1985) interpreted the development in politics as well as in other areas of society in terms of increasing secularisation, with a diminishing role of religion. Furthermore, they found the religious cleavage in politics to be a divider between left-wing and right-wing parties (cf Lipset and Rokkan 1967). The Gustafsson study is of particular importance to this thesis as it has inspired the NOREL project, to which I have referred to earlier, and to which I will return in different ways throughout the thesis.

A prominent area has been Nordic parliamentary parties and their relationship to religion, focusing on Christian Democrats (Demker 1998, 2005; Madeley 2000; Brommesson 2010; Madeley 2012), Social Democrats (Ahlbäck 2003; Fridolfsson et al 2009) or right-wing populists (Rydgren 2004; Lindberg 2011; Sedgwick 2013). In other studies, specific empirical sources such as party platforms have been analysed in search of different references, including religion (Aardal, Krogstad and Narud 2004; Green-

Pedersen 2005; Kestilä 2006; Holberg 2007; Sorensen 2011; Thorhallsson and Rebhan 2011).

An overview of scientific research on religion and politics in the Nordic countries should also include studies on the influence of religiosity on voting behaviour based on survey results, although that is not specifically in focus in this thesis (Aardal 2007a; Hagevi 2009, 2010, 2011a, 2011b; Knutsen 2010).

Finally, in recent years, as a sign of increased research interest in the field, a number of doctoral theses in sociology of religion have focused on or related to religion and politics in the Nordic countries. In most of these, records from parliamentary debates have been used as an empirical source. Brian Arly Jacobsen (2009a) has studied the discourse on and comparison of Danish parliamentary debates on Jews in the early 20th century and Muslims between 1967 and 2005. Henrik Reintoft Christensen (2010) has studied the limitations of religious authority as referred to in newspaper editorials and parliamentary debates and analysed the different forms of secularism in Denmark, Norway and Sweden in 2006. Johan Cato (2012) has studied the discourse on Islam in Swedish public policies, 1975-2010. Lise Kanckos (2012) has studied Finnish parliamentary debates on assisted reproduction in the 2000s. Signe Engelbreth Larsen (2013) has studied Danish parliamentary debates on the laws on blasphemy 1912-2012. Marta Axner's (2013) study should also be mentioned although it is less related to my study, as it focuses on religious actors in Swedish debate articles, 2001-2011, but is still within the research field of religion and politics.

All of these examples illustrate the increasing porosity between religion and politics that I referred to earlier in this chapter, whether or not we prefer to call it a return of religion in politics. Either way it is highly relevant to continue to relate these discussions to theories on religious change and to the purpose of religion in politics, which I intend to do here. The previous studies on religion and politics in the Nordic countries that I have referred to have had a narrower scope than the one I intend to contribute with here.

More specifically, the contribution of my study lies within its contemporary and comparative approach over time in all of the five Nordic countries, with a focus on religion, which has not been done before. The focus is on the empirical contributions, but it is also intended to add theoretical implications and to contribute to further developed methods in the study of empirical sources, such as party platforms and records of parliamentary debates.

Structure of the thesis

I will structure the thesis as follows: in this chapter, I have introduced the research problem, aim and research questions with an overview of the research context and geographical and cultural setting of the thesis. I have also defined the two key concepts: religion and politics.

In the second chapter, I will outline a number of theoretical perspectives, structured on the two research questions. First, I will give a background, to deepen my understanding of how religious change and globalisation have affected the relationship between religion and politics, and then define the analytical tools that I use to answer the first research question. Second, I will give a background to why religion may be used and possibly even needed in politics. I will also present a two-by-two model as the analytical tool for the second research question, with four different ways of using religion in politics in relation to diversity, for homogeneity and with a lower or higher degree of politicisation.

In the third chapter, I will present the methods that I apply in the four articles. I will explain my choice of empirical material and the timeframe of the studies as well as the specific context of party platforms and parliamentary debates. Furthermore, I will explain and define my research design, not least the method of content analysis that I apply in all of the four articles in different ways.

In the fourth chapter, I will present the conclusions from the empirical studies in the four articles and analyse these further with the theories presented in the second chapter. From this discussion I will draw general conclusions on the use of religion in Nordic politics and suggest needs for future research in the field.

Finally, the four articles on which this thesis is based are:

- I Lindberg, Jonas. 2013. 'Religion in Nordic Party Platforms 1988-2008.' In this article, I particularly study religion as an element in party identity and in relation to religious change.
- II Lindberg, Jonas. 2014. 'Politicisation of Religion in Scandinavian Parliamentary Debates 1988-2009.' In this article, I particularly study politicisation as a use of religion in *realpolitik* in parliamentary debates.
- III Lindberg, Jonas. 2014. 'Renegotiating the Role of Majority Churches in Nordic Parliamentary Debates on Same-Sex Unions.' In this article, I particularly study the renegotiated use of majority churches as performers of weddings.
- IV Lindberg, Jonas. Forthcoming. 'Values and Veils in Danish and Norwegian Parliamentary Debates.' In this article, I particularly study the way a narrative of secular progress is used to defend the identity and credibility of the states.

In addition to these studies, I have written an article on how Nordic right-wing populist parties use Christianity as part of their criticism towards Islam, which I will refer to in the following as Lindberg 2011. Furthermore, as my analysis on parliamentary debates in Article II does not include Finland and Iceland, I will in some cases refer to Lövheim et al (forthcoming), as part of the final report from the NOREL project, where I have added those countries to the analysis.

2. Theory

My main research problem is what purpose religion may serve for the Nordic parliamentary parties within the timeframe: as an element in party identity, in *realpolitik* and/or as a main contributor to societal cohesion. To enable a better understanding of this problem, I therefore intend to outline theoretical backgrounds and specify the analytical tools that I will use to operationalise the research questions and interpret the empirical material of this thesis in this chapter.

As I will show in different ways through the chapter, the situation in the Nordic countries needs to be set in a wider context, not least in a European one. A contemporary example of the use of religion is how religion and European identity intersect in the controversy over the possible inclusion of the predominantly Muslim and yet officially secular Turkey into the European Union.

While Europe has an unambiguously-Christian heritage in culture and values, its common contemporary identity has been claimed as drawing on a narrative of progress from tradition, hierarchy, oppression, belief, superstition and religion to modernity, equality, freedom, reason, science and secularism (Casanova 1994:30-31; Casanova 2004; Ihalainen 2005:104; Scott 2007:95; Woodhead 2009; Challand 2009; Foret 2009; Laudrup 2009:55; Calhoun, Juergensmeyer and VanAntwerpen 2011:6-7). According to Nilüfer Göle (2006:143), the self-definition of Europeans calls for an ‘other’, in this case Turkey, to profile itself against.

Yet, Christianity has also been brought back in ‘the longstanding quest for a European memory’, as François Foret (2009:37; cf Hervieu-Légér 2000) puts it. Whether related or not, the verdict to allow crucifixes in Italian schools with reference to ‘national identity’ has, in a similar way, brought issues of religion back into public debate on who ‘we’ are (Foret and Itçaina 2012:11).

I will structure the chapter on the basis of the two research questions, in both cases first with a theoretical background and then with analytical tools. To begin with, I will outline a background to the first research question on how the political use of religion has changed, divided in five sections: from a sacred canopy to a sacred narrative of secular progress; the continuous relationships between church and state; new understandings of the secularisation theory; a return of religion in politics; and finally the impact of globalisation.

Background: The changing political use of religion

My purpose with this section is to create an understanding of the context and presuppositions of my empirical studies. First, I will refer to a process from religion as a sacred canopy to a contemporary narrative of secular progress and, second, I will examine the more or less continuous relationship between states and majority churches in the Nordic countries. These two parts primarily refer to changes in society and the way religion is understood and used by different actors. Third, I will refer to new interpretations of the secularisation theory and, fourth, I will address how some of these interpretations have also turned into claims of a return or re-emergence of religion, not least in politics. These two parts both refer to altering scientific interpretations of religious change and of the role and use of religion in politics. Fifth, I will refer to how globalisation leads to major changes both in society and in relation to religion, as a way of deepening my understanding of why many scholars now interpret religious change in new ways.

From a sacred canopy to a sacred narrative of secular progress

In the previous chapter, I outlined a way of describing a process of religious change from the sacred canopy of traditional societies to the decreasing influence of religion in functionally differentiated modern societies (Durkheim 1933; Wilson 1966; Berger 1967; Luhmann 1982). In other words, the overarching and transcendent religious system is being reduced to a subsystem among others, thereby losing its claims over other subsystems, with Dobbelaere's (1999:232) definition of the secularisation thesis.

This process has been thought of as being more or less linear, until religion would even eventually disappear (Berger 1999:2-3). If and when the established churches have resisted functional differentiation, they have been seen as obstacles to modernisation, according to Casanova (1994:30). He continues to claim that the Enlightenment critique of religion has become a vehicle of a self-fulfilling prophecy towards further secularisation, with decreasing influence of ecclesiastical institutions in society and diminishing authority of religious worldviews in general (cf Berger 1999:3). As a consequence, economy has lost its religious ethos and the political system has had to rationalise, which gives little room for the kind of traditional or charismatic authority that may be associated with religious authority (Dobbelaere 1999:232).

Ideologically, the process may be described as the triumph of the 'sacred narrative of secular progress' (from here on referred to as the narrative of secular progress), which I particularly discuss in Article IV (Casanova 1994:30-31; Scott 2007:95; Woodhead 2009; Calhoun, Juergensmeyer and VanAntwerpen 2011:6-7). Values such as modernity, equality, freedom, reason, science and secularity have been proclaimed to supersede tradition,

hierarchy, oppression, belief, superstition and religion in Western Europe, thereby contrasting with other parts of the world, where religion has sometimes been seen as a vehicle of democracy and freedom (Woodhead 2009:100).

As I understand this narrative, it has similarities with the concept of a sacred canopy as, for better or worse, it simplifies the world, rules out contingency, supports and sustains classifications and backs the current social practices and traditions (cf Sinding Jensen 2011:37). However, I do not claim that the narrative of secular progress incorporates the entire socio-cultural world to the same degree as the traditional sacred canopy has been claimed to do (Berger 1967).

The continuous relationships between church and state

If functional differentiation has led to a decreasing influence of religion in society, it may seem paradoxical that the Nordic countries have continued to have more or less close ties between the states and the Evangelical Lutheran churches, as well as the Orthodox minority church in Finland, as I referred to in the first chapter.

Casanova (1994:22, 219) has claimed that the state-church relationships in the Nordic countries are 'rather residual anachronisms' and examples of churches being under 'caesaropapist control' of the absolutist state. His stance has been criticised by Beckford (2010:130), who points to the fact that civil society and state are not completely different spheres in the Nordic countries. The majority churches, whether state churches or not, have been assigned a special privilege and responsibility by the state in these countries.

In the first chapter, I referred to a theoretical explanation of such relationship as the notion of performance (Beyer 1994:80). According to Luhmann (1982:238-242), religion may in that sense contribute to other subsystems to problems that are unsolved there and function as what Grace Davie (2006:251) dubs 'public utilities'. This means that, in particular, the majority churches may even be expected by the general public to have continuous functions in society whether it is as a means to cohesion and comfort in national crises or as performers of weddings. I discuss these aspects of the political use of religion despite, or possibly as part of, an ongoing process of religious change in Article III. Another possible reason for the continuation of a formal state church relationship may be that majority churches have a potential to express a sense of togetherness of the inhabitants in a country (Riis 1989:142).

From a European perspective, the continuous relationships between state and church in the Nordic countries are in fact not an exception (Madeley 2003b:18). According to Casanova (2012:31), there are few strictly secular democracies in Europe, as the majority of countries have, rather, established institutional relations with religious communities in order to organise them

to function as interlocutors and institutional partners for different purposes, such as welfare provision (Bäckström and Davie 2010; Markkola and Naumann 2014:12; Ammerman 2014).

As the arrangements of church and state relationships differ from state to state, I suggest that the notion of ‘multiple modernities’ can be applied here (Eisenstadt 2000). According to the notion, functional differentiation has led to different ways of organising arenas such as economy, politics and, in this case, religion in different countries. Thus the claim is of ‘multiple’ ways of being modern rather than one single way.

New understandings of the secularisation theory

If the process of functional differentiation historically has been interpreted in a more or less one-directional way of secularisation, as I referred to earlier in this section, the contemporary scientific discussion on religious change points to less certainty of such linear development (Dobbelaere 2002). Berger (1999:2), even claims that a whole body of religious studies, including some of his own works on the secularisation thesis, is ‘essentially mistaken’, although he also recognises that major parts of Western Europe still apply to the traditional interpretation of secularisation (Berger 1999:9-10).

One explanation to the altered interpretation is that, while modernisation initially may have been seen as the engine of the religious change that has been brought about with functional differentiation, it also brings about pluralisation. Societies become heterogeneous and intercultural communication grows, which favours pluralism rather than religious monopolies, according to Berger (1999:4). In a similar way, Beyer (2007:99) claims that if secularisation seemed to be a natural consequence of modernisation, then pluralisation is the natural consequence of globalisation, which I will further examine in the section on globalisation later in this theoretical background.

Pluralisation does not indicate secularisation, but rather the opposite, according to Dobbelaere (1999:234), as it presupposes an institutionalisation of Christian ethics and he claims that pluralisation will augment the need for generalisation to legitimise the societal system. In a similar way, pluralisation has undermined the taken-for-granted certainties that have been part of humanity’s basic beliefs through history, according to Berger (1999:11).

Dobbelaere (1999:239-240) therefore proposes the need for a ‘new sacred canopy’, based on the typical values of the Christian gospel such as social justice, wellbeing and special attention to marginalised people (cf Berger 1967). Riis’ take (1989:143-144) on ‘protestant humanism’ in the Nordic countries in the first chapter has a similar approach, arguing that these common contemporary core values are based on Christianity.

A return of religion in politics?

As part of this altered understanding of religious change, many scholars go even further to claim a new visibility of religion or even a return of religion to the public sphere (Haynes 1998). Here, I will initially refer to two such claims, the de-privatisation of religion by Casanova and the post-secular by Jürgen Habermas, and then refer to different discussions on the return or re-emergence of religion more specifically in politics. My intention here is not to specifically argue for or against any of these claims, but rather to use them as indicators of religious change in politics. My contribution will instead be to add empirical findings to be used as part of these ongoing discussions and to interpret these findings in relation to theory.

Starting with Casanova (1994), the concepts of public and private are central, while he also uses them parallel to the concepts of system and lifeworld, possibly as a way to complement a more biased concept with a more descriptive pair. Privatised religion is, according to Casanova (1994:5), marginalised and restricted to individual needs, as opposed to public religion that may challenge dominant structures and paradigms in society. The lifeworld is the internal subjective viewpoint and the system is the external viewpoint of modern society (Habermas 1987). The concepts are important in order to understand the turn that Casanova describes.

First, as a consequence of functional differentiation, religion became privatised, as I have referred to earlier. As Dobbelaere (1999:232-233) points out, human life is increasingly considered to be technically improvable as part of a natural scientific understanding of human existence. As a consequence, the salience of religious knowledge decreases, which contributes to the privatisation of religion. The dichotomy of private and public may also be considered as a legitimising conceptualisation of the world, as it may be used to rule out what is not considered to be publicly relevant, such as religious views (Dobbelaere 1999:233).

However, Casanova's (1994:3) point is that a de-privatisation of religion has taken place since a number of events took place, starting with the Islamic revolution in Iran 1979, meaning that religion has once again become more public, as I have already referred to in the previous chapter (cf Beyer 2007:105). From this he draws two conclusions: first, that religion is here to stay and, second, that religion is likely to play an important public role continuously in the construction of the modern world (Casanova 1994:6).

By the second conclusion, he means that religious actors may enter the public sphere not only to contribute to traditionally religious issues but also in the definition of the boundaries between private and public spheres or system and lifeworld. Such examples are the boundaries between legality and morality, individual and society and civil society and state. According to Beckford (1990:11), such boundary disputes are endemic to individual in-

dustrial societies, especially in relation to religion, as it crosses the distinction between public and private, religion and politics.

While Casanova's concept of de-privatisation focuses on religious actors in politics, I still consider it relevant to refer to here, as the influence of one actor possibly calls for reactions from other actors, in this case parliamentary parties and their representatives.

Turning to Habermas (2008:19-20), he agrees with Casanova on the claims of a de-privatisation of religion. Habermas' conclusion (2008:17) is that the populations in Europe, Canada, Australia and New Zealand that have become used to perceiving their societies as secularised now need to realise that they are living in what he labels the post-secular society. Habermas (2008:20-21) sees three reasons for this: first, the common perception of global conflicts associated with religion; second, the increasing efforts by churches and religious organisations to influence public opinion on key issues such as abortion and euthanasia; and third, the increasing pluralism of religious denominations, which denotes the problem of how to integrate immigrant cultures socially. This means that religion maintains public influence and relevance and that the previous certainty that religion would lose ground globally is losing traction (Habermas 2008:21).

Beckford (2012:8-9) points out, in his reading of Habermas' notion of the post-secular, that the post-secular and secularised are not opposing terms but, rather, a matter of legal, ethical and political adjustments to religious forces in the public sphere. However, Beckford (2012:16-17) is also critical towards any of the different meanings attributed to the post-secular, including Habermas' version. According to him, they trade on simplistic notions of the secular, have a shortsighted view of history and refuse to analyse the legal and political forces that define 'religion' in the public sphere. The consequence is, then, that almost anything might count as post-secular, according to Beckford.

Finally, a number of similar claims to the ones referred to here by Casanova and Habermas have been raised, but then specifically related to politics (e.g. Beckford 2010; Toft, Philpott and Shah 2011; Foret and Itçaina 2012). Haynes (1997:709) refers to claims of a global resurgence of religion in politics. He argues that the postmodern condition stimulates a turning to religion that secularisation continues in the West but not in many parts of the Third World, and that religion may be considered a better alternative than socialism and liberalism in many countries in the Third World. This is particularly common under circumstances of cultural defence and transition, according to Haynes (1997:726). Foret and Itçaina (2012:3) claim that the re-emergence of religion in politics highlights the porosity between the different geographical contexts of nation, Europe and global politics. They continue to claim that the contemporary clashes are not so much religious in content but, rather, symbolic and political.

Beckford (1989:170-171; 1999:25-26), has highlighted not least the symbolic use of religion and claims that religion continues to have the potential to serve as a language for powerful inspirations, peace, justice, cultural integrity and even ultimate meaning and infinite power. Once religious symbols have been freed from the control of religious bodies they may become a cultural resource that is possible to combine with virtually any set of ideas or values.

The impact of globalisation

In this section, I will further develop my understanding of how global conflicts associated with religion, pluralism of religious denominations due to immigration, and porosity between different geographical and cultural contexts may all have contributed to an alleged return, re-emergence or deprivatisation of religion in politics. All of these phenomena may be described as part of the process of globalisation, which I understand as intensified interaction between markets, politics and societies: a grand process that may affect most areas in society (Ingebritsen 2006:5). Here, I will outline the impact of globalisation on political legitimacy, cultural diversity and religion.

The first outcome of globalisation relevant to refer to here is the weakening of national political legitimacy. An increasing number of political decisions now need to be made at a supranational level, such as the EU, in relation to areas such as environmental issues, transnational capital markets, terrorism and pandemics (Petersson 2007:38; cf Habermas 1998:398). As a consequence, the idea of the demos as a necessary limitation of the borders of democracy, as I referred to in the first chapter, is challenged (Petersson 2009:143-145).

Globalisation may also lead to increased financial vulnerability for many countries. This means that governments may face an enduring problem with legitimacy if they fail on economic achievement and employment rates (Turner 2013:148). To Zygmunt Bauman (2007:7-25), globalisation is a 'parasitic and predatory process', as the internationally-open nation states lose influence over their own fate. He claims that 'markets without frontiers' create injustice and fears over individual misfortunes as the traditional welfare state is being wholly or partly withdrawn. At large, society is no longer protected by the state and the major challenge now is to bring power and politics back together, according to Bauman.

Cultural diversity is the second outcome of globalisation that is relevant here. The idea of the demos as a necessary limitation of the borders of democracy is also challenged by increasing cultural diversity, due to the increasing development of information technology as well as physical communications (Petersson 2007:38). As a consequence, sovereign states are

becoming less undivided and more linked to wider networks, which makes their boundaries more porous than before (Casanova 2001a:429; 2008:102).

The porosity of borders is, not least, visible in relation to immigration, which also contributes to globalisation. The physical presence of people in new countries is one important factor in itself and also the ability to maintain the links between one's old country and the new one, using media and telecommunications technologies, in ways that have not been possible before (Beyer 2007:108).

The third and final outcome of globalisation that is relevant here is religious diversity, which has increased in the Nordic countries in recent years (Kühle 2011:208). The states have dealt with this development in different ways but all support the increasing religious diversity in some way, including financial support in all of the five Nordic countries and support of confessional free schools in Denmark, Norway and Sweden (Kühle 2011:210-211). While the official number of members in religious communities is available, they do not necessarily tell us about the actual number of people with a particular faith or belief. The largest group besides different Christian traditions is, however, most likely Muslim. In Sweden 3.8-4.4 percent of the population has been estimated to be Muslim, in Denmark about 3.5 percent, in Norway about 2.5 percent, while only about 0.8 percent in Finland and 0.1 percent in Iceland (Larsson 2009:3).

Increasing religious diversity has consequences. The presence of such diversity has been shown to strengthen church-oriented religious involvement and preferences for a religious impact on politics (Pettersson 2006). Beyer (2007:98-104) claims that globalisation leads to glocalisation, which means that the local has to come to terms with the global, and suggests that glocalised religion manifests itself along four – not necessarily exhaustive – axes:

1. Institutionalised versus non-institutionalised religiosity. While religion may be regulated through established forms of relationships between states and religious institutions, new forms of religion appear in forms that are less easy to regulate, such as networks.

2. Publicly influential versus privatised religion. As I have referred to earlier in this chapter, religion has come to be regarded as a private matter along the process of functional differentiation in Western liberal democracies (Casanova 2001b:13.788; Gregory 2012:375). According to Beyer, Islam is generally more publicly active than other religions, which challenges the distinction between public and private in relation to religion.

3. Traditional/conservative versus modern/liberal religion. The increasing attention to 'fundamentalism' challenges the notion that all religion would become more liberal and non-exclusive along the course of modernisation, which has not been the case.

4. Religion being enacted as such versus non-religious forms that carry 'religious functions'. To different degrees, religion has become or continued to be intertwined with culture and nationalism when groups of people insist

on an intimate connection between religion and a particular territory and a common ancestry and history in that territory.

As I understand the manifestation of religion over these four axes, they are expressions of the tensions that arise over religion in the 'glocal' society. According to Beyer (2007:99), religion becomes a site of difference and, often, as well as of conflict through these tensions. Additionally, Roland Robertson and JoAnn Chirico (1985:238) claim that globalisation pressures societies to define their identities, what they stand for and what is ultimately 'sacred' about them (cf Durkheim 1976:422). In Beckford's thinking (1990:11; 1999:24; 2003:14), the situation leads to boundary disputes over acceptable and non-acceptable (forms of) religion. The disputes are over the very distinction between issues such as public and private, religion and politics, and true and false religion.

More explicitly, the major site of difference in Western societies is over the presence and influence of Islam. On the one hand, these societies tend to tolerate and respect individual religious freedom. On the other hand, Islam in particular becomes the 'other' of Western secular identity, as European societies have assumed that they have already solved all issues concerning the role of religion in the public sphere, according to the liberal, secular norm of privatisation of religion (Casanova 2007:66-67).

The tension over Islam in relation to parts of Nordic politics is visible in survey results (Jensen 2000b:389). According to these, 79 percent of Danish and 71 percent of Norwegian Members of Parliament perceive conflicts between Western and Muslim countries as a threat and, on a party level, right-wing populists scored the highest result of any Scandinavian political party family with 95 percent. I will further address these issues in the section on nationalism later in this chapter.

Casanova (2001a:427), claims that what it all comes down to is that we need to start thinking about religion less as religious markets and more as cultural systems. These systems may be de-territorialised through globalisation, which dissolves the link between 'sacred time, sacred space and sacred people' as well as the bonds between histories, peoples and territories that have defined nations and countries (Casanova 2001a:430-431). In a similar take, Turner (2013:54) claims that globalisation has eroded the 'sacred roots' of collective cultures along with intense commercialisation and commodification of social relations, which creates liquid forms of global social networks that have little stability in community. Thereby religion may have lost its ability to provide societal cohesion (Beyer 2007:99).

Summary

To summarise this background to the first research question, I have outlined how both changes in society and within religion are related to how political

actors use religion and how scientific interpretations of these changes have evolved over time.

First, I have picked up on the traditional, most common interpretation of the secularisation theory, with references to functional differentiation in the previous chapter, and then I have described how religion may have been seen as an obstacle in the process towards secular progress. I discuss this further in Article IV.

Second, I have contrasted this view of the decreasing influence of religion with the more or less continuous relationships between the majority church and state in the Nordic countries and offered possible explanations for this in terms of performance, public utilities and multiple modernities. I discuss this further in Article III.

Third, I have described parts of the contemporary discussion on new ways to understand the secularisation theory, where functional differentiation still offers an important explanation, while not a sufficient one, which I discuss further in Article II. The major reason has been claimed to be that increasing pluralisation in the trails of modernisation also evokes issues of the need for common legitimisation of the societal system.

Fourth, I have described parts of the contemporary discussion on a possible return or re-emergence of religion in the public sphere and, not least, in politics. Religion may have become to an increasing degree de-privatised, and citizens, certainly in Europe, may have to come to terms with living in post-secular societies. Different factors have been used to explain this change, such as boundary disputes between private and public followed by an urge for religious actors to re-enter public debate on a range of these issues, as well as an increasing focus on issues of religion, immigration and violence. Such politicisation of religion may have been facilitated by a process where religious symbols have been freed from their initial ties to institutional religion to become cultural resources.

Fifth, I have described how globalisation in terms of increased interaction between markets, polities and societies has made an impact in general and more specifically on the contemporary role and use of religion. It poses challenges to national political legitimacy due to an increasing degree of supra-national decision making, increasing financial vulnerability and increasing cultural diversity. I have also described how immigration may lead to increasing religious diversity and boundary disputes over acceptable expressions of religion in the globalised setting. In Western societies this is particularly the case, with Islam as the proposed 'other' of the Western cultural and possibly secular identity.

In my understanding, these background factors and changing theoretical interpretations strengthen the need for further examination on how religion is used by Nordic parliamentary parties and may help to explain the findings in my empirical studies, as I will discuss and show in Chapter 4.

Next, I will present the analytical tools that I intend to use to operationalise the research questions in each of the four empirical studies in this thesis and to interpret the findings in the studies. As I referred to in the previous chapter, all of these research questions are part of the first overarching research question.

