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Religious Affiliation in Europe – an Empirical Approach.
The «Swiss Metadatabase of Religious Affiliation in Europe (SMRE)»

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Religious Affiliation in Europe – an Empirical Problem.
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Abstract: The role of religion in European societies has become a prominent topic of public and academic debate. In the context of contemporary European societies questions concerning religion figure large when it comes to identities and social integration. The role of the different Christian traditions, the degree of secularization and the status of more recently immigrated religious minorities, especially of Muslims, are contested. Consequently, statistics on religious affiliation are frequently used (or mis-used) as political arguments. Data on religious affiliation are regularly brought forward in debates about the strength, predominance and acceptance of various religious groups.

Despite the growing importance of this statistical information, social science research has thus far paid little attention to the question of religious affiliation and its precise measurement. In fact, social scientists (as well as politicians) use figures on religious affiliation which, to the surprise of an empirically-minded researcher, vary greatly. Moreover, for Europe as a whole, as for important European countries such as France and Great Britain, it is currently impossible to give reliable figures on the religious affiliation of its population.

The *Swiss Metadatabase of Religious Affiliation in Europe (SMRE)* has been set up to change this situation. Over the course of three years, data from a wide range of sources have been collected by two researchers from the University of Lucerne. These data were integrated into a new database designed especially for this purpose. The SMRE-base is part of the sub-project #4 of the university research program *Religion und gesellschaftliche Integration in Europa (REGIE)* at the University of Lucerne. The new metadatabase includes statistics on religious affiliation for 42 European countries (including Turkey) covering two periods of reporting, namely 2000 (1996-2005) and 2010 (2006-2015).

Keywords: Religion, religious affiliation, religions, denominations, Islam, pluralism, population statistics, Europe, cultural and religious identities, reliability and validity of census data and general surveys, metadatabase, censuses

Content

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Religious Affiliation in Europe – an Empirical Problem. The «Swiss Metadatabase of Religious Affiliation in Europe (SMRE)»

1   Religious Affiliation and European Identity

The role of religion in European societies has become a prominent topic of public and academic debate. In the context of contemporary European societies questions concerning religion figure large when it comes to identities and social integration (cf. Altermatt/Delgado/Vergauwen 2007; Buchstab/Uertz 2008; Glockner 2010; Kallscheuer 1996; Kallscheuer 2009; Leustean/Madeley 2010; Weninger 2007; Werkner/Liedhegener 2013). The role of the different Christian traditions, the degree of secularization and the status of more recently immigrated religious minorities, especially of Muslims, are contested. Consequently, statistics on religious affiliation are frequently used (or mis-used) as political arguments. Data on religious affiliation fuel debates on the strength, predominance and acceptance of various religious groups across Europe.

Despite the growing importance of this statistical information, social science research has thus far not lent much attention to the question of religious affiliation and its precise measurement. In fact, social scientists (as well as politicians) use figures on religious affiliation which, to the surprise of an empirical minded researcher, differ vastly. Moreover, for Europe as a whole as for important European countries such as France and Great Britain it is currently impossible to give reliable figures on the religious affiliation of its population.

The *Swiss Metadatabase of Religious Affiliation in Europe (SMRE)* has been set up to change this situation. Over the course of three years, data from a wide range of sources have been collected by two researchers of the University of Lucerne. These data were integrated into a new database designed especially for this purpose. The SMRE-base is part of the subproject #4 of the university research program *Religion und gesellschaftliche Integration in Europa (REGIE)* at the University of Lucerne. The new metadatabase includes statistics on religious affiliation for 42 European countries (including Turkey) covering two periods of reporting, namely 2000 (1996-2005) and 2010 (2006-2015).