Analytical tools

In this section, I will present an additional theory and an additional concept – social cleavage theory and politicisation – as well as once again referring to some of the theories and cultural factors that I have presented as part of the background.

Article I: Social cleavage theory

Social cleavage theory is used to explain the formation of political parties, by referring to the cleavages that divide voters into voting blocs. As I referred to in the previous chapter, Lipset and Rokkan (1967) identified four basic cleavages: centre/periphery, state/church, owner/worker and land/industry. The most influential cleavage on voting behaviour is, in most countries, the owner/worker or economic class cleavage, which also constitutes the common left-right distinction (Demker 2008:10).

The social cleavage that is most relevant in relation to this thesis, however, is the state/church or religious cleavage as a divider between religious and secular authorities and voters. In the Nordic countries, religion may not have been expected to be politically contentious to the same degree as in other European countries because of the close relationship between church and state, which I described in the background section (Madeley 2003a:38-39).

Contemporary Norwegian and Swedish surveys have shown that voters for the centre-right parties are slightly more positive towards religion than voters for the left wing (Aardal 2007b:53-54; Hagevi 2009:122; 2010:135-144). However, religious voters also seem to follow a logic of their own in relation to party choice, based on other survey results in Sweden (Hagevi 2011b:266). Hagevi's point is that religious voters, defined as people attending a religious service at least once a month, often hold traditional values in relation to ethics, which may be interpreted as authoritarian values, while they often also hold libertarian values in relation to an issue such as immigration.

As I showed in the previous section on the impact of globalisation, religious diversity has increased in the Nordic countries (Kühle 2011:208). Survey results from Sweden have shown that Muslim as well as Jewish voters tend to vote for left-wing parties to a higher degree than centre-right parties

(Hagevi 2009:166-168, 201, 228). However, political Islam has, in more general terms, been described as a blend of 'Christian' democracy in issues of morality and education and Social democracy in other social and economical issues (Gardell 2006:147-148). In that sense, Muslim and religious voters in general may be fairly similar in the voter's preference (cf Hagevi 2011a:26).

However, while the voter's preference is part of the formation of political parties through the religious cleavage, religion may also become a site of difference, as I referred to in the previous section on globalisation (Beyer 2007:99). As I also noted there, Islam in particular has been associated with tensions in Western societies, including the Nordic ones. European survey results have shown that religion once again has become more important to party preferences following a period of decreasing saliency, particularly in countries with a high degree of religious diversity and, not least, high numbers of Muslims (Van der Brug, Hobolt and de Vreese 2009:1280). According to other survey results, the impact of globalisation has come to strengthen the link between religiosity and right-wing party choice, which possibly sheds light on religious foundations of an 'anti-globalisation backlash' (Patrikios and Xezonakis 2011). I will further explore this area of research in the section on nationalism later on in this chapter.

With the increase of religious diversity and importance of post-materialist values, John Madeley (2000:41) has suggested that the contemporary Nordic religious cleavage should be tripolar, with Christian Democrats in a centrist position between the new left of the left-socialists and the new right of the neo-liberal progress parties. Meanwhile, Ole Borre (2001:91) has been less certain of the place of issues like religion with the emergence of such value-based politics. Such different claims may both be related to discussions on a re-emergence of religion in politics, which I referred to in the previous chapter (eg Foret and Itçaina 2012).

To summarise, the main analytical tool in Article I is social cleavage theory, while I also use background factors such as the more or less close church and state relationships, increasing religious diversity and immigration as part of globalisation, the growth of secular-rational values and claims of a re-emergence of religion in politics as part of the analysis.

Article II: Politicisation

In the previous chapter, I used a definition of politics as an interaction 'predominantly oriented toward the authoritative allocation of values for a society' (Easton 1965:50). Furthermore, I referred to a political party as 'a team of men [sic] seeking control over the governing apparatus by gaining office in a duly constituted election' (Downs 1957:25). Here, I will focus particularly on the actions to seek political control through the process of politicisation and how that may affect the use of religion.

When the leadership of a political party tries to achieve changes in society, it uses a four-step strategy, according to Jonas Hinnfors (1992:13-14). First, it formulates standpoints that may help to achieve those changes. Second, the leadership evaluates the possibilities of increasing voter support in competition with other parties. Third, it evaluates the possibility of counting on support from the partisans of the party in relation to the standpoints. Fourth, the leadership evaluates the possibilities of achieving the changes, given the parliamentary situation. To minor parties, it may for example be beneficial to strive for agreements with other parties.

I will relate this strategy to the concept of politicisation. According to Björn Molin (1965:141), politicisation should be defined as the decisions where an issue is part of the party propaganda that the parties expect to have an effect on voters' opinions. Consequently, non-politicisation of an issue should be understood as decisions that are more vague and/or flexible and are not expected to have an effect on voters' opinions.

John W Kingdon (2011:196-198) understands politicisation more gradually as a process of agenda setting. An event such as a disaster, crisis, personal experience or powerful symbol may draw attention to specific conditions. If the events and conditions are thought to violate important values, they may be turned into a problem, especially if they stand out as problems in comparison to other countries or relevant units. Furthermore, if the problem is possible to categorise, then it may also be labelled as one particular kind of problem. The more important the problem may be considered, the more likely that it will rise on the political agenda and thus be politicised. The key to increasing political influence is then to make other actors, such as political competitors and voters, catch on. I will develop this further in the section on parliamentary debates in the next chapter.

As I do not believe that the use of religion in politics necessarily has the objective to affect voters' opinions, at least not in the short perspective, I choose to understand politicisation in the more gradual sense that Kingdon does, which is also in accordance with the step-wise party strategies suggested by Hinnfors.

In the introduction to this chapter, I referred to the possible inclusion of Turkey in the European Union as a contemporary example of the use of religion in politics. Benoît Challand (2009:76) claims that the association of Europe with Christianity in this way is a very recent construction that serves political functions more than religious ones. In such cases we can therefore speak of the politicisation of religion.

The concept may be understood in different ways in relation to religion. As I referred to earlier in the section on the changing use of religion in politics, religion may turn up in politics through religious actors in order to influence public policies in accordance with their values (Casanova 1994:6). Some scholars have therefore come to speak of the politicisation of religion in such cases, and of the 'religionisation' of politics in cases when religions

are the objects of public policies in regulation, rhetoric, symbols and tradition (Robertson 1991:14; Gentile 2005:20; Ivanescu 2010:312). I have chosen here to stay with the use of the concept of politicisation, but to speak, with Anders Berg-Sørensen (2006:800), of religions that politicise and religions that undergo politicisation or are simply being politicised. My focus here is the party political use of religion, through politicisation.

Such use of religion may, not least, be affected by the process of glocalisation, which I referred to in the previous section of this chapter. Increasing religious diversity may lead to boundary disputes over what should count as 'acceptable religion' in relation to what is regarded as societal core values, such as individualism and gender equality (Beyer 2007:98-103; Beckford 1999:23-40). Meanwhile, religion has gradually lost its ties to churches and other organisations, which has made it easier to use it as a cultural resource including its politicisation (Beckford 1989:170-172).

To summarise, the main analytical tool in Article II is politicisation. In a situation with increasing glocalisation, religion may be politicised both as a source of conflict over boundary issues and as a cultural resource.

Article III: Functional differentiation, performance and cultural factors

In Article III, I use two background factors as analytical tools. The first one is theories on functional differentiation, with the notion of performance as a way for subsystems such as religion to contribute to other subsystems (Durkheim 1933; Luhmann 1982:238-242).

The second is cultural factors, first with more or less close relationships between states and majority churches, where these churches may function as public utilities, meaning that they are expected to be available at the point of need to the population as a whole (Kühle 2011:208; Davie 2006:251). Furthermore, the Nordic majority churches are still, to different degrees, controlled directly and/or indirectly by the states (Martin 1978:71). The final cultural factor is the generally very high but yet different levels of secular-rational values among the Nordic countries, which may be contrasted with traditional family values associated with religion (Inglehart and Welzel 2010: 553-554; EOS Gallup Europe Report 2003; Olson, Cadge and Harrison 2006).

To summarise, the main analytical tools in Article III are functional differentiation with the notion of performance and cultural factors regarding state-church relationships, control over these churches and possible tensions between secular and traditional religious values.

Article IV: Symbolic politics and secular progress

In Article IV, I use the concept of symbolic politics, which I understand as a form of politicisation or a political strategy. By discursively focusing on a symbolic matter, political actors may in reality refer to another matter, such as to trigger exclusive notions of national belonging (Edelmann 1964:6; Hadj-Abdou et al 2012:138-139). In this article, I interpret parliamentary debates on whether Danish judges and Norwegian policewomen should be allowed to wear (Muslim) veils or not as an example of symbolic politics. However, the heart of the matter is, rather, to emphasise a cultural factor labelled the European ‘sacred narrative of secular progress’, which I have referred to in the first background section of this chapter (Woodhead 2009; Casanova 1994:30-31; Scott 2007:95; Calhoun, Juergensmeyer and Van-Antwerpen 2011:6-7). Such a factor may be particularly visible in the Nordic countries, due to their high degree of secular-rational values and the integral importance of gender equality (Inglehart and Welzel 2010; Ellingsæter and Leira 2006:7). Such values may be used to politicise expressions of a religion such as Islam, which in contrast may be perceived as oppressive and obsolete (Woodhead 2009:89-90; Göle 2006:145).

To summarise, the main analytical tool in Article IV is symbolic politics based on a narrative of secular progress, to which a high degree of gender equality and secular-rational values in Denmark and Norway may contribute.

Summary

Here, I have presented the analytical tools: the theories and background factors that I use to operationalise the research questions in each of the four empirical studies and to interpret the findings in the studies.

In Article I, I use social cleavage theory and background factors such as the Nordic church and state relationships, the impact of globalisation, increasing secular-rational values and claims of a re-emergence of religion in politics.

In Article II, I use politicisation as the key concept and background factors such as glocalisation with boundary disputes over ‘acceptable religion’ in contrast to religion as a cultural factor.

In Article III, I use theories on functional differentiation and cultural factors such as the Nordic church and state relationships and control over these majority churches, as well as possible tensions between secular and traditional religious values.

In Article IV, I use symbolic politics as the main analytical concept and how it may refer to values associated with the narrative of secular progress, not least gender equality and secular-rational values.

Next, I will give a background to the second research question.

Background: Societal cohesion and political legitimation through religion

As I referred to in the introduction of this chapter, the second overarching research question is: What patterns are discernible in the way Nordic parliamentary parties use religion, 1988-2012, in terms of weak or strong politicisation for the purpose of homogeneity or in diversity, and what may this tell us about changes in the use of religion as a means to societal cohesion? The question will direct the contents of this theoretical background and the following section with an analytical model. While my focus here is on the way party political actors use religion in politics, I will here refer to discussions on the use of religion in politics in general terms.

Ted Jelen (2000:90) claims that a national religious tradition is ultimately good for democratic politics, as it may provide societal cohesion and a common ground for moral or ethical consensus. According to Brad Gregory (2012:375), a state that lacks such common ground will likely have to become more legalistic and coercive to be able to establish stability and security. He also claims that herein lies a paradox, as religion is considered to be a private matter in liberal states. Marcela Cristi (2001:238) argues in a similar way that collective life demands some sort of common faith or it will fall apart with ‘anarchy, moral confusion and brute force’.

In my understanding, these statements may well be associated with the assumed need to create a demos to be able to set the borders of a democracy, as I referred to in the introduction chapter (Petersson 2009:143-145). Given claims such as these, it might not then come as a surprise when Berger (1967:32) states that historically religion has been ‘the most widespread and effective instrumentality of legitimation’.

However, with increasing religious diversity and liberal democratic ideals, a model with one common religious ground seems less reasonable than it might have seemed earlier in history (Demker 1998:171). To discuss the possible motives of using religion in politics, this also needs to be taken into account, and we also need to look for alternative solutions. More explicitly, a common ground in society does not necessarily have to be based on a religious understanding of life (Anthony and Robbins 1975:407). In order to take into account traditionally religious understandings of life as well as other sources of common ground, I have applied a functional definition of religion in answering the second research question, as I have referred to earlier in this and the previous chapter. With Woodhead (2011), I therefore define religion here as culture, identity and power.

While religion in itself may be regarded as culture, identity and power, it may also be used to support politics and, then, mainly in its form of traditional institutional religion. Marie Demker (1998:13) structures the potential political power of religion in three ways, claiming that it lies within its ability to legitimise politics, to communicate collective values and be normative.

All of these three motives are relevant in this section of the chapter and I will therefore use them to structure it. First, I will discuss the ability to legitimise and the concept of authority, with the help of theories of Max Weber. I will also use theories by Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Carl Schmitt in a similar way on the concept of sovereignty. Second, I will use theories of Durkheim to discuss religion as an expression of collective values. Third, I will discuss the ability of one single religion to be normative in a religiously-diverse society and pose alternative ways of understanding the relationship of religion and politics with the help of a theory by John Rawls and comments by Jürgen Habermas and Charles Taylor.

For clarity, my purpose in this section is not normative in the sense that I evaluate which interpretations are the best but, rather, to show possible ways why different actors (in this case the parliamentary parties) may be motivated to use religion in politics and society. This may in turn help my understanding of the contemporary development of the way that Nordic parliamentary parties use religion. My intention is not to give a complete account of this area of research but to give enough overview to help the understanding of this line of thinking.

The use of religion to legitimise politics

I will first turn to the motive of using religion to legitimise politics. According to Weber (1946), there are three ideal types of social authority: traditional, rational-legal and charismatic. Traditional authority is based on the integrity and the legitimacy of the traditional approach to appointing rulers in society; rational-legal authority is based on the authority of human reason; and the legally-established bureaucracy and charismatic authority is based on devotion to the exceptional sanctity, extraordinary character or heroism of an individual person. While Weber saw a decrease of traditional authority and an increase of rational-legal authority as a consequence of modernisation, he also claimed that there could never be a completely rational solution to how a society should deal with competing ethical standards (Weber 1949:110-111; Giddens 1995:43). Therefore, he saw the importance of charismatic authority as a way of making sense of the seemingly ‘senseless’.

Rousseau had developed a similar thought in the 18th century. The stated aim of his book *On the Social Contract* is to analyse political authority and whether there can be such legitimate authority (Rousseau 2003). According to his line of thought, nature cannot guide us to how society should be run and therefore we are left with individual interests. The essential purpose of politics is therefore to turn a people into *one* people by establishing an original and possibly fictional covenant. On the one hand, Rousseau sees the people as the only sovereign in a legitimate democracy but, on the other hand, he sees the need for what he calls ‘the legislator’ because he does not trust the people to have insight enough to see their common good. Further-

more, the people cannot give the authority of the law to itself and therefore it needs a fictional character. The legislator would be a person of superior intellect who stands outside society with the purpose of helping the people achieve the common good with a long-term perspective to preserve the state.

To Simon Critchley (2012:8-9), there is a paradox in Rousseau's thinking here, as the sovereignty of the people and the authority of the legislator may be perceived as self-contradictory. Critchley's (2012:24-25) own explicitly-reluctant conclusion is that politics may well be conceivable without religion, but he nevertheless asks if it is practicable without some sort of religious dimension, due to the problem of sovereignty. To him, however, a solution of a religion without God is preferable as a means to societal cohesion (Critchley 2012:19-20). He calls politics, law and religion fictions, not as a sign of their weakness but possibly of their strength and the resolution is therefore a supreme fiction: one that everyone knows is not true but nevertheless believes in (Critchley 2012:91). In Rousseau's thought, the solution would be the invention of 'civil religion', which I will turn to in the next section on the analytical tool of my second research question.

The next scholar to address the issue of the use of religion to legitimise politics here is Carl Schmitt. Due to his membership of the Nazi party in Germany before and during World War II, he is a controversial scholar today (Hoelzl and Ward 2008:3). Nevertheless, his theories on 'political theology' are widely discussed in contemporary scientific literature (e.g. Mouffe 1999; Žižek 1999; Sigurdson 2009; Yelle 2010; Habermas 2011; Calhoun 2011; Espejo 2010; Strong 2012; Critchley 2012). Drawing on the works of Rousseau, Schmitt develops the notion of the legislator into what he calls 'the sovereign', whom he defines as the one 'who decides on the exception' (Schmitt 2005:5). As Schmitt (2010) claims that politics is based on the distinction between friends and foes, Paulina Ochoa Espejo (2010:488) draws the conclusion that that distinction depends on the decision in the exception, which then makes the sovereign essential to politics.

The concept of political theology has its background in Schmitt's claims (2005:36; 2010:106) that the idea of the modern constitutional state is based on secularised theological metaphysical concepts. One example of this is the turning of the idea of an omnipotent God into an idea of a similarly omnipotent lawgiver, which means that it has an authority beyond question (Strong 2012:225). Then the justification of the state is ontological rather than epistemological (Strong 2012:231). However, as nineteenth-century political theory developed further and further away from its transcendental origins, legitimacy no longer existed in its traditional sense, according to Schmitt (2005:51). Schmitt has also been claimed to reject 'liberal normativism' and pluralism, which assumes that a state can rest on a set of mutually-agreed-to procedures and rules (Strong 2012:234). Politics may well rest on the equality of its citizens but then in their collective differentiation from their 'enemies', which is their 'transcendental presupposition' (Strong 2012:234).

The ongoing discussion of Schmitt's political theology includes severe criticism. Espejo (2010:486) disagrees with Schmitt on the need for political theology and argues that, while there are historical assumptions that connect politics and religion in the West, other forms of political organisation exist beyond the West and that should be reason enough to assume that there can be overlapping sources of authority in politics as well. Habermas (2011:20-21) also questions the genealogy of political theology and claims that a decisive step toward the 'neutralisation' of the metaphysical origins of politics had already been taken in early modernity. Furthermore, he argues that democratic legitimacy is the only one available today (Habermas 2011:24). To try to replace it with some sort of 'deeper grounding' of the constitution amounts to obscurantism, as the secularisation of state power can never be reversed, according to Habermas. Craig Calhoun (2011:127) agrees with him and calls Schmitt's approach non-democratic and impossible in today's 'irretrievably pluralist' society.

Weber, Rousseau and Schmitt all have in common that they claim that politics need external legitimacy. While I have referred to criticism of their concepts due to the pluralist and democratic character of contemporary societies, their claims continue to be discussed, which I interpret in the sense that something in our current situation makes these issues relevant again. I will return to this discussion in the final chapter.

Religion as an expression of collective values

Second, I will now turn to theories by Durkheim to discuss the motive of using religion as an expression of collective values. While the three main scholars that I have just referred to – Weber, Rousseau and Schmitt – may be described as having a top-down perspective, Durkheim has a bottom-up perspective on the role and use of religion in society (Cristi 2001:4; 2009:68). To Durkheim, every society has a naturally religious foundation, while Rousseau as an example simply states that every society needs one (Cristi 2001:45-46). As a contemporary example, the president of the European Community (later the European Union) Jacques Delors stated in 1992 the importance of giving 'a soul to Europe, to give it spirituality and meaning' (European Commission BEPA 2010). Carin Laudrup (2009:52) interprets his statement in terms of a collective consciousness, which Durkheim saw as integral to creating societal cohesion. According to Durkheim (1976:419), the idea of society is the soul of religion, which in his thinking means that religious forces are human, moral forces and that 'God' then is the collective power over society, rather than a supernatural force. In that sense, the purpose of religion is societal cohesion (Laudrup 2009:52).

In Durkheim's thinking, the separation of the sacred and the profane is central (Durkheim 1976:415; Boglind, Eliaeson and Månson 2009:256-263). He understands the sacred as something added to and above the real, some-

thing to which humans attribute a higher sort of dignity, while the profane is the opposite, meaning everyday life (Durkheim 1976:422). Through the collective experience of the sacred as something separated from the profane, human beings experience cohesion, cause, time and space (Boglund, Eliaeson and Månson 2009:263).

According to Durkheim, religion is not something constant but something that changes over time, to continue to express the collective consciousness. While he recognised that religious institutions may lose social and political influence, he has also been observed to claim that the functions of religion in society may be overtaken by other forms of religion (Beckford 1989:26). What Durkheim saw was that nationalism could be such a religion, to inspire new rituals and sacrifices. However, according to Laudrup (2009:55), he also saw dangers when the notion of cohesion could be taken to an extreme, where national exclusivity would become more important than a more cosmopolitan-oriented inclusivity.

Therefore, Durkheim also predicted that, in the long run, nationalism could be replaced with the individual cult that would be rational and based on reason and justice (Furseth and Repstad 2005:50-51; Boglund, Eliaeson and Månson 2009:259). While we may grasp the individual cult as something individualistic or even egoistic in our contemporary understanding of such terms, that would be to completely misunderstand the fundamental conditions of the religious life (Durkheim 1976:425; Giddens 1995:83). To Durkheim, society is the living source and the only way to sustain and increase the morality of the individual.

The individual cult is also known as the religion of the individual, the cult of man and moral individualism (Cristi 2009:58). Similar concepts have been created by scholars such as Auguste Comte, John Stuart Mill and Henri de Saint-Simon, but I have chosen to focus on Durkheim's interpretation here, as I assess that it will contribute enough to the understanding of such a concept (Pétursson 1988; Casanova 2001a:430; Malachuk 2010:137-139).

Durkheim's idea of a general moral community has been criticised, as it does not appear to be functional in contemporary societies with conflicting group interests and a focus on individual interests (Cristi 2001:239-240). The idea may further lead to chauvinism, narrowness and exclusiveness with national, religious, social, ethnic or political walls between friends and foes (cf Schmitt 2010).

I will develop the concepts of the individual cult and nationalism in the next section on the analytical tool of my second research question, and discuss the possible continuous urge to create and maintain collective values in the concluding discussion in the fourth chapter.

Religion used in a normative way?

Third and finally, I will now turn to the motive to use (one) religion in a normative way given the contemporary religious diversity in the Western world. Earlier in this section of the chapter I have referred to critique by Espejo, Habermas and Cristi towards different notions on a common moral and (pseudo) religious ground in society. Here, I will refer to an alternative approach by Rawls with comments by Habermas and Taylor.

When discussing justice, as one of the basic preconditions of a constitutional democracy, Rawls (1999a:395) explicitly denies that the notion of truth is needed for justice, but that justice is only composed of what reasonable beings with a similar history will rationally consent to (Strong 2012:259-260). His alternative is, instead, to call for the establishment of an ‘overlapping consensus’, an agreement on particular principles of justice despite inconsistent conceptions of justice (Rawls 1999b:446-448). A precondition to such agreement, however, is that the different conceptions of justice are based on comprehensive normative doctrines including systems of religion, political ideology or morality and that groups with different conceptions of justice agree not to dispute over fundamental arguments such as metaphysics. In Rawls’ terms (1999c:573-574), this is to communicate within the limitations of ‘public reason’ based on a common acceptance of a constitutional democratic regime and legitimate law.

Habermas (1995:131) has criticised Rawls’ concept of overlapping consensus, since he thinks that the concept does not provide an independent normative force but only works as an instrument to control an already accepted normative condition (Maffettone 2010:183). However, later, he also added that Rawls’ concept of the use of ‘public reason’ is a promising key to how religious as well as secular actors may contribute to politics as partakers in a pluralist civil society (Habermas 2011:28).

Taylor (2011:47-49) seemingly takes a middle position. On the one side he recognises that the principles of civil philosophy seem to demand a ‘deeper grounding’ but, on the other, he also recognises that a really diverse democracy cannot turn into a religiously uniform society and that we therefore are ‘condemned to live an overlapping consensus’. The heart of the matter of these discussions is whether human reason can be regarded to be commonly understood universally or, rather, is a phenomenon that is historically embodied in social practices (Mendieta 2002:1).

As I understand it, the decreasing influence of traditional institutional religion as a normative force in society creates a need to discuss possible alternatives such as the one that I have referred to here. In the fourth chapter I will, once again, discuss how such assumed needs may affect contemporary Nordic politics.

Summary

To summarise this background to the second research question, I have described theories with discussions on three different motives for using religion in politics. These are discussions on the use of religion in politics in general terms, while my focus is on the way party political actors use religion.

First, religion may be used to legitimise politics, with the kind of top-down perspective that scholars such as Weber, Rousseau and Schmitt have applied. In a similar way, they argue that legal-rationality (Weber), nature (Rousseau) and secularised theological concepts (Schmitt) are not enough to provide politics with legitimacy. To solve this problem, they propose the need for charismatic authority (Weber), an independent legislator and civil religion (Rousseau) and an independent sovereign who decides on the exception (Schmitt).

Second, religion may be used to communicate collective values in the kind of bottom-up perspective that Durkheim provides us with. In his thinking, such collective identity may transform over time from traditional religion, through nationalism to the individual cult.

Third, religion may be used as a normative force in society. However, that is a difficult if not impossible task in a religiously-diverse society and therefore I choose to describe Rawls' concept of overlapping consensus as an alternative approach to normativity. However, his concept has been criticised by Habermas because of its lack of actual normativity, while Habermas approves of his concept of public reason. Taylor, finally, recognises the need for a moral 'common ground' in society and yet submits to overlapping consensus as the only reasonable solution in a religiously-diverse society.

As stated, my intention here is not to come to a normative conclusion in the sense of evaluating which interpretations are the best but to develop an understanding of different approaches to the issues of legitimation and authority in politics in relation to the use of religion, to which I will return again in the final chapter.

Next, I will present a model to be used as the analytical model that I will use to operationalise and answer the second research question.

Analytical model

As I have just showed, religion may be used to legitimise politics, to communicate collective values and, possibly, as a normative force in order to create or strengthen societal cohesion. Such purposes may be played out differently in practice, depending on the setting and degree of political conflict, as I will explain next.

When I have referred to the need to create a demos in order to be able to establish a democracy, a crucial question is whether a thin or thick cultural layer is needed in order to do so (Petersson 2009:148-150). In other words, can societal cohesion be established in diversity as a thin layer or does it call for homogeneity as a thick layer? Here I understand diversity as an expression of a pluralistic society. As I have also referred to as part of the analytical tools for the first research question, religion may be politicised to different degrees, meaning that it is more or less associated with conflicts of interest.

To be able to analyse the results from the first research question, I will now present a two-by-two model of different ways to apply the uses of religion in relation to diversity, for homogeneity, and for weak or strong politicisation (Figure 1).³ Thereby I will have a tool to operationalise and answer the second research question. I will present the four ways of the model, step by step.

use of religion	weak politicisation	strong politicisation
for homogeneity	civil religion	nationalism
in diversity	privatised religion	human rights

Figure 1. Model of four different ways to apply the political uses of religion in relation to homogeneity, diversity, and weak or strong politicisation.