2 The Research Problem: Contradicting Statistics of Religious Affiliation and Lacking Data Reliability

2.1 Religious affiliation in Europe: an open research question – state of research

There has been a wealth of research on the return of religion versus secularization in Europe in recent decades. Although in recent scientific research on religion in Europe there was a debate on the question of old versus new forms of religion and especially on the phenomenon of believing without belonging (Davie 1994; Davie 2006; Gabriel/Gärtner/Pollack 2012; Hamplová/Nespor 2009; Knoblauch 2009; Pickel/Sammet 2012; Pollack/Müller/Pickel 2012), this did not provoke marked efforts to answer the question of religious belonging empirically. Religious affiliation has not been at the forefront of scientific research on religion. Although some scientists realized the problem of poor statistics on religious affiliation across Europe (Brown 2000; Hoffmeyer-Zlotnik/Wolf 2003; Knippenberg 2005; Peach 2007), scholars have more often followed a strategy to give specific numbers without debating data problems in depth (Gerhards 2006: 66ff.; Minkenberg 2007: 898-899; Minkenberg 2010: 96-97; 2010/ Robbers 2005 a: 630; Robbers 2005 b: 578). However, there are no official data on religious affiliation in EU statistics or those from other international organizations. On the other hand, almost all international social science survey programs such as the World Value Survey, European Value Study, or International Social Survey Programme feature some questions on religious belonging and come up with more less contradictory data.

Thus, in 2010 the endeavour that was later to become the *SMRE project* started with the disturbing discovery that even the most recent scientific literature differs substantially on figures on religious affiliation in Europe. In sum, based on scientific standards it is actually not possible to provide reliable statistics on the religious composition of the total population of Europe (Liedhegener/Gerstenhauer 2010: 161). Statistics on religious affiliation in France are a prominent example. It depends on the data you choose to either name France a catholic country or to declare it to be a highly secularized nation. However, comparing the different data on France collected by the SMRE, it becomes clear that it is virtually impossible to come up with reliable figures for this Western European country today.

This empirical finding causes serious problems to all data collections and all data bases which leave the user with just one set of figures on a given country's composition in respect to the religious affiliation of its population. The state of art in research on religious affiliation is cur-

rently marked by an US project. A few years ago, the private Pew think tank – mainly financed by the assets of the owner family of Heinz Ketchup – set up a task force to work on the problem of a worldwide statistic of religious affiliation (Pew 2011a; 2011b). In late 2012 Pew published a comprehensive report on this project (Pew 2012). The Pew report provides tables on religious affiliation for 232 countries of the world. The technical notes to that report show that the Pew effort faced much the same problems as our SMRE-project.

There are however two main differences between both projects. First, the SMRE focusses on Europe and develops its categories[1] of religious belonging specifically in light of the European religious tradition (Hoffmeyer-Zlotnik/Wolf 2003: 389-391, 393, 404). Thus, in contrast to the Pew data, the SMRE differentiates within Christianity and provides numbers for various Christian traditions. Second and even more important, the Pew report gives only a single statistic for each country. At the same time it does not include any standardized procedure to evaluate the quality of the data reported. In this respect the Pew data do not exceed the former international "gold standard" of comparative statistics on religious affiliation, the World Christian Database (Hsu 2008).

Figure 1: SMRE-data on France

Dataset	C	P	O	oCh	J	M	nra	Oth
CIA World Factbook	83.0-88.0	2.0			1.0	7.5	4.0	1.0
Encyclopaedia Brit. 2001	63.4	1.2			1.0	6.9	19.0	5.4
eurel 1999 (A. Zwilling)	91.9	2.4	1.9	0.7	2.4	0.2		0.6
eurel 2003 (A. Zwilling)	65.0	2.0			1.0	5.0	25.0	2.0
EVS 1999	44.8	1.3	0.3	0.0	0.6	3.1	48.9	1.1
FWA 2009	75.0							
Gerhards 2006	52.7	1.3	1.2			0.1	42.6	2.1
ISSP 2008	51.5	1.3	0.3	0.0	0.7	0.9	44.8	0.7
Minkenberg 2010	78.8	1.6	0.3		1.1	8.5		9.7
PEW (GC & GMP) 2012	60.4	1.8	0.6	0.2		7.5		
RM 2008	58.0	0.6		2.4	0.0	3.0	34.0	2.0
WCD 2012	71.8	2.1	1.2	2.9	1.0	8.5	23.0	1.7
WCE 2010	82.3	1.6	1.1	0.0	1.0	7.1	19.7	1.5
WRD 2010					1.0	8.5	23.0	1.7