Weak politicisation of religion for homogeneity: Civil religion

Beginning in the upper left white box of the model, I will here present how I understand civil religion as an example of weak politicisation of religion in

³ The model was originally proposed by associate professor Magnus Hagevi and has been developed here.

order to express homogeneity. In this, I understand civil religion as an inclusive approach towards all citizens, regardless of their religious faith, although not necessarily a successful one (cf Warburg 2013:35).

First, I will describe what the concept of civil religion means and how it has been discussed. Second, I will set the concept of civil religion in the Nordic context.

The concept of civil religion develops

According to Emilio Gentile (2005:29-30), the sacralisation of politics takes place all the time and is a process that belongs to modern society. Once the political system has gained autonomy from traditional metaphysical religions, it needs to create new systems of beliefs, myths and rites to continue to be 'untouchable'. Civil religion, in Gentile's thinking, is one such form of sacralisation that is neither identified with the ideology of a particular political movement nor a particular religious confession but, rather, as a common deistic civic creed. The purpose of civil religion can also be described as a way to provide a link between citizens, their nation and transcendental providence (Hvithamar and Warburg 2009:4).

The concept of civil religion was originally created by Rousseau in the 18th century and presented in his book *On the Social Contract* (Rousseau 2003), as I referred to in the background to the second research question. However, Critchley (2012:28) points out that in the first unpublished version of Rousseau's book, known as the Geneva manuscript, the concept of civil religion was most probably missing. Critchley's interpretation is that the later addition of the concept reflects Rousseau's doubts about whether or not the issue of politics can be raised without reference to religion.

When Rousseau came to the conclusion that religion was needed in some form, he also decided that traditional institutional religion was not a working solution because of the separation of theological and political authority in Christianity (Rousseau 2003:146-158; Laudrup 2009:56; Critchley 2012:70-71). Through the creation of civil religion, however, theological and political authority could be reunited.

Rousseau's concept of civil religion was never implemented, except possibly for a brief period in 1794 (Hvithamar and Warburg 2009:2). However, the concept has lived on theoretically and has been developed, or rather reinterpreted, most famously by Robert Bellah (1967). To Bellah, civil religion is not a normative concept but, rather, an empirically observable entity expressed in a set of beliefs, symbols and rituals (Hvithamar and Warburg 2009:3). When he describes American civil religion, he states that it is not a form of national self-worship but the subordination to ethical principles on which the nation should be judged (Bellah 1967:4). Furthermore, civil religion is the religious dimension that is found in the life of every people and through which the people interpret their own historical and social experience through the intentions and actions of a transcendent reality, usually God

(Bellah 1975:3). While ‘God’ in Rousseau’s version of civil religion is a deistic watchmaker god, ‘God’ in American civil religion is actively interested and involved, with a special concern for America, according to Bellah (1967:7).

The concept of civil religion has been widely discussed, whether in Rousseau’s version or Bellah’s. On the one hand, Rousseau’s version has been described as an un-dogmatic and (therefore?) tolerant form of religion in the sense that the citizens were allowed to hold their own non-political religious opinions (Bellah 1967:5). On the other hand, the fact that the state could not accept any religious political competitors has been interpreted as an intolerant position (Rousseau 2003:156-158; Sigurdson 2009:351-352).

Pål Repstad (2009:200) reminds his readers that Bellah has a critical-prophetic element in his interpretation of civil religion alongside an element of tolerance and inclusivity. When a people does not live up to the standard that is expected of a chosen people, it needs to be reminded thereof through the use of civil religion (Botvar and Sjöborg 2014:236). All that is left without that element is ‘banal civil religion’, the religious glorification of a nation (Repstad 2009:200).

As I interpret Bellah’s concept of civil religion in relation to the three basic uses of religion in politics, its set of symbols and rituals could be used to legitimise politics. Civil religion as a set of beliefs and as subordination to ethical principles may be used to communicate collective values and possibly also as a normative force. When I use civil religion as part of my analytical model, I will focus on how parliamentary parties may use civil religion to communicate collective values while, to some degree, I will also refer to it as symbols and rituals as political legitimisation.

Civil religion in the Nordic context

When Riis (1985:34) described religion as a non-issue in Danish politics, I understand it as a low degree of politicisation of religion for the purpose of homogeneity. At that time, all parties quietly agreed on the importance of keeping an open majority church and religious tolerance. I believe that this also tells us something about civil religion in the Nordic context, as I intend to show here.

As I showed earlier in this section, Rousseau did not consider traditional institutional religion to be a solution to the problem of political authority because of the separation of theological and political authority in Christianity. When civil religion has been discussed in the Nordic context, scholars have instead referred to Bellah’s interpretation of the concept, arguing that the Nordic majority churches fulfil the same functions as civil religion does in the USA (Sundback 2000:41-42; Botvar and Sjöborg 2014:235-236; Warburg 2013:9-10). A recent case study example of this is an analysis of the annual opening ceremony of the Nordic parliaments, which all include a church service (Jacobsen 2009b:172-174). To me, the most reasonable ex-

planation of these arrangements is that the majority churches are used as part of civil religion, which in turn supports such claims of Nordic civil religion, at least to some degree.

As I have showed in the section on the changing use of religion in politics first in this chapter, the Nordic majority churches have continued to have more or less close relationships to the states, which may explain such association. Göran Gustafsson (2000:184) has suggested that the use of the Swedish majority church in civil religion is as a result of the (Social Democratic) 'folkhem' ideology, according to which the church would manifest national community and cohesion. In contemporary Denmark, religious and national motives are mixed in what is described as a comprehensive civil religion (Warburg, Larsen and Schütze 2013:5-6). In my analysis, I understand Nordic civil religion as such a combination of religious and national motives but, because the aim of this study, I will focus on the religious ones and, primarily, the use of the majority churches.

However, not all agree on the association of civil religion and majority churches. Inger Furseth (1986:160) has claimed that civil religion does not exist at all in Norway. She has argued that the majority church and Christianity do not represent a common Norwegian self-understanding but, rather, one of certain subgroups and classes. Susan Sundback (2000:72) concludes that the Nordic civil religious ideology appears to be most widely accepted in Denmark and Finland and to a lesser degree in Norway and Sweden. She explains the difference as a consequence of the fact that the nineteenth-century revival movements in Norway and Sweden were organised independently of the majority churches, as opposed to the case in Denmark and Finland.

With the decreasing influence and use of Christianity in society, it may seem as a natural consequence that Nordic civil religion changes (Sundback 2000:42; Warburg 2013:48; Botvar and Sjöborg 2014:237). Additionally, with increasing religious diversity in the Nordic countries, Dobbelaere (1999:235) asks what degree of pluralism is incongruent with the Nordic majority churches fulfilling the role of civil religion. I will discuss such possible changes of contemporary Nordic civil religion in the section on more politicised religion in diversity later in this chapter.

Summary

In this section of the chapter, I have outlined how I understand civil religion as an example of weak politicisation of religion in order to establish and maintain homogeneity, as it, at least theoretically, holds an inclusive approach to all citizens.

First, I have explained the concept of civil religion in the sense of Rousseau and Bellah and discussed and problematised the alleged tolerance of the un-dogmatic civil religion, especially in relation to multicultural societies. I have also discussed the critical-prophetic element in Bellah's version of

civil religion, with claims that the lack of that element leads to banal civil religion. I will mainly focus on civil religion as a means for party political actors to communicate collective values but also, to some degree, as a means of legitimising politics through symbols and rituals.

Second, I have referred to the Nordic context and the more or less close relationships between the states and majority churches, which have been interpreted as the Nordic form of civil religion by some scholars, with whom I agree, with the addition of national motives, although I will only focus on the majority churches here. However, with decreasing influence and use of Christianity in society and increasing religious diversity, civil religion may be expected to either disappear or possibly change in content and character.

Weak politicisation of religion in diversity: Privatised religion

Continuing to the lower left white box of the model, I will here present how I understand privatised religion as an example of weak politicisation of religion in diversity. I will focus on the division between public secular and private religious spheres and how such division has been increasingly questioned. To be clear, my focus here is religion on the political level and not on an individual one.

As I have referred to in previous sections, both in this chapter and Chapter 1, a common understanding of the secularisation theory is that it relies not least on the theory of functional differentiation (e.g. Casanova 2001b:13.788; Luhmann 1982). As a consequence, religion has become a private matter to anyone but religious professionals. The development has accelerated further through the focus on individual religiosity through pietistic influence, processes of individuation and the reflexive nature of religion (Casanova 2001b:13.791).

However, according to Casanova (2001b:13.788), such limitation of religiosity is not only a natural consequence but also a deliberate choice that is taken more or less for granted, not least by political parties and social movements (cf. Dobbelaere 1999:233; Gregory 2012:375). Such a position may be understood as a triumph of the narrative of secular progress (e.g. Woodhead 2009). The result of this process is a weaker degree of politicisation of religion, with little public influence for traditional institutional religion and an acceptance of religious diversity as long as it stays a private matter at an individual level. As I have referred to earlier in the thesis, the Nordic countries are no exception to these developments.

As I will reiterate in the next section, the process of glocalisation has caused several scholars to speak of challenges and changes to this form of weaker politicisation of religion (Beyer 2007:99-104). As two major examples, Casanova (1994) claims that religion has become increasingly deprivatised and Habermas (2008) speaks of the post-secular society, due not

least to an increasing visibility of Islam in the Western world (e.g. Beyer 2007:99-104).

To summarise, I have briefly referred here to how functional differentiation and individual processes have contributed to the separation of public secular and private religious spheres. However, this change has also been claimed as a conscious choice by, not least, political parties and social movements, which has been increasingly questioned, as I will show next.

Strong politicisation of religion in diversity: Human rights

Continuing to the lower right white box of the model, I will here present how I understand the use of human rights to handle religion as an example of strong politicisation of religion in diversity.

First, I will outline why human rights are growing in salience and how this relates to traditional institutional religion. Second, I will describe the status of the concept of human rights in the Nordic countries.

The concept of human rights and its growing salience

As I have referred to earlier, Riis (1985:34) considered religion to be a non-issue in Danish politics in the Gustafsson (1985) study, meaning that all parties quietly agreed on the importance of keeping an open majority church and religious tolerance, and I have interpreted this as an expression of civil religion. However, while religious tolerance may be an expression of human rights, the situation may be very different with increasing religious diversity when tolerance and the application of human rights may actually be put to the test. As I will explain further in the following, I will use human rights as an example of strong politicisation of religion rather than a weak form of politicisation to reflect the development in Nordic politics during the timeframe of this study.

With the growth of multicultural societies, a concept like civil religion has become increasingly questioned, with claims that it does not pose an adequate solution to the problem of conflicting interests in society and that it is insufficient when it comes to analysing ideological and political motives for the use of civil religion (Cristi 2001:242). Furthermore, Casanova (2003:128) states that while the un-dogmatic character of civil religion may seem inclusive, it still may be perceived as discriminatory to non-conforming religious minority denominations and non-believers.

Taylor (2011:47) claims that a strong 'philosophy of civility' would be a preferable solution. In contemporary societies such philosophy is often expressed as human rights, democracy and equality and non-discrimination. In a similar way, Habermas (2011:28) states that the acceptance of universal human rights may serve as a reminder of the need to develop a constitutional frame for the multicultural world society.

Taylor's and Habermas' suggestions may be a reminder of Durkheim's vision of an individual cult that would be a rational one, based on reason and justice (Furseth and Repstad 2005:50-51; Boglind, Eliaeson and Månson 2009:259). In a similar way, Dobbelaere (1999:239-240; cf Berger 1967) proposed the need for a new sacred canopy based on typical Christian values such as social justice, wellbeing and special attention to marginalised people, which I referred to in the background sections earlier in this chapter.

While Casanova (2001a:430) claims that we cannot expect the formation of one single global religion, he states that the individual cult 'has indeed arrived' through the arrival and global expansion of human rights doctrines (cf Porsdam 2012:38-39). Cristi (2009:74) explains the change as a shift from national to international rights, where the human person has become the carrier of absolute rights and dignity and has acquired a sacred status.

It needs to be noted here that human rights is not a unitary concept. References to human rights may implicate the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, as well as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989, but also a number of other declarations and conventions. In the Nordic context of this thesis, the European Convention on Human Rights of 1950 is of major importance, as all member states of the Council of Europe must sign and ratify it (Porsdam 2012:32-35). Here, I choose to understand references to human rights in Nordic party platforms and parliamentary debates primarily as references to either one of these three specified declarations, regardless of whether or not this is explicitly stated, as these are the ones with the highest formal status.

In the previous theoretical background, I have referred to discussions on whether or not societies need any transcendental reference for political authority and legitimacy. A similar debate is taking place in relation to human rights, where the anti-foundational majority standpoint is to deny that human rights call for theoretical foundations (Malachuk 2010:127-128). Laudrup (2009:60-61) possibly represents such view, when she argues that human rights are moral in themselves and that they constitute a system of sacred symbols that represent the existing moral order. Paul Kahn (2012:44) goes one step further and claims that to believe in human rights is to believe that they are convincing enough on their own and therefore do not need any supplement in terms of divine legitimation.

Foundationalists opposingly argue that there are in fact universal, rationalist foundations for human rights or, in a 'modest' form, religious foundations (Malachuk 2010). Representatives of modest foundationalism may point out that while the Universal Declaration of Human Rights formally is a secular document, it has also been claimed as being grounded in Western Christianity with an appreciation of natural law (Turner 2013:73). Human rights have furthermore been claimed to be dependent on the belief that every human being is created in the image of God (Gregory 2012:381). Once

the world is no longer considered to be a divine creation, then that belief no longer will be normatively valid, according to Gregory.

Human rights in the Nordic countries

Pål Ketil Botvar and Anders Sjöborg (2014:236) claim that human rights play a central role in Nordic public life and function as some kind of cohesive values, not least in young people's lives. In a parallel development, human rights are getting an increasing degree of formal status. In Sweden, central human rights have been given a pivotal place in the national school curriculum. In Norway, human rights were referred to in an amendment to the constitution as a fundamental value to society for the first time ever in 2012 (Botvar and Sjöborg 2014:238). In the Norwegian debate on these constitutional changes, many politicians went even further to claim that human rights should be equivalent to the Evangelical Lutheran faith or even substitute the place of that faith in the constitution.

On the basis of findings such as these and analyses of survey data, Botvar and Sjöborg (2014:255) therefore claim that human rights and the sacralisation of the nation state are interrelated. Their conclusion is that human rights fulfil the criteria for being a (new) civil religion in the Nordic countries, and that that is the case to a higher degree there than in other Western European countries in their study.

Furthermore, the Nordic countries have been claimed to take on the role as 'moral superpowers' or 'norm entrepreneurs' in international peace-making processes with a strong sense of human rights, as I referred to in the previous chapter, (Ingebritsen 2006:2; Botvar and Sjöborg 2014:236). In Riis' thinking (1989:143-144), these are expressions of a religious attitude, which he labels 'protestant humanism', as I have referred to earlier. To Repstad (2009:202), the Nordic countries in this way fulfil the kind of critical-prophetic element that is part of Bellah's version of civil religion. That would lead to a form of civil religion independent of the Christian churches (Repstad 2009:212). However, Repstad also proposes that Nordic civil religion may move in the opposite direction, to strengthen the Christian character in opposition of other religions and in particular Islam.

I find these discussions on human rights in the Nordic countries very interesting, as they indicate that the concept of civil religion may be changing towards a focus on human rights, while human rights may well be considered to be an expression of a religious attitude as well.

Summary

In this section, I have presented how I understand the use of human rights to handle religion as an example of strong politicisation of religion in diversity.

First, I have referred to claims that human rights are a better solution than civil religion in multicultural societies and compared it to Durkheim's vision of the individual cult and Dobbelaere's proposition of new 'sacred canopy'. I

understand human rights here primarily as references to the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child and the European Convention on Human Rights. I have also referred to discussions on whether human rights doctrines are dependent on transcendental references or not.

Second, I have described the strong status of the concept of human rights among people in general in the Nordic countries. They have been given increasing official status in at least Norway and Sweden and have also been suggested as part of a renewed form of civil religion with weaker ties to the majority churches. However, Nordic civil religion may also get a stronger Christian character through the increasing salience of nationalism, as I will show next.

Strong politicisation of religion for homogeneity: Nationalism

Finally, I turn to the upper right white box of the model, where I will present how I understand nationalism as an example of strong politicisation of religion in order to express homogeneity with the exclusion of ‘others’. In this sense, nationalism differs from civil religion, which has the purpose of being inclusive, although it does not necessarily succeed in that objective.

First, I will refer to discussions on what nationalism is and why we may see an increasing salience of nationalism. Second, I will refer to the development of right-wing populist parties in Europe and how nationalism is part of that development. Third, I will refer to the possible use of religion as an expression of nationalism. Fourth, I will refer to discussions on right-wing populist parties in the Nordic context and their use of religion.

The increasing salience of nationalism

The modern nation-state grew out of the eighteenth-century French and American revolutions and Enlightenment thinking, which overturned what was perceived as the God-given legitimacy of hierarchic dynastic rules (Anderson 2006:7). Kings and emperors that had been thought of as rulers by the grace of God were now replaced by the popular sovereignty of a nation or a people (Taylor 2011:43). While the people may once have identified with the regime in premodern societies, it was now expected to identify with collective agency as the realisation of its freedom and/or the locus of its national and cultural expression. Taylor (2011:44-45) states that the modern democratic state demands a people with a strong collective identity, as democracy obliges the people to show more solidarity and more commitment to each other in comparison to the premodern hierarchical order.

According to Benedict Anderson (2006:6), a nation may be defined precisely as an imagined political community. It is imagined as the members will never meet or even hear of more than a fraction of the other members. Yet it is regarded as a community, based on a deep horizontal brother- and

sisterhood, which makes it more akin to kinship and religion than liberalism and fascism, according to Anderson.

Along with Anderson's useful definition of a nation, I also concur with Smith's (2009:23) definition of national identity as the identification of individuals with 'the reproduction and reinterpretation of myths, symbols, memories, values and traditions'. More explicitly, national identity in his thinking is about the creation of an ethnic or ethnic community where the myths are about a common ancestry, historical memories and elements of shared culture, including a common territory and a measure of solidarity. In more concrete terms, Anderson (2006:133) claims that the creation of common national languages has been one of the most important vehicles of the unification of nation-states through its ability to generate a sense of solidarity.

In ideological terms, national identity may be expressed as nationalism, which I understand with Mudde (2007:16) as a political doctrine that strives for the unification of the cultural (alternatively 'ethnic' or 'racial') and political (alternatively 'territorial' or 'civic') dimensions of a nation state (cf Smith 2009:22). The core goal of nationalism may, therefore, be described as the creation of monocultural states. Differently put, the objective is not just to establish a *demos* but a more communitarian notion of the nation as *ethnos*, as I referred to in the first chapter (Petersson 2009: 148-150; Schnapper 1994).

As I referred to in the background section to the second research question in this chapter, Durkheim projected that nationalism could overtake the religious functions in society as traditional religious institutions lost social and political influence, while the individual cult would eventually replace nationalism (Furseth and Repstad 2005:50-51; Boglind, Eliaeson and Månson 2009:259). However, while we may interpret the increasing focus on human rights as the growth of an individual cult, nationalism also seems to gain salience. Taylor (2011:44) even states that 'this is the era of nationalism, of the breakup of empires' as different subgroups start to demand their own states.

Laudrup (2009:54) describes a process over the past two decades with increasing focus on national identity and the exclusion of all other identities in most European nation states. Akkerman and Hagelund (2007:197) claim that the change is a turn from multicultural policies to a growing emphasis on citizenship and social cohesion. As a possible explanation of such developments, I note that a national language, national culture and national institutions have been crucial to the creation of European nation-states (Ivanescu 2010:311; cf Anderson 2006:133). Therefore, increasing pluralisation through immigrants with other languages, other cultures and non-institutionalised religiosity may be perceived as a challenge to the existence to such states (cf Beyer 2007:98-104).

However, the increasing focus on nationalism has been met with criticism. As an example, I referred to Repstad's (2009:200) discussion of the

critical-prophetic element in Bellah's version of civil religion in the previous section of this chapter, in which he claimed that the lack thereof would lead to banal civil religion, the religious glorification of a nation (cf Billig 2004:6). Furthermore, Stjepan Meštrović (1997:154) claims that the eruption of nationalism is a mere attempt to mechanically induce a sense of the sacred that has been lost through the decreasing influence of traditional institutional religion. Next, I will explore how nationalism is part of the growth of right-wing populist parties.

Nationalism through the growth of right-wing populism

In party politics, nationalism may be associated in particular with parties on the (far) right, although that distinction is not as easily made as it may seem, which I will return to shortly. Fascist and National Socialist (Nazi) parties can be defined as belonging to the extreme right with their antidemocratic approach (Mudde 2007:31). However, since the late 1970s and early 1980s, a new political master frame has been developed in Europe, originally with the National Front in France and its electoral breakthrough in 1984 (Rydgren 2004:478). The new master frame differs from the one of the extreme right in the sense that it is at least nominally democratic and focuses on cultural racism (also known as 'new racism') rather than the biological racism of the extreme right (Mudde 2007:31; Rydgren 2004:278; Modood 2013:41).

The new master frame has given birth to a group of parties that alternately have been called radical right, radical right-wing populist and populist radical right parties (Rydgren 2004; Mudde 2007; Akkerman and Hagelund 2007; Arter 2008). I have chosen to use the label right-wing populist parties here, as I perceive the 'radical' part to fit less well with parties that are fairly well established, in the way that at least the True Finns and the Norwegian Progress Party are within the Nordic context.

Cas Mudde (2007:22-23) characterises these parties as having three core features. First, nativism, which he defines as the key notion, which claims that states exclusively belong to their native members and that non-natives threaten the homogeneity of these states. Second, there is authoritarianism, which he defines as the belief in a strictly-ordered society, with severe punishments for those who disrupt the order. Third, there is populism, which he defines as an ideological feature of the 'common sense' of the people in contrast to 'the corrupt elite'.

Finally, to characterise these parties as right-wing is an oversimplification, as I referred to earlier. While the left-right distinction is mainly based on the socioeconomic cleavage, economics is not a core feature of the right-wing populist parties (Mudde 2007:25; cf Lipset and Rokkan 1967). Moreover these parties support a (chauvinist) welfare state and protectionist policies.

The nativist core feature of right-wing populist parties is an expression of identity politics or a 'politics of fear', which builds upon the distinction be-

tween 'us' and 'them' in the sense that nationalism also presupposes boundaries between those who belong to the nation and those who do not (Mudde 2007:89; cf the distinction between friend and foe, see Schmitt 2010). This means that to construct an 'ingroup' one also needs to construct an 'outgroup', which may be described as standard behaviour in identity building (Mudde 2007:63). As an example, right-wing populist parties may describe outgroups as primitive, criminal and parasitic to define the ingroup as advanced and modern, (indirectly) honest, and hard working and social (Mudde 2007:89).

As I showed in the theoretical background to the first research question earlier in this chapter, globalisation may be perceived as a challenge to many people and, here, it may be added that Mudde (2007:196) states that 'globaphobia' is an essential feature of right-wing populist parties. As I have referred to earlier in this chapter, Islam and Muslims have become the target group of Western European reactions towards multiculturalism and this is particularly applicable in regard to right-wing populist parties. Put differently, Islamophobia has been claimed as being the anti-Semitism of the 21st century (Mudde 2007:84). According to Tariq Modood (2013:41), Islamophobia is the most important form of cultural racism today.

The use of religion in nationalism

Smith (2003:13-18) finds three models in Kedourie's approach (1971) to nationalism in relation to primarily traditional institutional religion. The first one is a model where nationalism is seen as the secular replacement of religion, much similar to Anderson's thinking (2006:10), where nationalism has been modelled on religion in a way similar to how civil religion was modelled on traditional institutional religion, as I showed in the previous section of this chapter. As Hvithamar (2009:104) points out, to Anderson religion is a static system that can be overruled by a more powerful system such as nationalism.

The second model can be labelled 'neo-traditional', according to which religion is continuously present through time and as part of modernity as well. Therefore it may also be used as an ally to and support for nationalism. In a similar way, Steve Bruce (2003:78-79) claims that a shared religious faith has been a vital part in the creation of most of the new nation-states and national liberation movements in the 19th century and that it is hard to write about nationalism and national identity outside Western Europe in the 20th century without any references to religion. He continues to claim that, as a contrast, most states that have sought legitimacy from secular nationalism have been less prosperous. Yet, religion 'is merely rhetorical window dressing', a way to enlist God as the 'recruiting sergeant' of the nation, according to Bruce (2003:4).

The third model is the most complex, as it keeps many features, such as symbols, liturgies, rituals and messianic fervour, from traditional institution-

al religion. In this model, nationalism is secular in content but religious in appearance and may be thought of as a form of culture and belief system, with the nation seen as a sacred communion (Smith 2003:18). According to Smith (2003:17), this model has the potential to offer deeper insights into how religious and national cultures may underpin and reinforce each other in order to produce powerful national identities. As an example, we may think of national flags as one of many signs of the association of nationalism with traditional institutional religion (Riis and Woodhead 2010:7-8). In a European perspective, the most obvious examples would then be the Nordic, British, Greek, Maltese and Swiss national flags with a Christian cross as well as the Turkish with the Muslim star and crescent.

Last, but not least, religion may be used as part of nationalism, to define what 'we' are *not*, or in other words to define the outgroup. The presence of religions other than Christianity in Western Europe may be perceived as a double threat to the alleged secular state, according to Ivanescu (2010:311), first, as an expression of pluralism and, second, with the chance or risk of religious revival. In the section on globalisation in the theoretical background to the first research question I also referred to four axes, proposed by Beyer (2007:99-104) to illustrate the tensions that arise over globalised religion. According to Beyer, religion becomes a site of difference and often also of conflict through these tensions.

Right-wing populism and religion in Nordic politics

In the Nordic countries, the process of nation building has been a fairly peaceful story since the 19th century, with the exception of the Finnish Civil War and World War II. The different countries have been united in different ways, including Finland being part of Russia. In modern times, diplomacy rather than war has been the primary road towards the establishment of the five separate states that we see today. When nationalism has emerged in the Nordic countries it has primarily been in a cultural sense, with a focus on having one's own language to support a unique identity (Arter 2008:25-40; Heidar 2004:13-15; cf Anderson 2006:133).

However, with the growth of right-wing populist parties in the Nordic countries, nationalism has become associated with conflict to a higher degree. In Denmark, the creation of the Progress Party in 1972 marks a starting point, but it was with the creation of the Danish People's Party in 1995 by members of the Progress Party that the new political master frame of right-wing populism was introduced in Nordic politics (Arter 2008:115-119). The Norwegian Progress Party was created in 1973, the Sweden Democrats in 1988 and the Finnish True Finn Party in 1995 as a development of the Finnish Rural Party. Iceland, however, has no right-wing populist party. According to Arter (2008:116), all of these parties are what he calls anti-immigrant parties, except the True Finn Party, which he labels anti-establishment.