Remarks: all numbers in per cent; C: Catholics; P: Protestants; O: Orthodox; oCh: other Christians; J: Jews; M: Muslims; nra: no Religious affiliation; Oth: Others

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[1] The SMRE defines some specific technical terms to enable a consistent description of its structure and content. An underline indicates that such a technical term is used. Each of these terms is underlined at its first appearance. In order not to overburden the text with technical definitions, Appendix A presents all SMRE-specific definitions in a glossary. It is recommended to take a look at Appendix A while reading the working paper.

2.2 Types of Data Error in the Data Sets and Primary Sources Used thus far

What causes the massive differences among different statistics on religious affiliation in Europe? The answer to this question is crucial to any attempt to review and improve the data available. A systematic inspection of all data sources included in the SMRE showed that the sources of error are manifold and that they even occur in combination. The main sources of error are:

Typing errors and miscalculation are more common than one might expect. These minor technical errors lead to considerably distorted statistics on religious affiliation. For instance, the sum of all percentages does not come up to 100 percent, or the sum of the absolute numbers of all members of religious groups including the non affiliated do not coincide with the absolute number of the population.

In some cases the data *quality of the given statistic* is poor. In such cases statistics are wrong or imperfect due to missing categories or absent figures, especially regarding smaller religious traditions. Instead of giving numbers, some sources only nominally declare the existence of a religious group, using "present" as a valid entry (cf. *Fischer Weltalmanach* or *CIA World Factbook*).

Different types of categorizations of religious bodies and traditions cause problems for comparison. This indicates that two basic questions faced by any statistic on religious belonging have a significant impact on the numbers given: What should be counted as a religious denomination or group? And how will the larger categories such as *Protestants* or *Others* be defined, and which denomination or group will be classified into which category?

The *wording of questionnaires* is also relevant. A different wording of questions leads to different results. This is particularly true for data from opinion polls. In addition, the prominent opinion surveys differ in their technical approach of measurement. A first difference is whether religious affiliation is asked using an open or closed question. Closed questions provide the respondents with a certain set of categories of religious belonging. Respondents are forced to fit into one of these categories, if they do not want to choose the "no response" option. Open questions allow for a undetermined answer, leaving the investigator with a whole variety of individual understandings of religious affiliation in everyday life. Sometimes both techniques are used in combination. Specified categories are given first, but in addition the respondent is free to add his affiliation in his own words. A second important technical differ-

ence is whether religious affiliation is asked in a one or two-stage process. A one-stage process is based on a single question asking directly for one's particular religious belonging. A two-stage process starts with the general question whether the respondent belongs to any religious denomination or group at all. Only those, who affirm on this first question are then asked to which denomination or religious tradition they belong. Finally the question on religious belonging can conceptually be phrased differently. The questions "Are you a member of the Church or other religious community?" is different from "Do you belong to a church or other religious denomination?" or "Do you consider yourself to a particular religion or denomination?". Depending on the particular wording, the question focuses either on an institutional or legal membership, or on a self-designation of a particular collective identity or a personal feeling of belonging which comes closer to a question on individual identity and religiosity. Obviously, the form of questioning points to different understandings of the researchers involved in the surveys of what is meant by religious affiliation (cf. chapter 2.1) and inevitably leads to different figures. To illustrate this: The two well-known international surveys *EVS* and *ESS* use a two-stage process of questioning. In comparison to other sources this technique leads frequently to much higher results on the proportion of persons with no religious affiliation. In addition, due to different wording, the ESS produces even higher figures in this category than the EVS.[2] In many European countries, a question about the respondent's personal sense of belonging (individual identity) yields lower figures for the prevailing denominations and churches and higher percentages of persons without any religious affiliation.

Another source of error comes with the *compilation and analysis of data*. For example, if a survey uses a two-step question on religious affiliation, the analysis of the religious composition must be based on the answers to both questions. A calculation of percentages based only on the second question substantially distorts the statistic. All people without a religious affiliation are dropped from the calculation. This automatically leads to much higher, inaccurate percentages of religious denominations.