The presence of right-wing populist parties in Nordic politics affects the public debate on religion in different ways and I will give three empirical examples here. Brian Arly Jacobsen (2009a:26-27) has shown similarities between how Jews were referred to as 'the other' or outgroup of national identity in the early 20th century and the way Muslims have been referred to in early twenty-first-century parliamentary debates in Denmark. Through the right-wing populist Danish People's Party, immigration has become the most contentious area in Danish politics, not least with its focus on Muslims (Jacobsen 2009a:276). Tjitske Akkerman and Anniken Hagelund (2007:199-200) show how immigration policies are being pushed in a more nationalist and restrictive direction when tensions arise over cultural and religious groups that suppress women's rights in Norway and the Netherlands. As a consequence, the Norwegian right-wing populist Progress Party politicises issues of human rights and gender equality in order to push an alleged threat of 'Islamicisation' of Norway. Finally, I have shown in an earlier empirical study (Lindberg 2011:154), how the Nordic right-wing populist parties in different ways claim that they are not Christian parties but parties that are devoted to the constitutional and historical Christian heritage of their nations. I further explore this area of research in Articles I, II and IV.

Summary

In this section, I have presented how nationalism may be understood as an example of strong politicisation of religion in order to express homogeneity, an ethnos, with the exclusion of 'others'.

First, I understand a nation here as an imagined community, national identity as the creation of an ethnic or ethic community and nationalism as a political doctrine to create monocultural nations. I have also referred to claims of an increasing salience of nationalism as a reaction to the assumed threat that consequences of globalisation may pose to the cohesion of nation-states.

Second, I have referred to the development of right-wing populist parties in Europe and how nationalism through nativism is part of that development, as well as authoritarianism and populism. The policies of right-wing populist parties may be described as an example of identity politics in order to construct an ingroup and an outgroup, of which immigrants and not least Muslims have become the target group in the latter category.

Third, I have referred to the possible use of traditional institutional religion in nationalism, either with nationalism replacing religion, with religion as support for nationalism or with nationalism appearing with religious characteristics, but with secular content. Religion may also be used in relation to nationalism as a marker of who belongs to the outgroup, which has led to a situation where religion has become a site of conflict.

Fourth, I have referred to discussions on right-wing populist parties in the Nordic context and their use of religion. In modern times, Nordic national-

ism has primarily been associated with peacefulness. However, with the growth of right-wing populist parties, nationalism has become associated with conflict to a higher degree, where Christianity has become a marker of national identity and Islam in particular has become a marker of what it is not.

Summary

To summarise this chapter, the main research problem is what purpose religion may serve for the Nordic parliamentary parties within the timeframe: as an element in party identity, in *realpolitik* and/or as a main contributor to societal cohesion. In this chapter, I have tried to increase my understanding of this problem with the help of theoretical perspectives, both as background and as analytical tools.

I have structured the chapter on the basis of the two overarching research questions, in both cases first with a theoretical background and then with analytical tools.

Background and analytical tools for research question one

First, I have referred to theories on how the use of religion has changed over time. According to the most common interpretation of the secularisation theory, functional differentiation has decreased the influence of religion in society and religion has also been seen as an obstacle towards secular progress. Meanwhile, the Nordic majority churches have also been used continuously as ‘public utilities’ through the notion of performance. Furthermore, increasing pluralisation evokes issues of the need for common legitimisation of the societal system, which stirs discussions on a possible ‘return’ of religion to the public sphere, not least over boundary disputes. If and when religion becomes a cultural resource, it may serve different purposes in political discourse. Finally, I have outlined the impact of globalisation on the contemporary use of religion in politics. In general terms, globalisation decreases national political influence and increases human interaction across national borders. As a consequence, religious diversity increases and religion gets glocalised, which causes tensions and boundary disputes over what should count as acceptable religion. Islam in particular has to a high degree become the other of the Western secular and/or religious cultural system.

Second, I have defined which analytical tools I use in each of my four articles. In Article I, I use social cleavage theory and background elements such as church and state relationships, globalisation, secular-rational values and claims of a re-emergence of religion in politics. In Article II, the key concept is politicisation with glocalisation and boundary disputes over acceptable religion contrasted with cultural religion as background elements.

In Article III, the main theory is functional differentiation with church and state relationships and possible tensions between secular and traditional religious values as background factors. In Article IV, the key concept is symbolic politics in an assumed conflict between Islam and the narrative of secular progress.

Background and analytical model for research question two

First, I have referred to theories on how religion may be used to legitimise religion and create societal cohesion. Weber, Rousseau and Schmitt have been taken as examples of scholars who claim that societies need an external authority to provide political legitimacy. From a cultural perspective, Durkheim has argued for the use of religion to communicate collective values, in a development from traditional religion, through nationalism to the individual cult. While the use of religion as a normative force in a pluralist society has been questioned, overlapping consensus has been discussed as a viable alternative to establish common ground for societal cohesion.

Second, I have posed a two-by-two model to describe in which ways religion is used in politics in relation to diversity, for homogeneity and with a lower or higher degree of politicisation. In the following I will briefly summarise the four parts of the model.

I understand civil religion as an example of weak politicisation of religion for the purpose of homogeneity and have explained the concept and problematised it in relation to multicultural societies as well as the use of or lack of its critical-prophetic element. I have also referred to scholars, according to whom the relationships between states and majority churches is the Nordic form of civil religion, a status which however may be about to change due to weakening bonds between the two.

I understand privatised religion as an example of weak politicisation of religion in diversity. I have referred to the concept as a consequence of functional differentiation, but also as a conscious choice, by both political parties and social movements, to turn religion into a private matter, which has become questioned in relation to religious diversity.

I understand doctrines of human rights as an example of strong politicisation of religion in diversity, as it may be used to handle religious diversity. I have referred to how human rights may be interpreted as a contemporary version of the individual cult, and to discussions on whether the concept has legitimacy without transcendental authority. In the Nordic countries, human rights have been claimed to be of increasing importance, with their international role as norm entrepreneurs becoming a possible adaptation of the critical-prophetic element of civil religion.

Finally, I understand nationalism as an example of strong politicisation of religion for the purpose of expressing homogeneity, with the resulting exclusion of others. I have outlined how increasing pluralisation may be perceived

as a threat towards national identity, which may contribute to the growth of right-wing populist parties and a rise of nationalism on the political agenda in order to construct an ingroup and an outgroup as part of identity politics. In such a process, primarily traditional institutional religion may become a tool, which is seemingly the case in the Nordic countries where Christianity becomes a marker of national identity and Islam in particular becomes a marker of what it is not in the eyes of right-wing populist parties.

In the next chapter, I will present the methods that I use in my empirical studies, including operationalisations of the theoretical backgrounds and concepts that I have presented in this chapter.

3. Method

My four empirical studies (Articles I-IV) are based on different forms of content analysis with mixed methods. Two studies (Articles I and II) are comparative studies and two studies (III and IV) are case studies. Article I is based on an analysis of Nordic party platforms and the other three articles (II-IV) are based on an analysis of records from Nordic parliamentary debates.

In this chapter, I intend to elaborate upon the methods that I use in these studies and I will structure the chapter as follows: First, I will revisit the definitions of religion and politics that I referred to in the first chapter. Second, I will develop the research design that I apply to my empirical studies with epistemological standpoints, a comparative approach, case studies and content analysis. Third, I will outline the context of my empirical studies, the characteristics of my two main sources party platforms and records from parliamentary debates and the timeframe of these studies. Fourth, I will discuss the reliability, validity and transferability of the studies. Fifth, I will operationalise the second overarching research question before my final summary of the chapter.

Definitions

In the first chapter, I defined the two core concepts and I will again briefly refer to those definitions here:

First, I understand religion in relation to the first research question in a substantial sense as beliefs, language, symbols, activities and institutions that are being used to regulate the cleavage between the empirical and supra-empirical perceptions of reality (Hill 1973:42-43). In relation to the second research question, I understand religion in a functional sense as culture, identity and power (Woodhead 2011).

Second, I understand politics as interactions ‘predominantly oriented toward the authoritative allocation of values for a society’ (Easton 1965:50). Material values may be related to conditions such as economy and natural resources and non-material values may be related to conditions such as norms on what is beneficial and destructive for society. With Downs (1957:25), I understand a political party as ‘a team of men [sic] seeking con-

trol over the governing apparatus by gaining office in a duly constituted election’.

Research design

In this section, I will outline the method that I apply in relation to the first research question, which is directly related to my four empirical studies. First, I will clarify my epistemological standpoints and then explain what I mean by a comparative approach, case studies and the use of content analysis and how I apply that in the four empirical studies respectively.

Epistemological standpoints

To be able to draw conclusions from an empirical study, a given logic needs to be defined. Initially, I will therefore outline my approach to the empirical material and theories, epistemology and basic methodology.

First, I have chosen to approach the empirical material abductively in relation to the first research question. According to Krippendorff (2004:36-38), the abductive method is the most common way of making inferences in content analysis, which is part of my research design and to which I will return more thoroughly later in this chapter.

Abduction is a method with characteristics both from induction and deduction, but which adds *understanding*, according to Alvesson and Sköldbberg (2008:55). Just as with induction, abduction starts with the empirical material, but does not reject theoretical preconceptions, which makes it related to deduction as well. Theory may in this case serve as a source of inspiration rather than as a more or less mechanical path to follow. As part of the process, the researcher turns back and forth between theory and the empirical material in order to enhance their understanding of both of these sources (Alvesson and Sköldbberg 2008:56).

In my studies, I initially turn to the empirical material and then find concepts, such as issue-areas in theories and previous studies, in order to analyse and structure the material (Brewer 1992:300). Next, I turn from the results of my empirical analyses to theories that may contribute to my understanding of the findings, and finally I discuss in what way the findings may contribute to a better understanding of the theories.

Furthermore, when answering the second research question I will use an analytical model based on the results from the first research question. Thus, my approach here is closer to a deductive approach, in that I expect the empirical findings to form a pattern in line with the analytical model that I will then be able to interpret according to the theories and background factors on which the model is based.

Second, I would like to clarify the epistemological grounds of my study. The two basic methodological approaches to social sciences, quantitative and qualitative methods, have been claimed to be incompatible, due to their underlying scientific paradigms of basic epistemological differences (Tashakkori and Teddlie 2003:7). Quantitative methods have their origins in a (post) positivist tradition and qualitative in a social constructionist one, which means that science either can be based on observable facts or on subjective constructions.

However, several scholars argue that while such a gap exists epistemologically, it does not exist ontologically and pragmatically (Riis 2012:94-100; King, Keohane and Verba 1994:3-4). Such a pragmatist approach is also held by Abbas Tashakkori and Charles Teddlie (2003:10-11), who suggest the term 'mixed methods' for the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods at many or all stages in the same study. The advantages of such an approach would be that mixed methods research can answer questions that other methods cannot, that they provide stronger inferences and provide the opportunity to present a greater variety of views (Tashakkori and Teddlie 2003:15).

To summarise, I apply an abductive approach with mixed methods on the four empirical studies in answering the first research question and a deductive approach in answering the second research question. Next, I will outline the three basic methods of these studies: the comparative approach, case studies, and content analysis and explain how these are applied in my studies.

A comparative approach

The two first empirical studies are both based on a comparative approach to five (Article I) or three (Article II) Nordic countries, while the third and fourth (Articles III and IV) are case studies with similarities to the comparative approach. Comparison has been called 'the engine of knowledge' as it highlights the particularities of the single case by comparing it to other cases (Dogan and Pélassy 1990:8-10). Comparison increases the ability to explain rather than just describe different phenomena by setting them into a larger context. To be able to compare in a trustworthy way, the researcher needs to structure data coherently within a logical framework and analyse the result with the help of theoretical constructions (Dogan and Pélassy 1990:32). While comparison does not guarantee validity and reliability (concepts that will be explained at the end of this chapter) of a study, it may to a high degree strengthen them (Dogan and Pélassy 1990:16, 198).

One of the weaknesses of the comparative method is that it is based on a 'many variables and small N' situation, which means that there may be too much variation and too few observations to enable generalisations from such studies. One way to try to solve this problem is to focus on the analysis of

‘comparable’ cases, which means that they are similar in a large number of important variables but dissimilar in a few characteristic ones. Such cases may enable the researcher to establish the relationship between the few variables, while the other variables are controlled (Lijphart 1971:686-687).

One example of this is the most-similar systems design that is based on John Stuart Mill’s Method of Difference (Przeworski and Teune 1970:32-34). The method rests on the assumption that if all crucial independent variables are present except one, that variable is likely to cause the variation in the outcome that has also been observed.

The Nordic countries, with their similarities in cultural attributes and institutional arrangements, are sometimes referred to as a good case for comparative analysis in a most similar systems design (Lijphart 1971:689; Damgaard 1992a:11; Heidar et al 2000:17). According to Heidar et al (2000:18), three types of variables are of greater importance to causal analysis in comparative studies: institutional variables, political variables and sociocultural variables. I will therefore take into account any relevant differences in relation to, in particular, the formal relationship between majority church and state and the value profile of each country and point out such differences where it is relevant in the empirical studies (cf Inglehart and Welzel 2010: 553-554). I apply a comparative analysis in a most-similar systems design in Article II.

Another means to strengthen the validity and reliability of comparative studies is to apply a diachronic perspective, which means that comparisons are made over time (Gerring 2007:217). Three of the four articles (I, II and III) are both diachronic and synchronic studies in the sense that they apply both temporal (diachronic) and spatial (synchronic) components, while the fourth (IV) one is a synchronic study, which means that it focuses on one similar spatial point in time. I will outline the diachronic framework of the empirical studies in the section on timeline later in this chapter.

The use of case studies

As I have already mentioned two case studies (Articles II and IV), which I understand as intensive studies of single cases, delimited in time and space, that are undertaken with the purpose of helping the understanding of a larger population of cases (Gerring 2007:20). Case studies, therefore, rest on the assumption that there is a micro-macro link in social behaviour, which makes cross-level inference possible (Gerring 2007:1). Case studies can be single or cross-case studies but in single case studies the researcher still needs to be able to answer the question of what the single case is an example of, which still calls for a cross-case study (Gerring 2007:12-13). However, the line between a single case study and a cross-case study is not easily defined, according to Gerring (2007:20).

Before choosing a case to build a study on, the researcher needs to reflect upon the purpose of their study. Gerring (2007:38) suggests ten such purposes: research goals (hypothesis, validity, causal insight, scope of proposition); empirical factors (population of cases, causal strength, useful variation, data availability); and additional factors (causal complexity, state of the field). As I will argue shortly, the first, most relevant purpose here is scope of proposition, with the aim of choosing cases that represent the most difficult scenario for a given theoretical assumption (Gerring 2007:49). The second most relevant purpose is causal complexity, here with the specific aim to uncover how multiple causes may yet have a common theoretical assumption (Gerring 2007:61).

Gerring (2007:86-150) then continues to suggest nine different case designs that fit the purposes as well as possible: typical case, diverse case, extreme case, deviant case, influential case, crucial case, pathway case, most-similar case and most-different case.⁴ Of these, the first most relevant case design in these studies is crucial case, which is used in cases that fit the theoretical concept most-likely or least-likely, where the most-likely case may disconfirm a theory and a least-likely case may confirm it. The second most relevant case is influential case, with the purpose of explaining why seemingly problematic cases do not challenge the given conceptual model.

In Article III, the purpose of the study is *scope of proposition* and therefore fits well with the choice of a *crucial* case with a most-likely model. What makes it a crucial case is the assumed high degree of tension between what are perceived as modern liberal values, such as gender and sexual equality, and traditional family values associated with traditional institutional religion. Due to the process of functional differentiation (as explained in Chapters 1 and 2) the most-likely scenario may be to expect such tensions to push the separation of majority church and state in the Nordic countries even further, given the, at least initially, negative attitude among the majority churches towards same-sex unions. While the study does not disconfirm the theory on functional differentiation, it contributes to a more nuanced understanding of it through socio-cultural factors.

In Article IV, the purpose of the study is to understand how a *causal complexity* may have a common theoretical ground and, therefore, the choice of an *influential* case fits well. The main theoretical concept in that study is

⁴ Definitions (of all but influential and crucial case, which I have defined in the main body of text): typical case (representative, causal, usually with typical values and with inner variance in focus); diverse case (maximal variance along the relevant dimensions, calls for more than one case); extreme case (an exploring method with an extreme or at least rare value on an interesting dependent or independent variable); deviant case (with the purpose of finding unexpected explanations through surprising values); pathway case (used to isolate an already confirmed causal effect from other effects); most-similar case (needs at least two cases that are similar in all respects except the variable of interest, to generate new theories); and finally most-different case (with all variables different except the one that is thought of as causal and the outcome, to eliminate necessary causes).

that values are associated with emotions and symbols and that European contemporary values are based on the narrative of secular progress (Woodhead 2009). In the British public debate on the wearing of veils among Muslim women, the most common value that was referred to was freedom, and particularly of women. In the Danish and Norwegian parliamentary debates on the wearing of veils among judges and policewomen, the most common values are secularism, secular progress and neutrality. The case study is used to explain that these different values, including the freedom of women, are actually expressions of the same theoretical assumption, namely a clash between different sets of values – between modernity and tradition, secularity and religion among others. In other words, what makes this an influential case is that a lower degree of concentration on explicit gender issues in the Danish and Norwegian debates does not make it different from the corresponding British debates, due to the understanding of these as based on the same value conflict between tradition and modernity.

Content analysis

In all four articles (I-IV), I apply content analysis. As I will return to later in this chapter, the material of the empirical studies are party platforms and records from parliamentary debates. To conduct studies on such material, a variety of methods are available, of which critical discourse analysis is common (Fairclough 1992; Van Dijk 2004; Krippendorff 2004:16). However, due to the large amount of text, not least in the parliamentary records, a method such as critical discourse analysis would be too time-consuming to give a proper account of the varieties of the parliamentary speeches with references to religion.

Instead, I agree with Krippendorff (2004:87) that texts are always qualitative to begin with but that a quantitative approach may add a more systematic account of the content as well. Such advantages of combining qualitative and quantitative methods, which I also explained earlier in this chapter, have therefore led me to the conclusion that I should apply content analysis in my empirical studies to reach the aim and adequately answer the research questions. For clarity, by quantitative I do not mean statistical analysis in this case but, rather more simply, counting, as I will further outline shortly.

Content analysis is a method of making replicable and valid inferences from texts or other forms of extractable content to the contexts that they are part of (Krippendorff 2004:18-19). In general terms, the framework of content analysis may consist of a body of 'text' (which in practice may refer to a wide range of different sources, not just written ones), a research question, a context within which the body of text makes sense, an operationalisation, inferences that are intended to answer the research question and validating evidence (Krippendorff 2004:29-30). The research question is used to target the inferences that will be drawn from the texts of the study (Krippendorff

2004:31-33). These questions are believed to be answerable by examining the text(s), they delineate a set of possible answers, they concern as of yet unknown knowledge and they allow for (in)validation, at least in principle.

The bodies of text (or the units of analysis, which is the term that I use in the articles, see Graneheim and Lundman 2004:106) in this project, namely party platforms and speeches in parliamentary debates, will be described in the material section later in this chapter. I have defined the research questions in the first section of this chapter as well as the context of Nordic party politics in the introductory chapter. In the final chapter, I will summarise the inferences of the empirical studies and discuss the validity of the evidence. Next, I will outline how I operationalise the research questions in each article, to make their concepts measurable. I do that by defining how I interpret the manifest data, that is the indicators in the empirical studies (Teorell and Svensson 2007:55).

Article I

In the study on the use of religion in party platforms (Article I), the aim is to contribute to the current discussion on the role of religion in politics by analysing changes in the way Nordic parliamentary parties refer to religion in their party platforms from around 1988, 1998 and 2008. To identify such changes, I take three initial steps to identify and classify the manifest content of religion, which I defined earlier in this chapter. Manifest in this sense means the visible content in contrast to latent content that demands a higher degree of interpretation (Graneheim and Lundman 2004:106).

First, to find the manifest content, I use a set of 36 keywords to find sentences which contain references to religion (Graneheim and Lundman 2004:106).⁵ My choice of keywords is inspired by a similar set of keywords used within the religion and media theme within the NOREL project to cover the traditional institutional world religions as well as newer forms of non-institutional religion and spirituality.

Second, I analyse each sentence that contains at least one of these keywords and turn them into quasi-sentences. Each quasi-sentence contains one argument that expresses a political idea or issue (Manifesto Project 2014; Budge et al 2001:96; Laver and Garry 2000:624), which means that one sentence may contain one or more quasi-sentences. The example given in the article is the sentence ‘the freedom of religion is very important, but the majority church holds a unique position’, which can be divided into two quasi-sentences, in this case one on each side of the comma sign.

⁵ Keywords, translated into Danish, Finnish, Icelandic, Norwegian (bokmål and nynorsk) and Swedish: *religi*, Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, church, mosque, synagogue, temple, Jesus, God, Prophet, Buddha, bishop, minister, pastor, imam (or similar in other religions), deacon*, congregation, worship, Bible, Quran, Satanism, angels, meditation, spiritual, new age, hijab, cross (and similar religious symbols), faith, holy, secular, secularisation, life stance and atheism.

Third, I classify each quasi-sentence as belonging to one or more of 18 empirically-generated issue-areas.⁶ An issue-area is a group of issues that shares one or more traits, such as foreign policy issues or social policy issues (Brewer 1992:300). The concept was originally developed within political science to analyse foreign and domestic policy and may be used in a three-step process of analysis for hypothesis testing and theory construction. In this study, however, it is just used as a typology of what religion is related to in the party platforms. I identify the issue-areas on the basis of the structure of the platforms, which is similar in most parties, with different sections on different issue-areas. However, in some cases, such as religion being part of human rights, the issue-area may also occur repeatedly through a platform because of the more fundamental character of that issue-area.

With the number of issue-areas that religion is related to it, is possible to find out if there is a quantitative change of the role or use of religion in party platforms. If religion is related to different issue-areas over time, we may also be able to see a qualitative change in what religion is related to. A methodological advantage of measuring change this way is that it makes it possible to compare party platforms regardless of the number of pages devoted to it. Furthermore, the method reduces the uncertainty in trying to measure religion quantitatively in terms of the number words. To be more specific, if one party uses 100 words to describe its policies on religious education it does not necessarily mean that it actually has said more than a party using 20 words for the same issue.

In this study, I use different kinds of party platforms and treat them equally, although with careful attention to possible differences in character. As the purpose of using party platforms is to analyse long-term policy positions, I avoid using election manifestos, which are more focused on contemporary policies. For that reason, no data is used from the Manifesto Project (2014).⁷ However, methods from that project have inspired this study and I will return to that in the section on research design later in this chapter.

The unit of analysis consists of 136 party platforms or (in four cases) similar documents from the 44 political parties that have had seats in the Nordic

⁶ Issue-areas: party identity (expressing the origin and core values of a party, usually in the portal paragraph); national identity (if national core values are associated with religion); (religion as part of) human rights; education (on all levels); culture (arts, music, etc); immigration; foreign policies (including foreign aid, but not armed conflicts); security (in relation to existing or potential conflicts); trade and industry; healthcare (medical issues related to religion); scientific research (mainly ethical issues); environmental policy (mainly ethical perspectives); organised religion (primarily the majority churches, but in some cases also other denominations and religious bodies); welfare (other than healthcare); food and animal care (e.g. ritual slaughter); labour market (in cases where religious affiliation affects work conditions) equality (gender and sexuality); and crime (including correctional care).

⁷ Through the Manifesto Project, election manifestos are mapped in 56 different categories, of which two correspond to religion (per 603 and per 607).

parliaments within the timeframe of this study, 1988–2008.⁸ Additionally, I have included the party platforms from the Sweden Democrats, who did not enter the Swedish parliament until 2010, to enable comparisons between all of the Nordic right-wing populist parties. The majority (109) of the party platforms in this study are digitally searchable and the rest are analysed manually.⁹ I have chosen all of the platforms from as close as possible to the three selected years, 1988, 1998 and 2008. However, as I previously mentioned, party platforms are only published with several years in between, as they are long-term statements. This means, in practice, that the unit of analysis here is more of a census than a sample.

I operationalise the four research questions of this study as follows: I interpret a higher number of issue-areas in general as a higher salience of religion in the party platforms, which may be related to claims of a re-emergence of religion in politics. I interpret a lower number of issue-areas such as national identity and organised religion combined with a higher number of issue-areas such as foreign policy, human rights and immigration as religious change in terms of weakening state-church relationships and increasing religious diversity. I interpret a qualitative change in the way the majority churches are viewed in the party platforms as a changing approach to these churches. Finally, in accordance with the theory on the religious cleavage (Lipset and Rokkan 1967), I expect right-wing and above all Christian Democratic parties to refer to a higher number of issue-areas than parties on the left wing and interpret any changes in relation to this as signs of religious change and changes in the way the religious cleavage ought to be interpreted.

Article II

In Article II – the first of three studies on the use of religion in parliamentary debates – the aim is to study possible changes in the politicisation of religion in Scandinavia over time in records from parliamentary debates in Denmark, Norway and Sweden in 1988/89, 1998/99 and 2008/09. Just as in Article I, I use content analysis, as I will show next.

First, I use a slightly expanded set of 40 keywords (due to a wider range of issues in parliamentary debates than in party platforms) to find speeches, which contain references to religion (Graneheim and Lundman 2004:106).¹⁰

⁸ An election manifesto has been used for the True Finns 2006/07 and a set of documents similar to party platforms have been used for the Swedish Centre Party 2009, the Swedish Christian Democrats 2010–11 and the Social Liberal Party 2011. For a full account of all included party platforms, see Appendix 1.

⁹ The Icelandic material is examined and in some cases translated by Bjarni Randver Sigurvinnsson, University of Iceland; Katriina Järvenpää, Church Research Institute in Finland, helped with some of the Finnish documents. All other translations are made by Jonas Lindberg.

¹⁰ Keywords, translated into Danish, Norwegian (bokmål and nynorsk) and Swedish (* means that all the different forms of the word has been searched for): *religi*, Islam, Christianity,

Then I count the speeches and the number of debates in which they occur. A speech is, in this case, simply the spoken content from one Member of Parliament on one occasion in a parliamentary debate.

Second, I gather the speeches that contain at least one of the keywords in four keyword clusters: 'religion in general', 'Christianity', 'Islam' and 'other religions'. I choose these clusters to enable comparisons between the traditionally-dominant religion Christianity, the publicly-debated Islam, other religions, and references to religion in general such as being part of human rights.¹¹ I count the keyword clusters and turn them into a percentage share of the total number of speeches with references to religion.