These errors, which are certainly not a problem which is limited to the statistics of religion, frequently come with an exaggerated trust in the reliability of the original data source. It is common practice to present data on religious affiliation uncritically without exploring their

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[2] *EVS* starts with this question: "Do you belong to a religious denomination?" (EVS, 6). More on the *ESS* see chapter 2.1.

origin, quality and if applicable the intents of the authors of the original source. Consequently, scientific research on religious affiliation and religious pluralization must start from the disturbing fact that currently, many statements and conclusions are not based on reliable and conclusive statistics. What is needed first is a strategy to overcome the current reliability problem in the field of statistics of religious affiliation.

2.3 Two Strategies to Overcome the Reliability Problem

There are two main strategies to avoid the incautious utilization of more or less critical data on religious affiliation. The first strategy would be to launch a census across Europe to establish a solid body of data on its total population. However, in recent years many European countries have discarded the traditional way of doing censuses by a total population count in favour of micro census techniques which are based on random sampling of a certain quota of the population. This important change in national statistics affects the availability of data on religious affiliation negatively. For example, the most recent census in Switzerland asked a question on religious belonging, but the micro census covered only those who are over 15 years old.[3] The new data of 2010 are not only incompatible to those figures derived from the last traditional census in 2000, but the recent micro census does not give a comprehensive picture of the Swiss landscape of religious denominations at large, since it does not cover the entire resident population. In particular if one is interested to do justice to minor religious groups and denominations, this recent example of Switzerland indicates that a general population census is still needed to achieve roughly accurate results.[4] The public and the state have an legitimate interest to be informed about the religious affiliation of its citizens as long as the question is addressed only at their institutional or legal membership. Public censuses must however refrain from any attempt to ask about private belief or religiosity. Current research

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[3] In addition, using a sampling method also reduces the reliability for figures on different regions. The margin of error involved with this method virtually erase any reliable statistic on religious affiliation for medium sized and small cantons.

[4] This is not to say that a general population census automatically produces 'true' figures. Sources of error can also be named for general censuses. In particular, censuses from authoritarian or totalitarian states must be interpreted with suspicion. Here the topic of religion affiliation can be related to political dispute and power struggles. However, in free and democratic societies, according to all our knowledge, general population censuses are the better data sources compared to surveys and other forms of data collection.

can only address the claim for fresh and better census data to national governments and their statistical offices. Only they have the competence and capacity for this kind of data acquisition.

The second strategy is to improve the data critique and data quality by comparative data collection and analysis. This approach is increasingly coming into use in the social sciences. For example, predictions of election outcomes are nowadays based on more than one survey. The strategy is to pool many survey results and to use all the information available to reduce the chances of error by comparing various results and thus computing a more accurate forecast (cf. http://www.pollyvote.com/). Moreover, there is a growing interest in social-science literature in establishing criteria on the quality of international comparative data sets and data bases (Müller/Pickel 2007; Traunmüller 2012). The *Swiss Metadatabase of Religious Affiliation in Europe (SMRE)* follows this approach of comparative data collection and analysis for producing better estimates on religious affiliation in Europe. This database, its approach and its first results will be introduced in the chapters to follow.

3   The Research Approach: The Swiss Metadatabase of Religious Affiliation in Europe (SMRE)

The *Swiss Metadatabase of Religious Affiliation in Europe (SMRE)* collects data on religious affiliation from a wide range of sources. Over the course of three years these data have been gathered and investigated and were finally integrated into a new database designed especially for this purpose. The SMRE-database is part of the subproject #4 of the university research programme *Religion und gesellschaftliche Integration in Europa (REGIE)* at the University of Lucerne.

The *Swiss Metadatabase of Religious Affiliation in Europe (SMRE)* is mainly based on the statistical techniques and procedures for an analysis of aggregated data. Broadly speaking, these procedures to collect and to analyse the data of the SMRE consist of four distinct steps:

(1) Relevant data sources are identified. For each of these data sources, the research team then investigates the origin of the data reported. Through this it is possible to identify those sources from which the reported figures really originate. Only these sources are called original sources.