Third, I also categorise the speeches into one or more of 17 empirically-generated issue-areas in order to identify what religion is related to in the debates and then count and turn them into a percentage share of the total number of speeches with references to religion (Brewer 1992:300).¹² As in the case of the keywords, my choice of issue-areas is related to the set of issue-areas that I identify in the study on party platforms, but is slightly expanded here, due to the wider range of issues in parliamentary debates. In case I am not able to categorise the issue-area in a speech, I leave that speech out of that part of the analysis.

Fourth, I categorise every speech where religion is being problematised, count them and turn them into a percentage share of the total number of speeches with references to religion. Here, I understand problematisation as negative connotations towards religion in a specific speech. In case I am not able to determine whether or not religion is problematised in a speech (as in

Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, church, mosque, synagogue, temple, Salvation Army, Pentecostal, Jehovah's Witnesses, Jesus, God, Prophet, Buddha, bishop, minister, pastor, imam (or similar in other religions), deacon*, congregation, worship, Bible, Quran, Satanism, angels, meditation, spiritual, new age, hijab, cross (and similar religious symbols), faith, holy, secular, secularisation, life stance, Humanist and Atheism. References to religion in the sense of 'mere expressions', such as 'oh, my God', were left out of the analysis. The number and percentage of excluded speeches with 'mere expressions' were, in Denmark 1988/89: 31 (24%), 1998/99: 124 (42%) and 2008/09: 118 (15%); in Norway 1988/89: 19 (13%), 1998/99: 34 (11%) and 2008/09: 39 (7%); in Sweden 1988/89: 75 (19%), 59 (21%) and 2008/09: 53 (16%).

¹¹ Keywords in keyword clusters: religion in general (*religi*, life stance, spiritual, faith/belief); Christianity (Christian, church, clergy, deacon, bishop, parish, cross, Bible, Salvation Army, Pentecostal, Catholic, pope, cardinal, Orthodox, Jesus, Christ); Islam (Islam, Muslim, mosque, imam, Mohammed, hijab, burka, halal, Quran); other religions (Jew, synagogue, Hindu, temple, Buddhist, Atheist, Agnostic, Humanist).

¹² Issue-areas: national identity, human rights, education, culture (arts, music etc), immigration, foreign policies, security, welfare (including health care), environmental issues, organised religion (primarily the majority churches, but in some cases also other denominations and religious bodies), food and animal care, labour market, trade and industry, racism, equality (gender and sexuality), crime. The final issue-area, called symbols, was used when no other issue-areas seemed to fit, despite a resemblance with a number of issue-areas such as national identity, human rights and immigration. Besides this complexity, all of these speeches were related to a debate on symbols, such as hijabs, crosses, logotypes or flags, hence the name of the issue-area.

the case of a possible ironic touch), I leave that speech out of that part of the analysis.

Fifth, I count the party affiliation of each speaker in speeches with references to religion and turn them into a percentage share of the total number of speeches with references to religion.

I do all counting in these steps of the content analysis manually, and at least twice in each case to strengthen reliability.

The unit of analysis in Article II consists of the speeches in records from parliamentary debates in the Folketinget (Denmark), Stortinget (Norway) and Riksdagen (Sweden). Instead of strictly adapting to the timeframe of the NOREL project (1988, 1998, 2008), I have chosen to follow the parliamentary years of 1988/89, 1998/99 and 2008/09. One of the advantages of this choice is that a parliamentary year is less likely to be split by a general election, which might have created a higher degree of uncertainty about what conditions affect the content of the parliamentary debates in terms of which parties and which representatives are taking part in the debates.¹³ Another advantage is that a parliamentary year follows a certain routine and major issues are more likely to be fully dealt with within a parliamentary year than between different parliamentary years.

I search the records from the parliamentary debates digitally on the website of each parliament (Folketinget; Stortinget; Riksdagen) or manually examine printed versions (*Folketingstidende. Forhandlingerne i folketingsåret 1988-89; Stortings-forhandlinger 1988-89*).

In addition to the three chosen years, I also analyse the records from the Swedish parliament in 2010/11 in order to assess whether the use of religion changes in Swedish parliamentary debates once a right-wing populist party, in this case the Sweden Democrats, enters parliament, as it did in 2010.

I may also add that the records from the parliamentary debates in Eduskunta/Riksdagen (Finland) and Alþingi (Iceland) within the timeframe are not used in this study, as they do not contribute in a decisive way to the main conclusion of the article – that a high degree of immigration and the presence of a right-wing populist party in parliament leads to a higher degree of politicisation of religion. However, I analyse the Finnish and Icelandic debates as part of the final report of the NOREL project (Lövheim et al forthcoming).

Parliamentary activity in general, including the number of formal questions, has been said to increase in frequency in the Nordic countries during the post-war era, in part because of heightened societal complexity (Wiberg 1994:357-359). However, the intensified political competition, as I refer to in the material section later in this chapter, is also a driving force (Arter

¹³ As shown in footnote 34 in Article II, data from the Swedish parliament indicates that there is no general increase in the total number of speeches in an election year compared to other years, despite the fact that political competition increases in election years.

2008:199; Damgaard 1992c:199; Petersson 2000:81). I have only managed to retrieve the total number of speeches made in each parliamentary year in the Swedish parliament, despite direct contact with the parliaments in Denmark and Norway. Such numbers would otherwise have enabled a comparison between the number of speeches with references to religion with the total number of speeches and the possible change in this share between the different years and countries of the study.¹⁴

I operationalise the four research questions of this study as follows: I interpret a higher number of speeches and debates with references to religion and a higher percentage of problematisation of those speeches as a higher level of politicisation of religion. I interpret a higher percentage of references to other keyword clusters than Christianity as a higher level of religious diversity, and a higher percentage of references to issue-areas such as foreign policies, immigration, security and human rights as an indicator of a higher level of glocalisation. Finally, I interpret differences between right-wing populist and other parties, such as the use of Christianity as a cultural resource, as different ways to politicise religion and for possibly different reasons.

Article III

In the second of the three studies on the use of religion in parliamentary debates (Article III), the aim is to analyse how the Members of Parliament express the position of the majority churches in Nordic parliamentary debates on same-sex unions and to discuss the results in relation to theories on functional differentiation contextualised through socio-cultural factors. Once again, I use content analysis and this time in three steps, which I outline somewhat more extensively here than in the article.

The study is a case study and, first, I use six keywords to find speeches with references to the majority church: church, bishop, clergy, parish, blessing and denomination (Graneheim and Lundman 2004:106).¹⁵ Then I count the speeches. A speech is, once again, the spoken content from one Member of Parliament at one occasion in a parliamentary debate. In cases where the speeches just contain 'mere expressions' in relation to the majority church or explicitly refer to all religious denominations other than the majority church,

¹⁴ In the Swedish parliament, the total number of speeches may be retrieved through adding up the number of speeches from each day on which debates have been held. That presents us with the following numbers: 1988/89: 10,107 speeches, 1998/99: 11,596 speeches and 2008/09: 13,627, which would indicate steady increase over time. However, according to the Information Service of the Swedish parliament (e-mail 18 September 2012) the equivalent numbers in the following years have been decreasing in comparison: 2009/10: 12,039, 2010/11: 11,492 and 2011/12: 11,578.

¹⁵ While the keywords blessing and denomination may also refer to religious denominations other than the majority churches I have taken into account the context of that particular reference, such as the previous speech, to determine whether the majority church is included in such reference or not.

I exclude them from quantitative inferences on the number of speeches with references to the majority church in the study.

Second, I count speeches with suggestions that the double track system, with full legal effects of civil as well as religious marriages, should be replaced with a single civil union and categorise them on the basis of the party affiliation of the speaker.

Third, I categorise all of the speeches containing references to the majority church by the kind of reason used to argue for or against the introduction of legislation on same-sex unions with references to the majority church. While I have drawn the categories from argumentation analysis (Björnsson, Kihlbom and Ullholm 2009), my purpose of using them here is not to value the different reasons or test the logic of their premises and conclusions but just to enable a comparison between different kinds of reasons in the same way as Axner (2013:101) does in her analysis of Swedish debate articles. In that sense, the method is still a form of content analysis. The seven different reasons that I use in the analysis are (Björnsson, Kihlbom and Ullholm 2009):

- Cause and effect: reason that points to the cause or effect of a fact.
- Sign: reason with a sign of a fact but which is not an actual cause or effect of it, as in the case of a barometer value as a sign of pending weather conditions.
- Example: reason with a concrete example of a fact, to illustrate or possibly prove one's thesis.
- Authority: reason that is strengthened by the support of an authority of some kind and thus is regarded as more credible.
- Analogy: reason with a comparison to another similar circumstance and the assumption that the consequences will be similar in the present case.
- Consequence: normative reason that supports a ban on an act, based on whether its consequences are considered to be good or bad.
- Rule: normative reason that applies to what is thought of or is in fact a general rule, in moral or legal terms.

The unit of analysis in Article III consists of the speeches with references to the majority churches in the final debates on registered partnerships and same-sex marriage in Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. As in the case of Article II, I analyse these on the basis of the digitally-searchable records on the website of each parliament, here with the addition of the Finnish and Icelandic parliamentary websites or records in print (Folketinget; *Folketingstidende. Forhandlingerne i folketingsåret 1988-89*; Eduskunta; Alþingi; Stortinget; *Stortings-forhandlingar 1988-89*; Riksdagen).¹⁶ The final debates on registered partnership were held in Denmark,

¹⁶ The Finnish material has been examined by research secretary Satu Ikonen, Finnish Church Research Institute and the Icelandic material examined by research assistant Eva Björk Valdimarsdóttir, University of Iceland.

1989, Norway, 1993, Sweden, 1995, Iceland, 1996 and Finland, 2001 and the final debates on same-sex marriage were held in Denmark, 2012, Norway, 2008, Sweden, 2009 and Iceland, 2010. As Finland has not yet introduced legislation on same-sex marriage, a debate on the issue in 2012 is added to the study to enable comparison between the different countries.¹⁷

I operationalise the three research questions of this study as follows: I interpret a higher number of speeches with references to the majority church as a sign of how the majority churches function as public utilities. I expect a higher number of suggestions that the double track system should be replaced with a single civil union, given the theory on functional differentiation and possible tensions between secular and traditional religious values. Finally, I expect a lower number of reasons of authority with references to the majority church and a lower number of reasons of rule with references to the freedom of the majority church to choose to adapt or not to the new legislation, given the theory on functional differentiation and the different levels of control that the Nordic states exercise over the majority churches.

Article IV

Finally, the third study on the use of religion in parliamentary debates (Article IV) is, like Article III, a case study and the aim is to analyse in what sense these debates may be understood as a clash between different sets of values and what roles religion and gender issues play in these debates.

The first step in the content analysis of the study is to use the same set of keywords as in Article II, listed earlier in this section of the chapter, to find parliamentary speeches with references to religion.

Second, I use four categories in order to categorise the kinds of values that each speaker in the debates refers to, to support their claims for or against the wearing of veils by judges and policewomen. The use of the four categories is inspired by a similar study about British public debate on the wearing of veils (Woodhead 2009). I understand values here as moral issues that are associated with emotions rather than rational or abstract norms and that draw on compelling images and narratives (Woodhead 2009:90). This makes the use of symbols powerful in relation to identity issues, as in the case of national flags and religious symbols such as a cross (Riis and Woodhead 2010:7-8; Anderson 2006). In contemporary Europe, the main narrative is one of secular progress, according to Woodhead (2009:90). Woodhead's use of the concept of values is easily related to my own theoretical reflec-

¹⁷ The Finnish parliament finally approved a bill allowing same-sex marriage on 28 November 2014 (meaning after Article III had been published), due to a citizens' initiative to re-open the issue. The archbishop of the Evangelical Lutheran church, Kari Mäkinen, commented on the decision by saying that 'I know how much this means to 'the rainbow people', their families and many others. With all my heart, I rejoice for them and with them' (*Kyrkpressen* 2014).

tions in the previous chapter on cohesive ways to use religion, such as civil religion and nationalism.

Woodhead (2009) found in her study that five values are particularly common in public attitudes towards the wearing of veils in Britain. In the study at hand on the wearing of veils by Danish judges and Norwegian policewomen, I find that three of these values are in common. In addition, I find that neutrality is a common value.

I operationalise the research question in the following way: freedom (references to women's freedom, feminism and sexual liberation, but also freedom of religion); secularism and secular progress (references to religion as a private matter and to modernity and secularity); integration and social cohesion (references to obstacles to the integration of immigrants); security (associations with Islamic extremism); civic values (references to fairness, politeness and tolerance); and neutrality (references to an assumed value neutral position).

Material

As I referred to in the first chapter, I analyse Nordic party platforms and records from parliamentary debates. In this section, I will further outline the context and choice of this empirical material as well as the timeframe of the studies.

Context and the choice of empirical sources

An empirical data source such as text is never an isolated phenomenon, but part of a context. In the case of a novel, that may be the formal structure it is part of: the writer, the editor, the publishing house, and so on. However, a context is always someone's construction and may therefore be described very differently (Krippendorff 2004:33). In the case of the novel, it could, as an illustration, also be part of a late modern, gender critical discourse context. In content analysis, the chosen context explains what the analyst does with the empirical material, based on the analyst's best hypothesis for what it means, tells and does (Krippendorff 2004:33). In other words, the context specifies the world that the research questions relate to.

The context of this thesis is, on a formal level, about Nordic parliamentary politics. It is also about the use of religion in such politics, which means that I need to find empirical material that may contribute to that kind of knowledge. In other words, I need to ask where and when religion may turn up in politics and I could then assume that it would have its designated areas, in particular related to the regulation of the majority churches.

However, religion has been claimed to have the potential of turning up practically anywhere in politics, and policy issues, therefore, cannot be said

in advance to be specifically ‘religious’ or ‘non-religious’ (Foret and Itçaina 2012:12). Beckford (1989:170-172) has explained this tendency as a consequence of the deregulation of religion in society, where religion has come adrift from its former points of anchorage in relation to organised religion and state. The consequence of such claims is that I need data sources that are wide enough to incorporate practically any aspect of the policy-making process of parliamentary parties. At the same time, it is necessary to define the limits of the empirical sources to be able to conduct the study in a reasonable manner, such as within a given timeframe. Furthermore, with the comparative approach that I apply, the sources need to be equally available for all Nordic parliamentary parties within the chosen timeframe.

I have considered a number of possible empirical sources in the process. Today, websites are a central data source about the policy positions of political parties. However, with a starting point in 1988, which I will discuss shortly, there would be no such data available as the World Wide Web did not become widely accessed until the mid-1990s. Another possible empirical source could have been press releases from the parliamentary parties as statements on contemporary policy issues. However, contacts with the parties have shown me that such documents have rarely been archived and therefore would make an uncertain source, given the objective that all parties should be included. Another possible empirical source that may be publicly available within the timeframe in the Nordic countries is debate pages in newspapers. However, in comparison to the alternatives, which I will turn to next, debate pages pose a less good option because of the uncertainty that all parties in practice would be similarly represented owing to the policies of each newspaper. It would also have required a discussion of the mediatisation of religion that might have widened the theoretical scope of this thesis too much (cf Hjarvard 2011). The same would have been the case if newspaper articles or press releases had been used. Furthermore, the role of religion in Swedish debate pages has been studied in a recent doctoral thesis (Axner 2013).

Within the chosen context, I have considered party platforms and records from parliamentary debates to be the best available choice of empirical sources. They both fulfil the requirements of being wide enough to incorporate practically any aspect of the policy-making process of political parties. They are also (with minor exceptions, as I specify in each study) available for all Nordic parliamentary parties within the chosen timeframe. The choice of timeframe will help to limit the extent of the studies. Furthermore, the choice of both party platforms and records from parliamentary debates has two additional advantages. First, they constitute different approaches to policy making with a focus on ideological long-term positions in party platforms and with a focus on *realpolitik* in parliamentary debates. Second, the possibility of comparing two related sources within the same timeframe may increase the validity of the studies, which I will return to later in this chapter.

Next, I will develop an understanding of the two empirical sources, first party platforms and then (records from) parliamentary debates.

Party platforms

In a political system, party ideology may be described as a label or shortcut in decision making for the voters (Downs 1957). Robertson (1976) has suggested that, to be credible to the voters and members of a party in the long run, parties should not alter their ideology until it is necessary. In other terms, party platforms may be described as ideological contracts that the parties should be careful not to deviate from too drastically (Narud and Valen 2004:33). I therefore understand party platforms as a core source of information about the long-term policy positions of political actors and the changes of those positions over time (Aardal, Krogstad and Narud 2004:386-387; Høigård 1978:11-15; Laver and Garry 2000:620; Narud and Valen 2004:33-34; Skjeie 1992:44).

These documents are developed by the members of each party and decided by a democratic vote, usually by the party congress and with several years before a new version is produced. The purpose of the party platform is external in the sense that it provides voters and the political system with an overview of the values and current policy positions of a party, and internal in the sense that it may be seen as an identity marker for its members and affiliates. To the members of a political party, the platform should not only inform of the party line, but also motivate their efforts for the party (Høigård 1978:13).

Party platforms come in different forms. With small and/or recently-formed political parties, they may be as brief as one single page, while major parties may publish some 60 pages. Different labels are also used on the party platforms. Such examples are work platforms that are similar to election manifestos, although with less focus on realpolitik and the upcoming election, and principle platforms that are more long-term than an election term (Høigård 1978:10-21). However, the differences between different forms of party platforms are not clear-cut and, at least to some Nordic parties, the different labels do not have any effect in practice on the content and function of the platform (Tvedten 2010:3).

Nordic party platforms have been used in a number of empirical studies in recent years, such as Aardal, Krogstad and Narud (2004), Green-Pedersen (2005), Holberg (2007), Kestilä (2006), Sorensen (2011) and Thorhallsson and Rebhan (2011) to map different policy positions of different kinds of political parties. In relation to the study at hand, it may be noted that few of these studies make comparisons between different countries. The role and use of religion in party platforms was analysed in the Gustafsson study (1985) and the main results from that study were presented in my first chap-

ter. In Sorensen's study (2011), religion was found to affect social policy development in Norway and Sweden.

Parliamentary debates

I understand parliamentary debates here as an activity taking place in the political institution of Parliament, that the people speaking in these debates are Members of Parliament elected through public vote, and that their primary task is to 'do politics' or 'do legislation' (Van Dijk 2004:339). However, as I will show next, parliamentary debates are, in practice, also about negotiating, positioning and communicating.

In the Nordic countries, party cohesion is very strong when it comes to following the party line in parliamentary votes (Jensen 2000a:232-233). The main reason behind this party-collectivist approach is said to be that parliamentary systems require cohesive parties in order to function (Esaiaasson 2000:51). Parties are the principal actors here, more than the individual politicians (Esaiaasson and Holmberg 1996:3) and Members of Parliament could thus be expected to speak mostly on behalf of their parties rather than on behalf of themselves or their respective geographic constituencies. As a consequence, political party groups are important parliamentary workshops (Heidar et al 2000:39). For governmental parties, they participate in the policy making together with Government Offices. In the opposition party groups, policy alternatives, such as a 'shadow budget', are generated (Arter 2008:204).

A number of standing committees are also central to efficient influence in the decision-making process in the Nordic parliaments, which creates a *modus vivendi* of 'bargaining parliamentarism' (Strøm 1998:47; Mattson 1996:230-235). The model can be termed 'working parliaments', with a strong legislative culture and focus on policy expertise (Arter 2008:198-199; Heidar et al 2000:39). The importance of negotiating can be explained by the fact that major parties may need to reach out to minor parties to have enough support to win a vote (Heidar 2000:208-209). Therefore not only size is important to parliamentary influence, position is also.

The fact that policy decisions are made within committees and party groups has led to the conclusion that Nordic parliamentary debates are primarily 'liturgical' (Arter 2008:198; Mattson 1996:9). However, with a competitive and performance-oriented environment like this, political parties and their parliamentary representatives constantly need to promote their own image (Ilie 2001:235). Therefore, all parties, and in particular small and populist ones, may use the parliamentary debates as a profiling mechanism (Arter 2008:199). When they do, other parties need to respond because, otherwise, it will give the impression that they have nothing to say on the particular matter, and that would be politically risky.

The ability to set the political agenda is a powerful tool in party competition and opposition parties have the advantage of being able to do so through criticism, rather than having to propose all of the solutions (Green-Pedersen and Mortensen 2010:257-263; Fredriksson 1992:36-37). What turns up on the agenda might be caused by certain conditions in society, events such as disasters and powerful symbols and feedback about the operation of existing programmes. Conditions can be perceived as problems if they are thought to violate important values, in comparison to other countries or units, and be classified in different ways. Once a subject is thought of as a problem, it rides up the political agenda (Kingdon 2011:197-198). This is the mechanism of politicisation of different issues, including religion, that I referred to in the previous chapter.

Which party benefits most from the politicisation of an issue depends on the issue ownership. If a party has established such ownership, other parties will have less to gain from such politicisation. However, if the other parties may be perceived as ignoring the issue or handling it ineptly, the voters may to an even higher degree turn to the party with the issue ownership (Mudde 2007:300).

In other words, parliamentary debates are about constructing a constantly updated model of a given situation, rather than just about doing politics and doing legislation. Such models are communicated to other Members of Parliament, as well as to the voters, through mass media (Van Dijk 2004:339-360). Pasi Ihalainen and Kari Palonen (2009:21-22) even argue that parliamentary debates provide the key dimension for the analysis of political discourse, rather than pre-political or extra-political publicity.

Parliamentary debates may be studied through the records from the debates. The records allow the researcher to identify the actual speaking situation in which key concepts are used and enable the analysis of changes in political language and culture (Ihalainen and Palonen 2009:17). The researcher can set the claims of one speaker in relation to the responses from other speakers and draw conclusions about which concepts stir up criticism and which ones are part of consensus (Ihalainen and Palonen 2009:24). I therefore believe that the central position of parliamentary debates, the availability of their records as empirical sources, the similar procedures between parliaments in different countries and the possibility of comparing the content of debates in different countries at similar points in time, all in all, make them a good choice in the study of key concepts in politics such as, in this case, religion.

Timeframe 1988–2012

As I referred to in the introduction, three of the four empirical studies are part of the NOREL project (NOREL 2014), which in turn has been inspired by the Gustafsson study (1985). In the Gustafsson study, three years were in

focus – 1938, 1958 and 1978 – to enable comparisons of the role and use of religion in the Nordic societies over time. In the NOREL project, a similar model was chosen, but with the years 1988, 1998 and 2008.

However, the choice of years may have a number of advantages in themselves as well. One of the major changes in European politics in recent years was the collapse of the Iron Curtain, the imagined division between the market economy system of the Western world and the Socialist planned economy system of Eastern Europe in particular. The main symbolic event of that collapse was the tearing down of the Berlin wall, the concrete division between the East and the West, in late 1989. Thereby, one of the major obstacles to the process of globalisation, described in the previous chapter, had disappeared. With the choice of 1988 as the first year of comparison in this study, I have a reference point in time before that change.

Furthermore, the terrorist attacks on a number of symbolically-important buildings in the USA on September 11, 2001 has been of great importance to the global discourse on the relationship between religion and politics, globalisation and religious diversity. With 1998 as one year of reference and 2008 as another, I have one point of comparison just before that event and one several years after to enable a more long-term analysis of how the discourse on religion has developed in politics since then.

Finally, the choice of years also fits fairly well with the case study on the role and use of the majority churches in the parliamentary debates on same-sex unions and the process of disestablishment of the state church systems in Sweden and Norway. Denmark was the first country to introduce legislation on registered partnership for same-sex couples in 1989, and in 2012 all Nordic countries but Finland had introduced legislation on same-sex marriage. Meanwhile, the Church of Sweden was disestablished in 2000 and the Church of Norway in 2012. These two parallel processes, at least in Sweden and Norway, pose an interesting case of two major developments in relation to religion and politics in the Nordic countries within the timeframe of this study: the increasing importance of liberal values and the renegotiation of the role of the (former) state churches in a time of increasing religious diversity. With other years of reference, other processes might have been chosen instead but, here, I have been lucky enough to be able to analyse a course of events that could be a turning point or at least a break point in the disestablishment process in state church relations. However, that will of course be a matter for further analysis in future research.

As I have referred to in the section on research design, Articles I and II are both based on material from the years 1988, 1998 and 2008, or as close as possible to those. Article III is based on material from 1989-2012, which extends the total timeframe here to 1988-2012, while Article IV is based on material from 2009.

Reliability, validity and transferability

In general terms, the results of scientific studies should be both reliable and valid on the basis of the research design being trustworthy. Therefore, I will discuss here to what degree my own studies can be counted as such.

While a quantitative method adds width to a study, which tends to contribute to the reliability of it, a qualitative method contributes depth, which tends to contribute to the validity, thus speaking in favour of the choice of both quantitative and qualitative methods, as in this case (Teorell and Svensson 2007:266-270). The most important criterion for reliability is that the findings of a study can be replicable, when the same methods are applied to the same data. That means that the method needs to be governed by rules that are explicitly stated and consequently applied (Krippendorff 2004:18-19). A scientific method must also produce valid results, which means that it measures what it is supposed to measure and not something else.

However, when you mix methods, as in my four empirical studies, validity in particular may be an issue, as validity in quantitative terms is about internal validity and in qualitative terms about credibility. Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003:35-38) therefore suggest that validity in such cases should be replaced with the term inference quality, which should be based on design quality and interpretive rigour.

Interpretative rigour should be based on four criteria (Tashakkori and Teddlie 2003:40-41). First, within-design consistency in relation to research questions, quality in observations, sufficient techniques, strength enough to warrant the conclusions and consistency between data analysis and inferences. Second, conceptual consistency in relation to how the inferences within a study are consistent with each other and with the current state of knowledge and theory. Third, interpretive agreement in that other scholars agree that the inferences of the empirical studies are the most defensible interpretations. Fourth, interpretive distinctiveness from other possible interpretations of the inferences, which may therefore, if not ruled out, then at least be credibly argued as being less likely.

Validity or inference quality may also be addressed in terms of whether or not the results can be claimed to be generalisable, which in quantitative studies may be referred to as external validity and in qualitative studies as transferability (Tashakkori and Teddlie 2003:37-38). To transfer results from one context to another demands a thick description of the context of the study at hand to enable other researchers to assess how well the results may fit another context.

Last, but not least, as I have referred to earlier in this chapter when discussing my comparative approach, comparison may strengthen validity and reliability (Dogan and Pélassy 1990:16, 198). That is particularly the case when comparison is applied diachronically, as I do in Articles I, II and III (Gerring 2007:217).

My hope is that all the different steps of this methods chapter have provided enough transparency to allow for a critical assessment of the methods that I use in the empirical studies. The use of both quantitative and qualitative methods within the same studies should contribute to both reliability and validity. I have presented all steps in the different research designs to show design quality as well as interpretive rigour in within-design consistency and conceptual consistency. Interpretive agreement and interpretive distinctiveness should both be strengthened by the fact that all four articles have gone through a blind peer review process in order to be published in scientific journals.

However, it may still of course be possible to point out a number of weaknesses in the empirical studies. As I already have mentioned, party platforms come in different forms and it has not been possible for me to make a selection of completely equivalent documents from all parties over time. Nevertheless, the majority of the party platforms are sufficiently similar and the credibility of that study should also be strengthened by the cross-comparison over time and five different countries.

In Article II, the choice of records from parliamentary debates in three years with ten years in between enables a comparison over time, while there is no way to determine whether the change between these years is linear. However, I have claimed earlier in this chapter that the party platforms in Article I are more of a census than a sample, due to the long time before a new platform is published. Therefore it is possible to compare between Articles I and II and that may add to the credibility of Article II, as both studies relate to the same parliamentary parties within the same timeframe.

In Article II, the number of speeches with references to religion is an important indicator of change and it would obviously have been good to be able to relate those numbers to the total number of speeches as well, although that has unfortunately not been possible. Counting speeches also has the disadvantage that the method does not take into account the fact that different speeches may be very different in length. That disadvantage is, however, to some degree compensated by the fact that the number of speeches is also supplemented with different forms of indicators of the content of each speech (keyword clusters, issue-areas and problematisation).

While it is hard to speak of generalisability in studies with qualitative methods, I prefer to speak of transferability with Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003:37-38). That is particularly the case with the two case studies (Articles III and IV), which are more limited in their scope than Articles I and II and are particularly aimed at enhancing the qualitative understanding of theoretical concepts. I have tried to give an account of the context of the Nordic countries with their political settings and values, hoping that it is thick enough to provide any other researcher with all relevant conditions to possibly transfer the results to other contexts.

Finally, to what degree can I speak of originality in relation to this thesis? Articles I and II in particular contribute to the body of scientific knowledge in the sense that no similar contemporary and genealogical studies had been made on the role or use of religion in Nordic politics before. These studies also contribute through the use of modified methods in the study of texts such as, in this case, party platforms and records from parliamentary debates. The two case studies thus contribute a deeper understanding of theoretical concepts in a way that has not been done before.

Operationalisation of the second research question

In the previous chapter, I outlined a theoretical model with four ways to apply the uses of religion in politics as a tool to analyse and operationalise my second overarching research question, which means that my approach here is deductive. I will operationalise the model as follows:

First, I will operationalise weak politicisation of religion for the purpose of homogeneity as civil religion, which I here understand as the association of Christianity with national identity and references to the Evangelical Lutheran majority churches, where its status in society is not questioned and when it is not contrasted with any religious others.

Second, I will operationalise weak politicisation of religion in a situation of diversity as privatised religion. For religion to become privatised it can either be actively or passively privatised. I understand active privatisation as explicit references to religion as a private matter and to the separation of church and state. Such separation may indicate that religion is no longer needed for public political purposes, while religion of course may turn up in public through civil society instead, but then possibly more on its own terms. I understand passive privatisation as decreasing numbers of references to religion on a general basis.

Third, I will operationalise strong politicisation of religion in a situation of diversity as human rights, which I here understand as references to the issue-area of human rights and references to the keyword cluster religion in general. In most cases, references to this issue-area and this keyword cluster overlap and indicate principle issues on how to handle religion in diversity. However, I consider it useful to include both sets of references as it enables me to make different kinds of comparisons with other issue-areas and keyword clusters respectively. This operationalisation is obviously limited as it only measures human rights in relation to religion, but I believe that it still may be a good indicator of the salience of human rights issues in general as well.

Fourth, I will operationalise strong politicisation of religion for homogeneity as nationalism, which I here understand as references to assumed

common national core values including religion, in contrast to values and religions that are portrayed as ‘foreign’.

Summary

In this chapter, I have initially repeated my definitions of the two key concepts of religion and politics. My basic approach to the empirical material is abductive, which means that I explore it first and then interpret it theoretically and discuss in what way the theories contribute to my understanding and to what degree the empirical findings may contribute to my understanding of the theories. As I will show next, I apply content analysis in all of the four studies, both quantitatively and qualitatively, in a mixed methods approach to answer the first research question.

Article I is a comparative study based on one party platform from each Nordic parliamentary party and from each year as close as possible to 1988, 1998 and 2008. It is diachronic in the sense that it compares references to religion over time and synchronic in the sense that it compares across countries. Content analysis is applied to identify references to religion and to contribute to the analysis of the findings through the use of keywords, quasi-sentences and issue-areas.

Article II is also a comparative study, but in a most-similar systems design, based on the records from the parliamentary debates in Denmark, Norway and Sweden in 1988/89, 1998/99 and 2008/09. In the same way as Article I, it is both a diachronic and a synchronic study. I apply content analysis to identify speeches with references to religion and to contribute to the analysis of the findings through the use of keywords, keyword clusters, issue-areas, problematisation and party affiliation.

Article III is a case study based on the records from the parliamentary debates on same-sex unions 1989-2012 in all five Nordic countries. In the same way as Articles I and II, it is both a diachronic and a synchronic study. The case is chosen with a scope of proposition purpose as a crucial case with a most-likely model. I apply content analysis to identify speeches with references to the majority churches through the use of keywords, to categorise different kinds of reasons among proponents and opponents of the new laws and to find out which Members of Parliament have argued for removal of the double track system.

Article IV is also a case study, but based on the records from the parliamentary debates on the wearing of veils among state officials in Denmark and Norway 2009. As opposed to the other three articles, it is only a synchronic study. The case is chosen as an example of causal complexity and as an influential case. I apply content analysis to identify speeches with references to religion and a set of values to categorise what values may be expressed through the reasons for or against the wearing of veils.

To answer the second research question, I have referred to my operationalisation of four ways to apply uses of religion in politics in relation to diversity, for homogeneity and with a lower or higher degree of politicisation in a deductive approach.

To summarise, I understand party platforms as long-term policy positions of the political parties and records from parliamentary debates as expressions of *realpolitik*, negotiations and political positioning. My intention here is that such a relatively broad empirical basis, together with the comparative approach over time and the five fairly similar Nordic countries, the mixed methods approach with quantitative as well as qualitative methods, and the transparency in presenting the methods here should all contribute to the interpretative rigour of the thesis in terms of validity and reliability.

4. Results, discussion and conclusions

This thesis took its starting point in possible tensions between religion and politics in the Nordic countries. As part of the picture, religious diversity is increasing alongside an assumed paradox with more or less continuous relationships between the Nordic states and the Evangelical Lutheran majority churches, despite the assumption that these countries are among the most individually secularised in the world.

Against this backdrop, I have formulated the main research problem, which is what purpose religion may serve for the Nordic parliamentary parties within the timeframe: as an element in party identity, in *realpolitik* and/or as a main contributor to societal cohesion. My aim has therefore been to analyse possible changes in the way religion is referred to by Nordic parliamentary parties 1988-2012 and in the way these parties use religion as a means to societal cohesion.

In order to accomplish such analysis, I have posed two overarching research questions:

1) Does the way that Nordic parliamentary parties refer to religion change between 1988 and 2012 and, if so, in what way? I have associated this question with the purpose of religion as an element in party identity and/or in *realpolitik* in the research problem.

2) What patterns are discernible in the way Nordic parliamentary parties use religion between 1988 and 2012, in terms of weak or strong politicisation for the purpose of homogeneity or in diversity, and what may this tell us about changes in the use of religion as a means to societal cohesion? I have associated this question with the purpose of religion as a main contributor to societal cohesion in the research problem.

I will structure this final chapter as follows. First, I will present results from the empirical studies in each of the four articles. Second, I will discuss these in relation to the backgrounds (context and theories) and analytical tools and model that I presented in Chapter 2, structured on the two research questions. Third, I will conclude my contributions to theory and discuss the need of future research within the area of religion and politics in the Nordic countries.

Results from the empirical studies

First, I intend to present findings and conclusions from each of the four empirical studies.

Article I

In this study, I have analysed party platforms from the Nordic parliamentary parties from around 1988, 1998 and 2008.

First, I have found that the number of issue-areas related to religion was higher in platforms from around 2008 than in the ones from around 1988. This was most obviously so in Denmark, followed in turn by Iceland, Finland and Sweden, whereas the number was slightly lower in Norway in platforms from around 2008 than in ones from around 1998 but higher than in platforms from around 1988. Furthermore, the total number of issue-areas related to religion has been highest in all of the years in Norway.

Second, I have found a change in regards to which issue-areas religion has been associated with over time. Most obviously, in platforms from around 2008, issue-areas such as human rights, immigration, security and foreign policy have been more commonly referred to in relation to religion than in platforms from around 1988. Furthermore, all of these issue-areas have been increasingly associated with tensions over time. This change is most visible in Denmark, followed in order by Norway, Sweden, Finland and Iceland.

Third, I have found that the majority churches have received a high degree of support in Danish and Icelandic party platforms, as well as in Finnish platforms, although less frequently there. In Norwegian platforms, calls for a separation of church and state have increased over time, while such separation has overall been framed as being in the best interest of the majority church in terms of freedom to manage its own affairs. In Swedish platforms from around 2008, most parties call for even further separation of church and state after the disestablishment in 2000, for the sake of equal treatment of all religious denominations.

Fourth, I have found that left-wing parties in general have referred to fewer issue-areas in relation to religion than right-wing parties and have focused primarily on issue-areas such as human rights and welfare. The right-wing parties have focused more on Christianity as part of national identity and on organised religion – in practice, the majority churches. The Christian Democratic parties are the ones that have referred to the highest number of issue-areas in relation to religion, including ones that other parties have not referred to at all, such as environmental policies. Last, but not least, right-wing populist parties have referred to issue-areas related to religion in a way similar to Conservative and Christian Democratic parties, but have differed from these parties by rarely referring to Christianity in relation to party identity. Right-wing populist parties also stand out from other parties in hav-

ing a more critical stance towards religions other than Christianity, in particular Islam.

As I understand these findings, the religious cleavage (Lipset and Rokkan 1967) has been continuously visible in these party platforms, with more references to issue-areas related to religion and closer association of national and party identity with Christianity among right-wing parties and not least Christian Democrats than among left-wing parties. However, left-wing parties have increasingly referred to issue-areas that may be associated with the growth of religious diversity, and right-wing populist parties have increasingly come to problematise Islam, which has come to make the religious cleavage more complex than before (cf Madeley 2000:41).

Article II

In this study, I have analysed records from Danish, Norwegian and Swedish parliamentary debates in 1988/89, 1998/99 and 2008/09.

First, I have found that the number of speeches with references to religion was much higher in 2008/09 than in 1988/89 in the Danish and Norwegian parliaments, while the Swedish debates show no obvious difference over time.

Second, I have found that Christianity was the most common keyword cluster in 1988/89, but that the keyword clusters Islam and religion in general became much more common in 2008/09 than before in all of the parliaments. In a similar way, issue-areas such as human rights and symbols but also security became more common in 2008/09 than in 1988/89. Meanwhile, that is not the case with other issue-areas that may be associated with globalisation such as international relations and immigration. As a contrast, issue-areas such as national identity and organised religion have been less common in 2008/09 than in 1988/89.

Third, I have found that religion has become problematised to a higher degree in all of the three parliaments and most of all in the Danish one.

Fourth, I have found that the right-wing populist parties in Denmark and Norway have made a greater number of speeches with references to religion than all (in Denmark) or almost all (in Norway) other parties in 2008/09. Their speeches are characterised by a higher degree of problematisation and references to the keyword cluster Islam and issue-areas such as immigration and symbols, and a lower degree of issue-areas such as organised religion and human rights. While Sweden did not have a right-wing populist party in parliament within the timeframe of the study, I have found that when the Sweden Democrats entered the parliament in 2010, the total number of speeches with references to some common keywords associated with Islam increased.

As I understand these findings, the higher degree of references to keyword clusters and issue-areas that may be associated with religious diversity over time can be interpreted as an impact of globalisation or, as Beyer puts it

2007:98-99), glocalisation. When these changes have been associated with boundary disputes, not least in relation to Islam, right-wing populist parties in particular have taken the opportunity to politicise religion to an increasing degree (Beckford 1990:11; 1999:24; 2003:14; Mudde 2007:300; Kingdon 2011:198). As Sweden has not had a right-wing populist party in parliament within the timeframe of the study and less of such politicisation of religion, I have come to the conclusion that the presence of such a party is crucial to this form of politicisation of religion.

Article III

In this case study, I have analysed records from the final Nordic parliamentary debates on the introduction of registered partnership and same-sex marriage.

First, I have found that the majority churches have been referred to in 10-20 percent of the speeches in the final debates on registered partnership in all countries but Iceland, where about 39 percent of the speeches had references to the majority church. Furthermore, I have found that the majority churches have been referred to in 40-50 percent of the speeches in the (final) debates on same-sex marriage in Denmark, Sweden and Iceland and in 10-20 percent of the speeches in Norway and Finland.

Second, I have found that Members of Parliament have used reasons of authority (cf p 81) with references to the majority churches more often as pro reasons in the debates on same-sex marriage than in the ones on registered partnership in Denmark, Norway and Iceland. In Sweden, Members of Parliament have used reasons of authority slightly more often as counter reasons than as pro reasons in the final debate on same-sex marriage but, altogether, more often than in the final debate on registered partnership. In Finland, Members of Parliament have used reasons of authority to a high degree as counter reasons in the final debate on registered partnership, but not at all in the debate on same-sex marriage that I have used as a substitute for a final debate on that matter. Furthermore, Members of Parliament in all of the countries have used reasons of rule (cf p 81) to different degrees as part of pro reasons, to underline that the different religious denominations, including the majority churches, should be granted the freedom to adapt or not to the new legislations. The opponents of the new legislations on same-sex unions have in a similar way used reasons of rule to express worries that such freedom would not be granted.

Third, I have found that the double track system with full civil law effects for both civil and religious weddings has been questioned by some Members of Parliament, particularly in the debates in Norway and Sweden. However, in none of the countries did such criticism get any support from more than a minority of the parties.

As I understand these findings, these debates may be understood as a re-negotiation, particularly in Sweden, or a re-affirmation of the state and

church relationships, given the tensions between traditional religious standpoints and political objectives to introduce a more equal legislation on same-sex unions, as well as a more or less ongoing process of functional differentiation in terms of state-church relationships. To further support this interpretation, I have pointed to the long process from the introduction of registered partnership to the introduction of same-sex marriage in the Nordic countries and the notions of performance and churches being used as public utilities (Luhmann 1982; Davie 2006:251). I have also explained the differences among the Nordic countries in terms of different degrees of political control over the majority churches and different value profiles among the populations in terms of secular-rational values and self-expression values.

Article IV

In this case study, I have analysed Norwegian and Danish parliamentary debates in 2009 on whether judges (Denmark) and policewomen (Norway) should be allowed to wear (Muslim) veils in their line of duty.

I have found that, in particular in Denmark, secularism and secular progress as well as neutrality are among the values most commonly referred to. As part of the argument, religion has been stated to be a strictly private matter unless it is part of a cultural understanding, such as the cross on the logotype of the Danish courts. The value of freedom has been used more with references to the freedom of religion than the freedom of women and women's equality. The value of social cohesion has only been invoked in single cases, although in one such case the argument is that Norwegian society is about to lose its common foundation of values.

As I understand the findings, these debates are a crucial example of the clash between Western Europe and a public negative perception of Islam and of how symbolic politics work (Scott 2009; Woodhead 2009; Edelmann 1964:6; Hadj-Abdou et al 2012:138-139). The form of secularism that is practised in particular in Denmark underlines a Lutheran Christian identity in contrast to what Islam is thought to stand for (Christensen 2010:203). Norwegian secularism has been claimed as being accommodative to a higher degree, while the outcome of the Norwegian debates still led to the banning of veils among policewomen.

The relatively low degree of references to the freedom of women and women's equality is surprising, given the high esteem for gender equality in these countries (Ellingsæter and Leira 2006:7). In my understanding, this is due to how cases like these highlight the identity of the state, which is dependent on the trust of the majority and what the majority perceives as neutrality or, rather, what is considered normal behaviour (Kiliç 2008:441-442). I also suggest that parliamentary parties, and in particular right-wing populist parties, have found alternative ways to gain political influence and establish common ground. This means in practice that a value like women's freedom is interchangeable if other values related to the narrative of secular progress

are considered to fit the particular case better, as the main underlying reason is to create an othering of anyone who does not embrace the values of the majority culture (Scott 2007: 90; Bilge 2012:303; Agustín and Sata 2013:65). Nevertheless, these debates are gendered in the sense that the wearing of veils by Muslim women is the main target of the clash in relation to the narrative of secular progress (Woodhead 2009:90).

Discussion

While I have discussed the empirical studies in relation to theory in each article, I here intend to summarise the conclusions from these studies and discuss them in a wider sense in relation to the background and analytical tools that I have presented in Chapters 1 and 2. I will structure this section of the chapter on the basis of the two overarching research questions.

Change and continuity in the use of religion in Nordic politics

As I explained in the first chapter, my first research question is the summation of all the different sub-questions of each article and is aimed at discussions on religious change. Through this question, as part of my main research problem, I primarily address the issues of what purpose religion may serve within the timeframe, as an element in party identity and realpolitik in Nordic politics:

1) Does the way that Nordic parliamentary parties refer to religion change between 1988 and 2012 and, if so, in what way?

As I referred to in the first chapter, in relation to the first research question, I understand religion in a substantial sense as beliefs, language, symbols, activities and institutions that are being used to regulate the cleavage between the empirical and supra-empirical perceptions of reality (Furseth and Repstad 2005:28; Hill 1973:42-43).

As I also referred to in the first chapter, there seem to be implications both for change and continuity for religion in the Nordic countries, which I will develop later. The Gustafsson (1985) study on religious change in the Nordic countries has been an important source of inspiration for the studies in this thesis, not least with its comparative approach using the five countries and over time. In that study, the focus was on church religiosity, and religious change was interpreted in terms of secularisation, with a diminishing role and use of religion in society. I have referred to theories on such changes particularly in the first section of Chapter 2 and will return to those theories here, in a discussion on the relationship between religious change and continuity.

Religious change

My discussion on religious change will first focus on glocalisation with boundary disputes over opposing values. Second, I will discuss the implications of my studies for the interpretation of the religious cleavage. Third, I will discuss how the presence of right-wing populist parties affects the political use of religion. Fourth, I will discuss how Christianity and allegedly secular values may be part of the same cultural system. Fifth, I will set my findings in relation to the claims of a return, re-emergence or de-privatisation of religion in politics and the porosity between the two.

First, while the focus here is on change, it is above all change in a different sense than in the Gustafsson study. In the two first empirical studies (Articles I and II), I have conducted an extensive search of ‘religion’ and found a changing pattern of reference to and use of religion both in party platforms (Article I) and parliamentary debates (Article II) over the timeframe, 1988-2009 (see also Lövheim et al forthcoming). In short, references to religion occur increasingly in new issue-areas such as human rights, immigration, security and foreign policy and increasingly as part of keyword clusters of other religions than Christianity and, in particular, of Islam. This pattern is most visible in Denmark, followed by Norway and Sweden, while less so in Finland and Iceland. I have interpreted this pattern as a sign of how increasing religious diversity becomes visible to different degrees in Nordic party politics.

Given the theories that I have referred to in Chapters 1 and 2 on globalisation, which I understand as intensified interaction between markets, politics and societies, these findings do not surprise me (Ingebritsen 2006:5). Through increasing immigration, pluralisation has been claimed as being fuelled by the physical presence of people from different countries, cultures and creeds, who are able to maintain links between their country of origin and their new home country through the developments of new media and telecommunications technologies (Beyer 2007:104-108).

In Beyer’s terms (2007:98-99), globalisation leads to glocalisation, which means that the local has to come to terms with the global. In relation to religion, that means that religion may become a site of difference and conflict. Beyer (2007:99-104) refers to four axes that glocalised religion manifests itself along: institutionalised versus non-institutionalised religion; publicly influential versus privatised religion; traditional/conservative versus modern/liberal religion; and religion enacted as such versus non-religious forms that carry religious functions. Beckford (1990:11; 1999:24; 2003:14) describes these kinds of tensions as boundary disputes over acceptable and non-acceptable (forms of) religion.

These tensions, conflicts or boundary disputes may have their origins in what has been called the narrative of secular progress of Western Europe (Casanova 1994:30-31; Scott 2007:95; Woodhead 2009; Calhoun, Juer-

gensmeyer and VanAntwerpen 2011:6-7). According to this narrative, values such as modernity, equality, freedom, reason, science and secularity have been proclaimed as superseding tradition, hierarchy, oppression, belief, superstition and religion (Woodhead 2009:100). In Western Europe, Islam in particular has become the opposite of this allegedly secular identity (Casanova 2007:66-67).

In my understanding, the narrative of secular progress fits particularly well with Nordic identity. As I referred to in Chapters 1 and 2, Nordic citizens hold the highest levels of the values of secular-rational and self-expression in the world (Inglehart and Welzel 2010: 553-554). Moreover, gender equality can also be said to be integral to Nordic citizenship (Elingsæter and Leira 2006:7).

In Article IV, I have particularly analysed these tensions through the kind of values that Danish and Norwegian Members of Parliament have referred to in debates on the wearing of veils among judges (Denmark) and policewomen (Norway) in 2009. In the study, values such as secularism and secular progress as well as alleged neutrality are used as the main arguments to ban (Muslim) women from wearing veils in their line of duty as judges or policewomen.

Second, the different parliamentary parties handle issues of religious diversity differently, which I will discuss here in relation to the theory on the religious cleavage (Lipset and Rokkan 1967). In Chapter 1 and in Article I, I have referred to the Gustafsson study (1985) where the religious cleavage was visible as a divider between left-wing and right-wing parties in the Nordic countries. I interpret the finding of the Gustafsson study as a religious cleavage based mainly on the purpose of religion in party identity in relation to the Evangelical Lutheran majority churches.

In more contemporary terms, I have referred to survey results in Chapter 2, according to which religious voters in general, to a slightly higher degree, prefer right-wing parties, while Muslim and Jewish voters to a higher degree prefer left-wing parties (Aardal 2007b:53-54; Hagevi 2009:122, 166-168, 201, 228; Hagevi 2010:135-144).

My own studies in Articles I and II have shown that right-wing parties still refer to religion to a higher degree than left-wing parties, in general terms. However, the increasing religious diversity is reflected in different approaches to religion among different parties. While right-wing parties still refer to Christianity and the majority churches to a higher degree, left-wing parties tend to refer more to religion in relation to human rights and other aspects of religious diversity.

Third, to complicate the religious cleavage even further, right-wing populist parties, and in particular the Danish People's Party, refer to religion in their own particular way. While right-wing parties in general, and Christian Democratic parties in particular, may refer to Christianity or the 'Christian humanistic heritage' in relation to their own party identity, it is more rarely

the case with right-wing populist parties. Meanwhile, right-wing populist parties refer to Christianity in relation to national identity to a higher degree. Here, I would once again like to refer to the fourth of Beyer's (2007:99-104) axes of how glocalised religion manifests itself: religion enacted as such versus non-religious forms that carry 'religious functions', where right-wing populist parties may be considered to be an example of the latter kind. Furthermore, right-wing populist parties problematise Islam in particular to a much higher degree than other parties.

In Article II, I have been able to show the effect that the presence of right-wing populist parties and their approach to religion has on Scandinavian parliamentary debates. In the study, I have made a comparative analysis in a most-similar systems design (Przeworski and Teune 1970:32-34). The point of the research design is that the units included – in this case Denmark, Norway and Sweden – are similar in all relevant independent variables except one, which may then be used in order to explain variable outcomes on the dependent variable.

In this case, the missing independent variable is a right-wing populist party in the parliament (Sweden) and the different outcome is the high number of speeches with references to religion and problematisation of Islam (Denmark and Norway) compared to lower numbers of speeches with references to religion and problematisation of Islam (Sweden). My conclusion is, therefore, that the presence of right-wing populist parties in parliament has a major impact on the number of speeches that are related to religion and, in particular, in relation to Islam and the problematisation of Islam.

Now it may of course be suspected that higher numbers of immigrants and in particular Muslims would have a similar effect. As I referred to in the first chapter, religious diversity has been claimed as being on the increase in the Nordic countries (Kühle 2011:208). However, Sweden has the greatest share of immigrants and calculated share of Muslims of these three countries, which in my understanding contradicts such assumptions (Norden 2013; Larsson 2009:3).

In order to try to explain why right-wing populist parties act in this way in relation to religion and particularly Islam, I have used the concept of politicisation, which in short is a matter of issue ownership and politicisation of such issues to gain political influence (Mudde 2007:300; Kingdon 2011:198). In this case, I claim that right-wing populist parties choose to politicise immigration issues and include Islam as part of that politicisation.

Here, it is once again relevant to recall Riis' (1985:34) claim that religion was considered to be a non-issue in Danish politics in the Gustafsson study (1985), as a sign of the major change that has taken place since then in the way religion is referred to and used in Danish politics.

Fourth, Christianity and allegedly secular values may be part of the same cultural system. As I have shown in Article IV, the narrative of secular progress may be an important explanation for the 'othering' of Islam in Western

Europe (Casanova 1994:30-31; Scott 2007:95; Woodhead 2009; Calhoun, Juergensmeyer and VanAntwerpen 2011:6-7). While it is a secular narrative, that does not necessarily exclude the use of Christianity and the majority churches as part of such politicisation, at least not in the Nordic context.

As I have shown in my previous study (Lindberg 2011), the Nordic right-wing populist parties claim in different ways that they are not Christian parties but parties that are devoted to the constitutional and historical Christian heritage of their nations. That is also visible in Article I, especially in comparison to Christian Democratic parties, which in most cases refer to Christianity in relation to both party identity and national identity.

I would like to explain this approach to religion through three factors. Initially it is a consequence of the more or less close relationships between church and state in the Nordic countries. In Christensen's (2010:203) thinking, Denmark in particular is characterised by a cultural authority of religion, meaning Christianity and the majority church as expressions of Danish culture and identity. According to Riis (1989:143-144) the Nordic emphasis on values such as individual human rights, self-fulfilment and individual expansion do not necessarily contradict Christianity. Instead it is perceived as a modern form of Christianity, which he labels protestant humanism. To refer to Christianity in political discourse, may therefore be similar to referring to such values. Furthermore, I believe, with Beckford (1989:170-172), that religion has come adrift from its former ties to traditional institutional religion to become a cultural resource that may be used for many different purposes, in this case to politicise the immigration issue. Finally, I agree with Casanova (2001a:427) that we need to start thinking more about religion as cultural systems and less as religious markets. In this case, I believe that Christianity and the majority church may be understood by right-wing populist parties in particular as part of a national cultural system that needs to be defended from differing systems, here represented by Islam in particular.

Fifth, my findings on how Nordic right-wing populist parties politicise religion in different ways are interesting to discuss in relation to the various similar claims of a return, re-emergence or de-privatisation of religion in politics that I referred to in the first chapter (Casanova 1994; Madeley 2003b:2; Foret and Itçaina 2012:3). While Casanova not least has focused on how religion may turn up in politics through *religious* actors, with the objective of influencing public policies in accordance with their values, my focus here has instead been on how *political* actors use religion. That distinction is of great importance, as an increasing use of religion in politics is not automatically beneficial for traditional institutional religion, not even the Nordic majority churches. My finding of the politicisation of issues related to immigration and religion therefore contributes to a better understanding of the claims of a return, re-emergence or de-privatisation of religion in politics.

Therefore, my findings underline what, in different ways, I have referred to throughout the thesis as increasing porosity. As I understand it, the porosi-

ty between the different geographical contexts of nation, Europe and global politics in turn leads to porosity between religion and politics (Beyer 2007:108; Foret and Itçaina 2012:3). As my analyses have shown, religion turns up in relation to a higher number of issue-areas (Articles I and II). Furthermore, to explain the political use of religion becomes an increasingly complex task, visible not least in references to the symbols issue-area and different values associated with the narrative of secular progress (Articles II and IV). As I hope that this thesis shows, religion and politics share many common traits and may be used for similar reasons and the distinctions between religion and politics are therefore not always easy to draw.

Continuity in the use of religion

While religious change has been the major theme in this section of the chapter so far, I also want to address the continuity in how the Nordic parliamentary parties use religion, or more specifically the majority churches. While the majority churches have decreasing membership figures and diminishing influence in society due to functional differentiation they may still be used politically through performance and as public utilities in different ways, as I will outline here.

In Chapter 1 and in the first section of Chapter 2, I have outlined a common theoretical understanding of religious change and I have explained secularisation theory as above all dependent upon the theory of functional differentiation, according to which traditional institutional religion has come to lose influence step by step in society (Durkheim 1933; Luhmann 1982; Casanova 2001b:13.788).

I have, furthermore, referred in Chapters 1 and 2 to changes in the relationships between state and the majority church in the Nordic countries. The Finnish (1919), Swedish (2000) and Norwegian (2012) Evangelical Lutheran majority churches have all been disestablished, although the states have kept more or less close relationships with them after the separations, while the Danish and Icelandic Evangelical Lutheran majority churches continue to be established (Kääriäinen 2011:155-157; Pettersson 2011; Kühle 2011; Botvar and Sjöborg 2014:236).

Individual membership figures are slowly decreasing, but are still at high levels, ranging from 67.5 percent in Sweden to 79 percent in Denmark (Markkola and Naumann 2014:1). Furthermore, participation in religious rituals such as baptisms, weddings and funerals has been described as being of major personal importance to a majority of the populations (Bäckström, Edgardh Beckman and Pettersson 2004:92; cf Bromander 2011:89). This may seem as a paradox in relation to what I have referred to here as the extreme position globally when it comes to the level of secular-rational values and self-expression values and the very low levels of importance of a personal belief in God (Inglehart and Welzel 2010: 553-554).

In relation to this background, my first two studies (Articles I and II; Lövheim et al forthcoming) have shown that organised religion, which to a very high degree refers to the majority churches, is the single most common issue-area that has been referred to in party platforms and parliamentary debates in all of the five countries. In parliamentary debates, the percentage share of this issue-area was certainly lower in 2008/09 than in 1988/89. However, as the total number of speeches with references to religion was higher in 2008/09 compared to 1988/89 in all countries but Sweden, it is also important to note that the actual number of speeches with references to organised religion was higher in 2008/09 than in 1988/89 in Denmark, Norway and Finland and at a similar level in Iceland. In other words, organised religion continues to be much referred to and other issue-areas have been added, as an expression of increasing religious diversity.

The only exception here is Sweden, where in practice organised religion was more often referred to in parliamentary debates in 1988/89 and 1998/99, before the disestablishment of the majority church, than in 2008/09, after the disestablishment (2000), if I temporarily ignore one major debate on the introduction of same-sex marriage in 2009, which I will develop on shortly.

The process of secularisation, that I have referred to here above all as a process of functional differentiation, has been used as a prediction of the decreasing influence of religion to a point at which religion may even disappear (Durkheim 1933; Wilson 1966; Berger 1967; 1999:2-3; Casanova 2001b:13.788). However, I have also referred to the notion of performance in Chapters 1 and 2, according to which functionally differentiated subsystems such as religion may contribute to other subsystems (Luhman 1982:238-242; Beyer 1994:80). Furthermore, I have referred to the notion of public utilities as a way of explaining how majority churches may continue to be expected to contribute to society in different ways (Davie 2006:251).

In my case study on parliamentary debates on same-sex unions (Article III and Lövheim et al, forthcoming), I have shown how the standpoints of Nordic majority churches have been of major importance and have even contributed to prolonging the introduction of same-sex marriage in the Nordic countries compared to other countries. Some Members of Parliament in Norway and Sweden suggested that the double track system, which permits both civil and religious marriages with full civil law effects, should be replaced with a single civil union (Jänterä-Jareborg 2011:849). That would then, at least in Sweden, be in accordance with the fact that a majority of the parliamentary parties have called for further separation of church and state in their platforms from around 2008 (Article I). However, a political majority in all of the countries has agreed to continue with the double track system, while Finland had yet not introduced same-sex marriage by the time that Article III was published (see footnote 17). As I have already referred to, I interpret these debates as renegotiations or re-affirmations of the role of the majority churches in particular in society. In a similar way, Markkola and

Naumann (2014:12) also understand the increasing use of the majority churches as welfare providers alongside other actors in society as renegotiations in state-church relationships (cf Bäckström and Davie 2010).

Once again, while the narrative of secular progress is mainly a secular narrative it does not necessarily exclude religion from being part of modernity (Casanova 1994:30-31; Scott 2007:95; Woodhead 2009; Calhoun, Jürgensmeyer and VanAntwerpen 2011:6-7). Secularisation through functional differentiation may not be the one-way street it was once thought to be (e.g. Berger 1967; Wilson 1966; Berger 1999:2-3). Instead, the notions of performance and majority churches as public utilities may contribute reasons why majority churches such as the Nordic ones may continue to be used in public and political life (Luhmann 1982:238-242; Beyer 1994:80; Davie 2006:251). However, such models of continuous church and state relationships may well be differently modelled in different countries, in accordance with the notion of multiple modernities that I referred to in Chapter 1 (Eisenstadt 2000).

Conclusion: the first research question

To conclude, the answer to my first research question is that Nordic parliamentary parties have increasingly referred to religious diversity over time and that right-wing populist parties in particular have politicised issues of immigration and religion. Meanwhile, Nordic parliamentary parties have continuously referred to the majority churches and, as I understand it, to some degree also renegotiated or re-affirmed their role and use as public utilities. Taken together, I understand these changes as signs of increasing porosity between religion and politics. While religion seems to be less important to Nordic citizens on an individual level, secular and Christian values may interact when used in politics as expressions of collective cultural values, which I will now discuss further.

Religion as a means to societal cohesion

I intend to take the analysis one step further in order to deepen my understanding of for what purpose the Nordic parliamentary parties use religion. My second overarching research question is related to the third element in my main research problem, about what purpose religion may serve for the Nordic parliamentary parties within the timeframe as a main contributor to societal cohesion:

2) What patterns are discernible in the way Nordic parliamentary parties use religion, 1988-2012, in terms of weak or strong politicisation for the purpose of homogeneity or in diversity, and what may this tell us about changes in the use of religion as a means to societal cohesion?

As I referred to in the first chapter, I understand religion in a functional sense in relation to the second research question. With Woodhead (2011), I

will here treat the use of religion as expressions of culture (particularly in the sense of cultural order, values, discourse, ideology, tradition and memory), identity (community-creating, boundary-forming, identity-claim, and organised belonging), and power (particularly in the sense of economy, politics and status, and recognition at different levels). My purpose in using such a definition is to be able to equally compare the use of traditional institutional religion with other sources of societal cohesion such as nationalism and human rights doctrines.

Empirical results structured on the analytical model

Initially, I will address the first part of the second research question, regarding which patterns are discernible in the way Nordic parliamentary parties use religion between 1988 and 2012, in terms of weak or strong politicisation for the purpose of homogeneity or in diversity. In order to do so, I will use the analytical model that I outlined in Chapter 2 and operationalised in Chapter 3 and set it in relation to the empirical results from answering the first research question.

First, I have proposed that civil religion is an example of weak politicisation of religion for the purpose of homogeneity, which I here understand as the association of Christianity with national identity and references to the Evangelical Lutheran majority churches where their status in society is not questioned and when neither Christianity nor the churches are contrasted with any religious others.

My analysis in Article I shows that, over time, Christianity is decreasingly referred to in relation to national identity, while the major symbols issue-area in Denmark and Norway in 2008/09 in Article II relates to religion and national identity in a more complex way. The majority churches are continuously present in the most common issue-area of organised religion in party platforms and parliamentary debates in all of the Nordic countries in the three selected years (Lövheim et al forthcoming). When Members of Parliament refer to organised religion they do not generally question the status of the majority churches (Articles I and II; Lövheim et al forthcoming). However, an increasing number of parties have called for (further) separation of church and state in their platforms, primarily in Norway and Sweden (Articles I and II; Lövheim et al forthcoming). Meanwhile, I have also referred to the parliamentary debates on same-sex unions as renegotiations or reaffirmations of the church and state relationships (Article III; Lövheim et al forthcoming).

Second, I have proposed that privatised religion is an example of weak politicisation of religion in diversity, which I here understand as explicit references to religion as a private matter and of a separation of church and state.

In the empirical studies, there are few explicit indications of actively privatised religion. However, references to the value of secularism and secular

progress include references to religion as a private matter in the Danish and Norwegian parliamentary debates on the wearing of veils by judges and policewomen (Article IV). Moreover, the processes of separation between church and state, not least in Norway and Sweden, may once again have indicated a change towards more privatised religion (Articles I, II and III). The lower number of issue-areas related to religion in Finnish party platforms compared to platforms in the other countries, as well as a low number of parliamentary speeches with references to religion, may indicate passively privatised religion, although I do not have the total number of speeches in each parliament to compare such claims (Article I; Lövheim et al forthcoming).

Third, I have proposed that human rights are an example of the strong politicisation of religion in a situation of diversity, which I here understand as references to human rights and references to the keyword cluster religion in general.

In the empirical studies, human rights have been increasingly referred to in relation to religion in party platforms and the share of parliamentary speeches with references to human rights and religion almost tripled in 2008/09 compared to 1988/89 in Norway and Sweden (Articles I and II). In a similar way, the share of speeches with references to the keyword cluster religion in general doubled (Iceland, Norway, Sweden) and tripled (in Denmark) in 2008/09 compared to 1988/89, while Finland shows a difference in the opposite direction with hardly any speeches with references to religion in general in 2008/09 (Article II; Lövheim et al forthcoming). I understand two findings as increased politicisation: first, that religion appears in relation to an increased number of issue-areas in party platforms and parliamentary debates and, second, with a higher number of references to assumed conflicts between different sets of core values associated with human rights, such as democracy, equality and freedom of religion (Articles I, II and IV; Lövheim et al forthcoming). The study on Danish and Norwegian parliamentary debates on the wearing of veils by judges and policewomen (Article IV) particularly highlights the assumed limitations of human rights doctrines when the credibility of the state is perceived to be challenged.

Fourth, I have proposed that nationalism is an example of strong politicisation of religion for the purpose of homogeneity, which I here understand as references to assumed common national core values including religion, in contrast to values and religions that are portrayed as foreign.

According to my analysis of the empirical findings in Articles I and II, right-wing populist parties in Denmark and Norway in particular politicise religion to a high degree, above all by problematising Islam and contrasting it with assumed secular values and/or Christianity and the majority churches (cf Article IV). Here it is noteworthy that right-wing populist parties refer to Christianity to a high degree in relation to national identity and to a low degree in relation to party identity in their party platforms, as opposed to Chris-

tian Democratic parties that do both (Article I). In Sweden, I have only indications on the degree of politicisation of Islam by the right-wing populist Sweden Democrats, as the party did not enter parliament until 2010 (Article II). The True Finns in Finland has been politicising Islam to a low degree, while there is no right-wing populist party in Iceland and therefore no such politicisation. Furthermore, in my understanding, national identity is related to the major symbols issue-area in parliamentary debates in Denmark and Norway, 2008/09, which in a more complex way addresses the relationship between values, religion and identity (Article II and indirectly Article IV).

Next, I will discuss the empirical findings from using my analytical model in relation to the background and theories that I presented as part of the model in Chapter 2.

Discussion of the empirical results

Initially, I will discuss each of the four parts of the analytical model and then conclude the discussion by showing different patterns for the five Nordic countries in the model. This means that once again I will use a comparative approach, as I outlined in the previous chapter.

First, I will turn to the use of Christianity and the majority churches as part of civil religion. While Christianity has been decreasingly referred to in relation to national identity over time, I understand the major symbols issue-area in Denmark and Norway as a shift towards a more complex understanding of national identity, religion and culture (Article II; cf Article IV). The shift indicates that Christianity now (again) is associated with societal identity issues, at least in Denmark and Norway.

Furthermore, given the more or less continuous relationships between the Nordic states and the majority churches, I am not surprised that these churches have continued to be frequently referred to in party platforms and parliamentary debates, as such relationships demand a number of issues to be dealt with politically. Consequently, I have shown a lower number of speeches with references to religion in Swedish parliamentary debates in 2008/09, since the majority church had then been disestablished since 2000. At least that is the case, if I for a moment ignore the major debate on the introduction of same-sex marriage in Sweden, in which the majority church was frequently referred to.

However, I have also interpreted the parliamentary debates on same-sex unions as a renegotiation (Sweden) or re-affirmations (Denmark, Iceland and Norway) of the church and state relationships, which may be due to a continuous role and use of the majority churches in terms of performance and public utilities (Luhmann 1982:238-242; Davie 2006:251; cf Markkola and Naumann 2014:12). Furthermore, the issue of same-sex unions is related to core values in society, in this case gender and sexual equality and/or human dignity. I therefore suggest that the process of introducing same-sex marriage was prolonged in the Nordic countries through a hope on the part of the

Members of Parliament and their parties that the majority churches would change their initial negative stances and thereby confirm the changing core values that were the basis of the new legislation.

While I here primarily analyse how the parliamentary parties use religion, I find it interesting to compare such use of the majority churches with Durkheim's (1976) view of religion as a contributor of collective values (cf Demker 1998:13; Laudrup 2009:52). In a similar take, Casanova (1994:229) claims that one of the major contributions of religious communities through civil society is to remind states and citizens of the common good in society, although I would like to stretch it slightly here not to only remind of, but also to confirm changes in core values.

This also illustrates how the concept of performance can be understood as a way of supplying and maintaining core values (cf Luhmann 1982:238-242). The notion of performance relies on the assumption that subsystems may contribute to solving problems in other subsystems. In the case of societal core values, the task of contributing and maintaining these may today have been overtaken by the media, financial institutions and/or politics in itself from traditional institutional religion. However, given the results from the empirical studies here, I would like to claim that it is not possible to rule out that the majority churches and possibly other religious denominations may continue to be used in that sense alongside other subsystems. My analysis of the parliamentary debates on same-sex marriage serves as a good illustration of this (Article III).

I would also like to claim that the majority churches continue to be used as part of Nordic civil religion, while other religious denominations may also be part of such a function. As I have referred to earlier, religious diversity has become part of the church service adjacent to the annual opening ceremony of the Swedish parliament, as representatives from other religions than Christianity may perform parts of it (Furseth forthcoming).

Second, privatised religion is less visible in the empirical material, except in the way that religion is referred to as a private matter in Danish and Norwegian parliamentary debates on the wearing of veils by judges and police-women (Article IV). Private in that sense refers to religious expressions that differ from what is perceived as cultural or neutral. In my understanding, that does not mean private in a strict sense but, rather, as a way to distinguish between acceptable and non-acceptable forms of religion (Beckford 1990:11; 1999:24).

In Finnish party platforms and parliamentary debates, the early separation of church and state in Finland may have contributed as an expression of functional differentiation (Casanova 2001b:13.788; Luhmann 1982). Within the timeframe of this study, I have also shown a similar process in Sweden and Norway, leading to the disestablishment of the majority churches, which is in line with Sundback's claim (2000:72) that civil religion is less accepted in those two countries. Sundback's explanation of this is that the revival

movements in Norway and Sweden have distanced themselves from the majority churches (cf Casanova 2001b:13.791).

Meanwhile, I have also shown a process with an increasing share of references to and problematisation of religious diversity, primarily in Denmark, Norway and Sweden, which I understand in terms of a de-privatisation of religion in general (Casanova 1994) or an increasing awareness of post-secularity (Habermas 2008).

While I agree with Beckford's criticism (2012:8-9) that the post-secular and secularised are not opposing terms, I still believe that it is relevant to speak of the post-secular in terms of an increasing awareness of the presence of religion. As I have referred to earlier, this awareness may be explained by much higher levels of religious diversity or, more specifically, assumed share of Muslim immigrants in these three countries compared to Finland and Iceland, in combination with the politicisation of religion, not least by right-wing populist parties (Larsson 2009:3; Article II).

Third, the increasing number of references to human rights, particularly in Norway and Sweden, is obviously a limited indicator of human rights issues in general, as I have only counted and analysed those that are related to religion due to the aim of this study. However, given theoretical perspectives on the increasing salience of human rights worldwide as well as in the Nordic countries, I believe that it is reasonable to claim that this is an indicator of a general increase in references to human rights as well (Casanova 2001a:430; Porsdam 2012:38-39; Cristi 2009:74; Botvar and Sjöborg 2014:254).

Furthermore, I understand the increased politicisation of religion in this sense as an expression of the boundary disputes that may arise over globalised religion (Robertson 1991:14; Beckford 1990:11; 1999:24; 2003:14; Beyer 2007:98-104). These disputes are commonly framed as a matter of conflicting rights, where some rights and values come to be regarded to be of higher value than others, which leads to a higher degree of political control over religion. The most explicit example of this is the case study in Article IV, where the freedom of religion is contrasted with the freedom of women and women's equality and the right to getting an impartial trial in a court of law, framed in terms of alleged neutrality.

While I have referred to the use of human rights doctrines here as an expression of a higher degree of politicisation, I also need to address the possibility that human rights may be used as something more akin to civil religion, with the purpose of striving for homogeneity with a weak politicisation of religion. Such a form of civil religion would then have the potential to become more inclusive towards religious and non-religious minorities than traditional civil religion (cf Cristi 2001:242; Casanova 2003:128).

As I have referred to in Chapter 2, Habermas (2011:28) and Taylor (2011:47) claim that civil religion and other sources of political legitimation associated with traditional institutional religion are not compatible with the pluralism of multicultural societies. Instead, these scholars propose human

rights (Habermas) or a philosophy of civility (Taylor) as alternative solutions. Such an approach is similar to Dobbelaere's suggestion (1999:239-240; cf Berger 1967) of a new sacred canopy and to Durkheim's vision of the individual cult based on reason and justice, which has been claimed to have arrived in the shape of human rights doctrines (Casanova 2001a:430; Furseth and Repstad 2005:50-51; Boglind, Eliaeson and Månson 2009:259).

While the majority churches have been described as the Nordic form of civil religion, it also makes sense to associate Nordic civil religion with human rights, given the high esteem for human rights in survey results and an increasing official status of human rights in at least Norway and Sweden (Botvar and Sjöborg 2014:235-236; 254; cf Sundback 2000:41-42). The critical-prophetic element of civil religion is also present through the Nordic international mission as norm entrepreneurs (Bellah 1967; Repstad 2009:202; Ingebritsen 2006:2; Botvar and Sjöborg 2014:236).

Fourth, just as in the case of human rights, I understand nationalism as a higher degree of politicisation of religion, due to increasing boundary disputes over what may be considered to be acceptable and non-acceptable (forms of) glocalised religion and Islam in particular (Beckford 1990:11; 1999:24; 2003:14; Beyer 2007:98-104; Casanova 2007:66-67). However, it differs from the focus on human rights issues in that the problematisation of Islam by Danish and Norwegian right-wing populist parties in particular ought rather to be interpreted as an expression of a nationalistic effort to strive for homogeneity through a unification of the political and cultural dimensions of their nation states (Mudde 2007:16; Smith 2009:22-23; Laudrup 2009:54; Akkerman and Hagelund 2007:197; Ivanescu 2010:311).

Moreover, I think that when Nordic right-wing populist parties refer to religion more in relation to national identity than in relation to party identity in their party platforms, it is a good example of Beckford's conception (1989:170-172) of how religion may become a cultural resource, due to its weakened ties to traditional institutional religion (cf Lindberg 2011). In Beyer's view (2007:100), this ought to be described as the fourth form of glocalised religion, meaning a non-religious form that carries religious functions as it is intertwined with culture and nationalism. Their additional use of presumably secular national values in debates on glocalised religion may further underline their actual secular identity.

As I have shown in Article II, the presence of a right-wing populist party in parliament is of crucial importance to the growth of this form of nationalistic discourse on religion in combination with a higher degree of religious diversity. This explains why the True Finn party in Finland does not politicise the presence of Islam to the same degree as the right-wing populist parties in Denmark and Norway and possibly why we have not so far seen such a party in Iceland (cf Lövheim et al forthcoming).

To summarise the use of this analytical model, I have discussed the empirical findings from the first research question in relation to background

factors and theory in order to answer the first part of my second research question. I believe that while I can see signs in all of the Nordic countries of all of the four uses of religion in politics in relation to diversity, for homogeneity and with a lower or higher degree of politicisation, I can also discern different patterns in the different countries. I will present the different patterns on a continuum, going from countries with more changes in these patterns over time to countries with less change.

I will start with the tendency in Norway and Sweden, according to my analysis (illustrated in Figure 2):

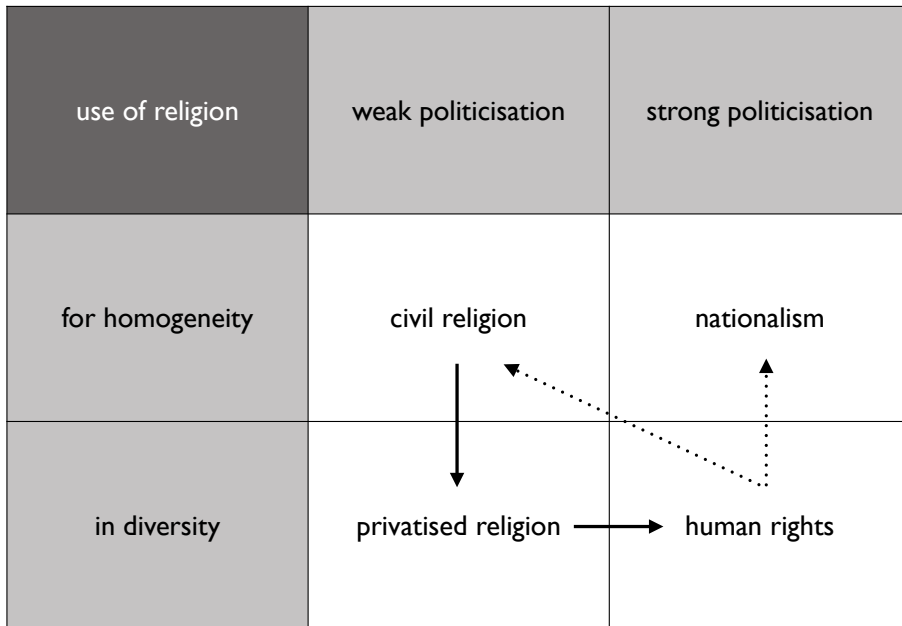


Figure 2. Model of four different ways to apply the political uses of religion in relation to homogeneity, diversity and weak or strong politicisation. The arrows illustrate the changing tendency in Norway and Sweden, 1988-2012.¹⁸

Within the timeframe of this study, 1988-2012, both of these countries have disestablished their Evangelical Lutheran majority churches, a process that has been visible in changing attitudes towards the state-church relationships in party platforms and parliamentary debates. While that does not automatically mean that the majority churches have stopped being used as part of civil religion, it still must be considered as a weakening of the official status of these churches towards a more privatised role and use of religion in society (illustrated with a full arrow in Figure 2 from civil religion to privatised

¹⁸ The full arrows illustrate the general development (from civil religion to privatised religion and then to human rights) and the dotted arrows illustrate partial (from human rights to nationalism) and possible (from human rights to human rights as civil religion) developments.

religion, to indicate a general development). If and when the majority churches continue to be part of civil religion it is then from a position in civil society, and I believe that my conclusion of a renegotiation of the relationship between church and state not least in Sweden in the parliamentary debates on same-sex unions is an indication of this (cf Casanova 1994).

However, following or parallel to these processes, religious diversity has increased, which is visible in a major increase in references to and use of human rights doctrines to handle and thereby more strongly politicise religion, especially with assumed conflicts between values such as democracy and human rights such as the freedom of religion (illustrated with a full arrow in Figure 2 from privatised religion to human rights, to indicate a general development).

Meanwhile, right-wing populist parties in particular – to a higher degree in Norway than in Sweden so far – have politicised religion as part of a nationalistic effort to strive for a higher degree of homogeneity (illustrated with a dotted arrow in Figure 2 from human rights to nationalism, to indicate that it is only a partial development).

Finally, I think that the suggestions that human rights doctrines may achieve status as (a new form of) civil religion in Norway and Sweden (Botvar and Sjöborg 2014:255) are very interesting, while that is not particularly visible in my empirical studies (illustrated with a dotted arrow in Figure 2 from human rights to civil religion, to indicate that it is only a possible development). It would then either replace traditional institutional religion in that position, with or without the explicit or implicit support from such religion, or support a form of civil religion based on traditional institutional religion, but widened to include religious diversity. An example of the last case is the church service, with representatives from different religions, that is part of the annual opening ceremony of the Swedish parliament (Furseth forthcoming).

This pattern is similar to what Christensen (2010:203) has characterised as ethical authority based on overlapping consensus when he discusses secularism in Scandinavia (cf Rawls 1999b:446-448). In his analysis, this form of public authority is particularly common in Norway, while Sweden, rather, is characterised by laicism, with no religious authority. This may also explain why Norway is the country that has gone furthest so far in discussing human rights as part of its constitution (Botvar and Sjöborg 2014:236). Meanwhile Denmark, as I will turn to next, is characterised by cultural authority in that it lacks the kind of church hierarchy that the Norwegian and Swedish majority churches have and that it has a more influential right-wing populist party, according to Christensen.

Continuing with Denmark, the relationship between the majority church and the state has only been questioned to a low degree in party platforms and parliamentary debates. While I have seen a higher degree of references to the keyword cluster religion in general, which I understand as an impact of reli-

gious diversity, references to human rights have not been as common in Denmark as in Norway and Sweden. Instead, the increasing salience of nationalism is most obvious in Denmark and I would therefore describe the use of religion in Danish politics within this timeframe as focused on homogeneity, with weak politicisation as civil religion and strong politicisation as nationalism.

In Iceland, the majority church continues to be a state church and has been questioned to a low degree in party platforms and parliamentary debates within the timeframe of this study, although the association between national identity and Christianity has been decreasing here as well as in the other countries. While I have seen a higher degree of references to the keyword cluster religion in general and the issue-area of human rights, it has not been in order to problematise and thereby politicise religion to any higher degree. I therefore suggest that the use of religion in Icelandic politics is primarily focused on civil religion, while human rights issues may be gaining salience.

Finland, finally, is the Nordic country that has seemingly been least affected by an impact of globalisation on the use of religion in politics, with few references to religious diversity and a low degree of problematisation of religion. The majority church and the Orthodox minority church have been disestablished for about a century, which may indicate that religion has become privatised to a high degree, with few references to religion in parliamentary debates. However, most of those references are still about the majority church in a way that is hardly problematised, which may indicate that the majority church continues to function as part of Finnish civil religion (cf Sundback 2000:72).

Next, I will interpret what I perceive as a general tendency in these patterns.

Concluding discussion: Religion as a means to societal cohesion

With the use of the first part of my second research question, I have showed the patterns that I think are visible in the political use of religion in the different Nordic countries, in terms of weak or strong politicisation for the purpose of homogeneity or in diversity. Now, I intend to answer the second part of the second research question – what this may tell us about religion as a means to societal cohesion in the Nordic countries – as a way of concluding the discussion.

In the introduction to this thesis as well as that of this chapter, I have referred to what may seem like a paradox between a high degree of individual secularisation in terms of decreasing traditional Christian beliefs and continuous, more or less close relationships between the Nordic states and the Evangelical Lutheran majority churches. I have also referred to the use of these churches in a performance-oriented approach as public utilities (Luhmann 1982; Davie 2006:251). As part of my analysis of the parliamentary

debates on same-sex unions, I have also suggested that the majority churches may also be used to confirm societal core values, in line with Durkheim's view (1976) of religion as a contributor of collective values (cf Laudrup 2009:52).

As a reminder, I referred to three motives to use religion in politics in the background section to the second research question in Chapter 2, of which religion's ability to communicate collective values was one, alongside its ability to provide political legitimacy and possibly also be a normative force (Demker 1998:13). As I have also referred to, religion has (therefore) historically been 'the most widespread and effective instrumentality of legitimation' (Berger 1967:32).

With the process of functional differentiation, religion and state power have gradually come to be separated over time and, as a sign of that, the religious cleavage in politics grew as a reaction to such separation (Durkheim 1933; Luhmann 1982; Lipset and Rokkan 1967). Furthermore, with the increase in pluralism and religious diversity, all of the three motives may be questioned (e.g. Habermas 2011:20-24). However, when I assume that every democracy needs a *demos* to function, then every democracy may still need something (else) to strengthen societal cohesion in terms of solidarity of the nation and political legitimacy (Petersson 2009:143-145). As I have referred to, Rawls' concept (1999b:446-448) of overlapping consensus may be such solution.

Nonetheless, religion has continued to be used in politics not least through civil religion, which I understand with other scholars in the Nordic context primarily as represented by the Evangelical Lutheran majority churches with the addition of national motives (cf Warburg, Larsen and Schütze 2013:5-6). Rhetorically, I may ask if this is just a remnant of the past or a more or less conscious objective to continue to use traditional institutional religion as a contributor to societal cohesion, despite increasing plurality.

When I have used my analytical model in answering the second research question, I have understood religion in a functional sense as culture, identity and power used to a lesser or higher degree of politicisation for the purpose of homogeneity (Woodhead 2011). Therefore I have been able to view traditional institutional religion alongside nationalism and human rights doctrines as comparable sources of societal cohesion.

Moreover, these sources may also be combined. Traditional institutional religion represented by the majority church is used as part of civil religion or nationalism, but nationalism may also function as religion in itself, based on what may be perceived as secular values for the purpose of societal cohesion. In a similar way, human rights doctrines may either be considered as being independent or dependent on beliefs that every human being is created in the image of God (Gregory 2012:381). Human rights doctrines may also contribute to a more inclusive interpretation of traditional institutional reli-

gion as part of civil religion. While Durkheim anticipated that traditional institutional religion would be replaced as the religion of society by nationalism and eventually by the cult of man, I would rather suggest that all of these three sources live parallel to and in combination with each other (Furseth and Repstad 2005:50-51; Boglind, Eliaeson and Månson 2009:259).

In my understanding, glocalisation and the subsequent politicisation of religion are reasonable explanations of why I have seen an increasing salience of religion in general in this study on Nordic politics between 1988 and 2012. However, with the common tendencies to either keep the formal relationships between church and state, to renegotiate them, or use traditional institutional religion as part of nationalism, I also understand these changes as an increasing search for a deeper grounding that I would like to label a 'core authority' in society, which I will explain next.

As I have referred to in Chapter 2, the political power of nation-states has decreased with globalisation, as a number of problems in society now need to be dealt with internationally (Habermas 1998:398; Petersson 2009:38). Nation-states become more financially vulnerable, which potentially creates social and economic injustice to a higher degree as the traditional welfare state weakens (Bauman 2007:7-25). With porous national borders, we may also experience pluralism in the sense of possibly-competing ethical standards in a glocalised context (Casanova 2001a:429; 2008:102; Beyer 2007:98; 108). Furthermore, it is claimed that the commercialisation and commodification of social relations create liquid forms of global social networks that have little stability in community (Turner 2013:54). As a consequence, societies are pressured to define their identities, what they stand for and what is ultimately 'sacred' about them (Robertson and Chirico 1985:238; cf Durkheim 1976:422). As in Casanova's understanding (2001a:427), I believe that we need to start thinking about religion more as a part of national cultural systems.

This is the crucial point. If modern nation-states are or would be totally dependent on political and economic performance, then political legitimacy and in the long run democracy are in danger if and when the most challenging effects of globalisation are sufficiently severe (Turner 2013:148; cf Petersson 2009:143-145). Then Taylor's claim (2011:44) that 'this is the era of nationalism, of the breakup of empires' may need to be stretched further to the breakup of nations as well. This development does not only bring about an increased politicisation of religion but it also raises issues of societal cohesion, and the role and use of religion in relation to that. To me, a search for a core authority is a way of expressing a striving for a thicker layer of culture, to establish a sense of more solid ground in a democracy challenged by the changes brought about by the impact of globalisation. That is how I understand the continuation of more or less close state-church relationships, despite the assumed high degree of individual secularisation in the Nordic countries and indications of increasing uses of religion for the purpose of

homogeneity, not least through nationalism but possibly also through the use of human rights doctrines as (part of) civil religion.

With this, I do not claim that the Nordic parliamentary parties have engaged in the theoretical underpinnings of how religion may be used to legitimise politics, to express collective values or in a normative way as deeply as I have done here, but at least that their reactions and strategies are possible to associate with different approaches to the theoretical foundations of the role and use of religion in society and politics.

Conclusion: the second research question

To conclude, the answer to my second research question is that I have discerned four different patterns in the use of religion in Nordic politics between 1988 and 2012 in terms of weak or strong politicisation for the purpose of homogeneity or in diversity. Norway and Sweden have moved from a form of less politicised civil religion associated with the majority church to a higher degree of privatised religion. However, these countries have continued to move to an increasingly politicised use of human rights doctrines to handle religious diversity and finally to tendencies towards nationalism and possibly also a renewed form of civil religion, influenced by human rights to a lower or higher degree. In Denmark, religion is primarily used for homogeneity through civil religion to a low degree of politicisation and nationalism to a high degree of politicisation. These two patterns are similar to the different characteristics of Scandinavian secularism, which Christensen (2010:203) has described. In Finland, the findings indicate a low degree of politicisation of religion, with both a privatisation of religion and a continuous civil religion through the use of the majority church. In Iceland, finally, the findings indicate a continuous civil religion through the majority church, although to a decreasing degree and with increasing references to religion in general terms.

In my interpretation, these findings of the continuous role and use of the majority churches in Nordic politics alongside growing nationalism is a sign of increasing emphasis on homogeneity, indicating an increasing search for a core authority as the impact of globalisation challenges societal cohesion in terms of political authority and solidarity. The use of human rights as (part of) civil religion would further strengthen such a conclusion.

Theoretical contributions and future research

In accordance with my choice of an abductive method, I have used my empirical material to find applicable theories and to discuss these in relation to the empirical material. I believe that through this approach I have made a number of theoretical contributions:

In Article I, I have primarily contributed to a more complex understanding of how the religious cleavage needs to be understood in increasing re-

ligious diversity (Lipset and Rokkan 1967). In Article II, I have primarily contributed to indicating how the presence of a right-wing populist party in parliament and the concept of politicisation need to be taken into account when scholars discuss claims of a return, re-emergence or de-privatisation of religion in politics (Kingdon 2011; Madeley 2003b:2; Foret and Itçaina 2012:3; Casanova 1994). In Article III, I have primarily contributed to a better understanding of how the roles and uses of the majority churches can be renegotiated or re-affirmed by the parliamentary parties, despite general functional differentiation (Durkheim 1933). I believe that the keys to this understanding are the notions of performance and of the majority churches as public utilities, not only as service providers but also by contributing to and confirming changing core values in society (Luhmann 1982; Davie 2006:251; Casanova 1994:229). In Article IV, I have primarily contributed to an understanding of how different values related to the narrative of secular progress may be interchangeable as part of symbolic politics (Woodhead 2009; Edelmann 1964:6; Hadj-Abdou et al 2012:138-139). Finally, in answering the second research question, I have primarily contributed to an understanding of how the impact of glocalisation may lead to an increasing search for what I have labelled core authority in society for the purpose of stronger societal cohesion and different ways to politicise religion to handle this (Beyer 2007).

As the impact of glocalisation, in different ways, is a major theme in these discussions and contributions, I would like to address it further here. I think that my findings from the first research question confirms an increasing awareness of religion in the political sphere, regardless of whether it should be labelled de-privatisation, post-secularity or something else (Casanova 1994; Habermas 2008). The consequence is that religion has become an issue that cannot be ignored and therefore needs to be dealt with, as it has to an increasing degree become associated with boundary disputes (Beckford 1990:11, 1999:24, 2003:14). Therefore, I do not believe that a (continuous) move towards more privatised religion is likely in Nordic politics in the near future.

Here I would like to return to the discussion of the demos problem that I introduced in the first chapter: of what it takes to constitute the demos, the people of a democracy (Petersson 2009:143). With a higher degree of religious diversity, the demos problem also has been turned into an ethnos problem, not least by the right-wing populist parties in Denmark, Norway and Sweden, (cf Petersson 2009: 148-150; Schnapper 1994). This means a return to focusing on societal homogeneity, after years of increasing diversity and plurality. With such a turn, it is easy to be reminded of German Chancellor Angela Merkel's famous statement in 2010, that the attempts to build a multicultural society in her country had 'utterly failed'.

While I consider the growing problematisation of religious diversity to be an act of politicisation of the immigration issue for the sake of increasing

political influence, it is also a process that in my understanding uncovers a dispute over the source of societal core values. While these tendencies are only partial, and stronger in Denmark than in Norway and Sweden and less strong in Finland and Iceland, I still understand it as something that can become a more general shift in all of these countries with the growing influence electorally of right-wing populist parties.

With the loss of societal influence over time, the Nordic Evangelical Lutheran majority churches may at first sight appreciate the kind of positive attention that an increasing focus on Christianity as part of national identity may contribute, not least through the right-wing populist parties. However, if that means an attempt to turn back to mono-religiosity, then the freedom of religion is at stake. That may also be the case if human rights or other possible forms of regulation of religion will be used to severely limit the expressions of public religion. Furthermore, what happens if or when the majority churches continue to lose enough members to become minority churches? Will a more pure form of nationalism with less association to the majority churches then be the preferable 'religion' to the political majority? Or will a civil religion based on human rights and religious diversity become a viable all-inclusive alternative (cf Repstad 2009)?

While I here have made my contributions to the research on the use of religion in Nordic parliamentary politics, a number of additional issues have come up along the way which call for further research:

The first issue is the possible developments of a higher status for human rights doctrines in the Nordic countries, such as further inclusion in constitutions and school curriculums, and what that may imply for civil religion (cf Botvar and Sjöborg 2014:236; Repstad 2009:212). I have only been able to indicate such possible development here, while much more future research is needed to clarify whether or not this is a more general development. Such analysis may also contribute further to my suggestion of an ongoing search for a core authority in Nordic politics.

A second issue is related to the historical development of the Nordic right-wing populist parties, to trace the inclusion of Christianity as a cultural fundament in their ideology alongside the rejection of Islam. Furthermore, there is a need to analyse if their growing influence in Nordic politics may also contribute to stronger relationships between the states and majority churches, as part of their striving for increasing homogeneity, with parallel increasing restrictions on expressions of religious diversity.

A third issue is to further analyse what I have called a renegotiation or re-affirmation of the church and state relationships, to find other indications for or against that claim. While I believe that the parliamentary debates on same-sex unions still hold as a crucial case, further studies may clarify this further (Gerring 2007:86-150).

A fourth issue is to analyse the Nordic discourse on the governance of religion, in terms of legal and administrative activities that define, manage and

oversee religious organisations and individuals by state authorities (Shakman Hurd 2011). With increasing religious diversity, we may continue to see boundary disputes over acceptable religion and, as a consequence, changes in the way that religion is governed by the Nordic states. The aim of such study could be to analyse the discursive practices around religion in terms of power and othering. What do the categories of religion and religious imply in such governance? Does, for example, the governance of religion have the objective of establishing 'normal religion' and, if so, in accordance with which explicit or implicit ideals and values? To answer questions such as these are of vital importance, especially if it is possible to trace changes in such governance over time and to analyse the reasons behind such change.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Party platforms

Denmark

The Centre Democrats (Centrum-Demokraterne):

CD – partiet i centrum. 1989.

CentrumDemokraterne. 25 år med hjertet i midten. 1998.

The Danish People's Party (Dansk Folkeparti):

Fælles værdier - fælles ansvar: Arbejdsprogram for Dansk Folkeparti – som vedtaget af Dansk Folkepartis folketingsgruppe september 2001. 2001.

Arbejdsprogram for Dansk Folkeparti. 2009.

The Progress Party (Fremskridtspartiet):

Det vil Fremskridtspartiet. For den personlige frihed. 1989.

The Red-Green Alliance (Enhedslisten – De rød-grønne):

Et rødt-grønt alternativ. Politisk grundlag for Enhedslisten - de rød-grønne. 1996.

The Conservatives (Konservative Folkeparti):

Frihed i fællesskab. Det konservative folkepartis holdningsprogram. 1992.

Det Konservative Folkepartis holdningsprogram. Fornuft og Fornyelse. Konservative værdier i det 21 århundrede. 2000.

Frihed i stærke fællesskaber. Debatoplæg til et nyt konservativt partiprogram. 2010.

The Christian Democrats (Kristeligt Folkeparti/Kristendemokraterne):

Princip-program Fremtidens samfund. 1986.

Principprogram 1996. Kristendemokraternes grundlæggende politiske program. 1996.

Principprogram. Politik til tiden – Politik i tiden. 2008.

The Liberal Alliance (Ny Alliance/Liberal Alliance):

Liberal Alliance. Arbejdsprogram. 2009.

The Social Liberal Party (Radikale Venstre):

Et radikalt principprogram. 1976.

Det Radikale Venstres Principprogram. 1997.

Politik (valg.radikale.dk/politik/). 2011.

The Socialist People's Party (Socialistisk Folkeparti)

Mod nye tider. SFs Princip- og handlingsprogram. 1991.

Princip- og perspektivprogram. 2003.

SFs Reformprogram. 2009.

The Social Democrats (Socialdemokraterne/Socialdemokratiet):
Socialdemokratiets arbejdsprogram 1988-1992. På menneskets vilkår. 1988.
Fælles fremtid. Fælles mål. Arbejdsprogram 1996-2000. 1996.
Hånden på hjertet. Principprogram. 2004.

The Liberals (Venstre):
Et trygt liv i frihed. 1986.
Mennesket frem for systemet. Nyt principprogram for Venstre. Afstemnings- og debatoplæg. 1995.
Venstres principprogram. Fremtid i frihed og fællesskab. 2006.

Finland

The Centre Party (Suomen Keskusta/Centern i Finland):
Suomen Keskustan ohjelma 1990-luvulle (luonnos). 1989.
Keskustan periaatteet. 1996.
Centerns principprogram: På vägen till ett jämlikt, jämställt och ekologiskt civiliserat samhälle. 2006.

The Green League (Vihreä liitto/Gröna förbundet):
Vihreän Liiton yleisohjelma. 1988.
Gröna förbundets program. 1998.
Gröna förbundets principprogram. 2006.

The Christian Democrats (Kristillisdemokraatit/Kristdemokraterna):
Suomen Kristillisen Liiton yleisohjelma. 1982.
Kristillisen Liiton tavoiteohjelma. 1998.
Kristdemokraternas principprogram och det allmänna programmet. 2005.

The National Coalition Party (Kansallinen Kokoomus/Samlingspartiet):
Kokoomuksen Lähiajan tavoiteohjelma. 1988.
Kokoomuksen tavoiteohjelma 1999-2003. 1998.
Samlingspartiets principprogram. 2006.

The True Finns (Perussuomalaiset/Sannfinländarna):
Suomen Maaseudun Puolueen Puolueohjelma. 1992. [The Rural Party (Maaseudun Puolue/Finlands landsbygdsparti)]
Lähiajan tavoiteohjelma. 2001.
Suomalaiselle sopivin. Perussuomalaiset r.p:n eduskuntavaaliohjelma. 2011.

The Social Democrats (Suomen Sosialidemokraattinen Puolue/Finlands Socialdemokratiska Parti):
Sosialidemokraattisen Puolueen periaateohjelma. 1987.
Principer för socialdemokratin. 1999.
SDP:s mål för mandatperioden 2007-2011. 2007.

The Swedish People's Party (Suomen ruotsalainen kansanpuolue/Svenska folkpartiet i Finland):
SFP:s Partiprogram. 1988.
Partiprogram 'Med människan'. 1997.

Steget före. Svenska folkpartiets partiprogram. 2006.

The Left Alliance (Vasemmistoliitto/Vänsterförbundet):

Vasemmistoliiton ohjelma 1990. 1990.

Vänsterförbundets Partiprogram 1998. 1998.

Principprogram 2007. Vänsterns väg till en rättvis värld. 2007.

Iceland

The Independence Party (Sjálfstæðisflokkurinn):

27. landsfundur Sjálfstæðisflokksins. Ályktanir og kosningayfirlýsingar Sjálfstæðisflokksins 1987. „Á rétttri leið.“ 1987.

33. landsfundur Sjálfstæðisflokksins 11.-14. mars 1999. Árangur fyrir alla. Ályktanir. 1999.

Nýjir tímar – á traustum grunni. 37. landsfundur Sjálfstæðisflokksins 12.-15. apríl 2007. Ályktanir. 2007.

The Progressive Party (Framsóknarflokkurinn):

Ályktanir 21. flokksþings framsóknarmanna 16.-18. nóvember 1990. 1990.

Ályktanir 24. flokksþings framsóknarmanna 27.-29. nóvember 1996. 1997.

Framsókn Íslendinga í 90 ár. Flokksþing framsóknarmanna. Ályktanir 29.

flokksþings framsóknarmanna 2.-3. mars 2007. 2007.

The Social Democratic Party (Alþýðuflokkurinn):

Stefnuskrá Alþýðuflokksins. Samþykkt á 43. flokksþingi í október 1986. 1988.

The People's Alliance (Alþýðubandalagið):

Þingtíðindi. Landsfundur Alþýðubandalagsins 1985. Ný sókn. 1986.

The Social Democratic Alliance (Samfylkingin):

Samfylkingin. Stefnumýsing Samfylkingarinnar. 2000.

Samfylkingin. Stjórn málaályktun Samfylkingarinnar 2001. 2001.

Samfylkingin. Stjórn málaályktun Samfylkingarinnar 2007. 2007.

The Left Green Movement (Vinstri hreyfingin – grænt framboð):

‘Ályktanir frá fyrsta landsfundi VG árið 1999.’ Vinstri græn – vegur til framtíðar. 1999.

‘Stefnan.’ Vinstri græn – vegur til framtíðar. 1999, but with later additions.

‘Ályktanir.’ Vinstri græn – vegur til framtíðar. 2007.

The Liberal Party (Frjálslyndi flokkurinn):

‘Um flokkinn.’ Frjálslyndi flokkurinn. 2004 (originally 1999).

Málefnahandbók. 2007.

The Citizens' Party (Borgaraflokkurinn):

Stefnuskrá Borgaraflokksins fyrir Alþingiskosningar 25. apríl 1987: samþykkt 29. mars 1987. 1987.

The Women's List (Kvennalistinn):

Kvennalistinn. Stefnuskrá. 1986.

Norway

The Labour Party (Arbeiderpartiet/Arbeidarpartiet):

Ny vekst for Norge. Arbeiderpartiet 86-89. Arbeidsprogram. 1986.
Samråderett. Prinsipp- og arbeidsprogram. Det norske Arbeiderparti 1997. 1997.
Skape og dele. Arbeiderpartiets program 2009-2013. 2009.

The Progress Party (Fremskrittspartiet/Framstegspartiet):

Fremtiden skapes – den vedtas ikke! Fremskrittspartiets program 1989-1993. 1989.
Fremskrittspartiets prinsipper. 1997.
Fremskrittsparties prinsipper 2009-2013. 2009.

The Conservative Party (Høyre/Høgre):

Høyres program 1985/89. Frihet og felleskap – mulighetenes samfunn. 1985.
Høyres prinsippprogram 2000. 2000.
Muligheter for alle. Høyres Stortingsvalgprogram 2009–2013. 2009.

The Christian Democratic Party (Kristelig Folkeparti/Kristeleg Folkeparti):

Handlingsprogram for Kristelig Folkeparti. Ta vare på livet! For Stortingsperioden 1985-89. 1985.
Handlingsprogram for Kristelig Folkeparti stortingsperioden 1997-2001. 1997.
KrFs program 2009-2013. 2009.

The Centre Party (Senterpartiet):

Senterpartiets valgprogram 1985-1989. 1985.
Trygg framtid. Prinsippprogram for Senterpartiet 1995. 1995.
Sp partiprogram 2009-2013. 2009.

The Socialist Left Party (Sosialistisk venstreparti):

Arbeidsprogram for Sosialistisk Venstreparti 1985-1989. 1985.
Sosialistisk Venstrepartis prinsippprogram 1995. 1995.
SVs arbeidsprogram for perioden 2009-2013. 2009.

The Liberal Party (Venstre):

Venstres program 1985-1989. 1985.
Borgerrett og samfunnsansvar. Prinsippprogram for Venstre 1996. 1996.
Frihet og ansvar. Et sosialliberalt samfunn. Venstres stortingsvalgprogram 2009-2013. 2009.

Sweden

The Centre Party (Centerpartiet):

Centerns partiprogram 1990. 1990.
Centerns idéprogram 2001. 2001.
Slutprotokoll Partistämman 2009. 2009.

The Liberal People's Party (Folkpartiet liberalerna):

Folkpartiets program 1990. 1990.
Folkpartiets program 1999. 1999.
Frihet att växa. Folkpartiet liberalernas partiprogram. 2007.

The Christian Democrats (Kristdemokraterna):

KDS Partiprogram. 1987.

För gemenskap och människovärde. Kristdemokraternas principprogram. 1996.
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and <http://kristdemokraterna.se/VarPolitik/Faktablad>. 2011.

The Green Party (Miljöpartiet de Gröna):
Miljöpartiet de Grönas idéprogram 1988. 1988.
Partiprogram 1997. 1997.
Partiprogram 2005. 2005.

The Moderate Party (Moderata Samlingspartiet/Moderaterna):
Partiprogram 1984. 1984.
På tröskeln till mänsklighetens bästa tid. Idéprogram 2001. 2001.
Vår tids arbetarparti. Handlingsprogram för nya Moderaterna 2007. 2007.

New Democracy (Ny Demokrati):
Ny Demokrati partiprogram. 1991.

The Social Democrats (Sveriges socialdemokratiska arbetareparti/Socialdemokraterna):
Socialdemokraternas partiprogram 1990. 1990.
Partiprogram för Socialdemokraterna 2001. 2001.
Socialdemokraternas politiska riktlinjer 2009. 2009.

The Sweden Democrats (Sverigedemokraterna):
Partiprogram 1989. 1989.
Partiprogram 1999 med justeringar 2002. 2002.
Sverigedemokraternas principprogram 2005 2005

The Left Party (Vänsterpartiet):
Partiprogram 1987. 1987.
För en solidarisk värld. Partiprogram 2000. 2000.
Partiprogram 2008. 2008.

Appendix 2: Errata

Article I: Religion in Nordic Party Platforms 1988-2008

P 125: Reads ‘In two cases (True Finns 2006/07 and Radical Left 2011), election manifestos have been used’. Should be ‘In one case (True Finns 2006/07), an election manifesto has been used’.

P 126: Reads ‘(Swedish Centre Party 2009, Swedish Christian Democrats 2010–11 and Radical Left 2011)’. Should be ‘(the Swedish Centre Party 2009, the Swedish Christian Democrats 2010–11 and the Social Liberal Party 2011)’.

P 135: Reads ‘assistant professor’ (footnote 1). Should be ‘associate professor’.

P 138: Wrong place in alphabetical order: Green-Pedersen, Christoffer. 2005.

Article III: Renegotiating the Role of Majority Churches in Nordic Parliamentary Debates on Same-Sex Unions

P 9: Reads ‘Gunnar Björnsson, Ulrik Kihlbom, and Anders Ullholm, *Argumentationsanalys: färdigheter för kritiskt tänkande*’ (footnote 37). Should be ‘Gunnar Björnsson, Ulrik Kihlbom, and Anders Ullholm, *Argumentationsanalys: färdigheter för kritiskt tänkande*’.

P 16: Reads ‘Bäckström, “De kyrkliga handlingarna som ram, relation och välbefinnande,” 145 – 47’ (footnote 44). Should be ‘Bäckström, “De kyrkliga handlingarna som ram, relation och välbefinnande,” 145 – 47’.