(2) All available statistics, original or not, are integrated into the metadatabase. In this step the data given in the sources are also harmonized with the SMRE-categories of religious denominations and groups.

(3) For each country all data will be analysed separately to classify them according to the degree of pluralization.

(4) The SMRE evaluates the overall quality of data of each country dataset included into the SMRE.

3.1 «Religious Affiliation»

The definition of *religious affiliation* or *religious denomination* is central for any statistic on this aspect of social structure (Baumann 2012; Jödicke 2011; Zieger 1958). For the purpose of the SMRE, religious affiliation is defined as an institutional relationship between a person and a religious group or tradition. In many European countries these institutional affiliations are rooted not only in historical traditions, but moreover in an official membership status which in some case even establishes the right to tax the members of certain churches or religious communities. Traditionally in Europe this kind of religious affiliation is an exclusive social relationship. Resulting from the *"cuius regio, eius religio"* approach so prominent in the religious wars across Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries, in Europe being a member of one church usually automatically means the exclusion of all other membership options of organized religion. Thus, religious affiliation as used in the SMRE is defined as an 'objective' property of a person and of a society's social structure. In practice, the list of categories useful to integrating data of different sources into the SMRE consists of *Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, other Christians; Jewish; Muslim, no religious affiliation*, and *others*.

There are of course surveys such as the European Social Survey (ESS) which favour a subjective approach and thus define religious affiliation as self-defining in regards belonging to a certain religion. However, this subjective notion of religious belonging overlaps with the broader concept of religiosity (Bertelsmann 2007; Stolz et. al. 2011). Data on this subjective form of religious affiliation almost by definition substantially differ from the objective meaning of the term and where thus excluded from the SMRE.

3.2 Data sets

The SMRE includes statistics on religious affiliation for 42 European countries (including Turkey) covering two periods of reporting, namely 2000 (1996-2005) and 2010 (2006-2015).

This has resulted in 84 <u>cases</u> included in the SMRE. The Statistics in the SMRE come from: *Barret 2001* and the *World Christian Encyclopedia, Church and Religion in an Enlarged Europe (C&R 2006), CIA World Factbook, Encyclopaedia Britannica, eurel, ESS 2004-2008, EVS 2008, Fischer Weltalmanach, Gerhards 2006, ISSP 2008, Minkenberg 2007 and 2010, Pollack 1998 and 2001, Religion Monitor 2008, Tomka 2000, World Christian Database, World Religion Database,* and *worldmapper.com.* When available national censuses were also included. Results of the *European Social Survey (ESS 2004, 2006 und 2008*) were first also integrated but were finally dropped from the list of <u>data sets</u> relevant for the comparative data analysis. This is due to the problems described above: By its wording the *ESS* defines religious affiliation as an individual sense of feeling of belonging (individual identity). More data sets can and will be integrated into the database in the near future.[5]

For each data set available the research team clarified the crucial question from which original data source the data set under investigation descended. This empirical inquiry showed that in the end there exist only three different original sources or types of data. All data sets available can be traced back to these three sources. These sources are: Surveys *(EVS, ISSP, ESS, C&R, etc.)*, censuses, which however are not available for all countries, and the *World Christian Database (WCD)* or the *World Religion Database (WRD)* which is an direct off spring of the *WCD*. For example, the frequently used data of the Encyclopaedia Britannica can all be traced back to the *WCD*. In itself the latter is not an unproblematic source, because its data, gathered originally for the *World Christian Encyclopedia*, result mostly from country reports prepared by American missionaries. Therefore, a systematic bias of its data in favor of Christianity is a major, although controversial point of criticism (cf. Hsu 2008). For Europe the SMRE data show that the *WCD* provides plausible data for a number of countries, but not for all.

To overcome the daunting problem of unclear origin of data, for each data set the SMRE lists which is the final original source of the data reported. It is this knowledge about the original source of the data given in the various sources which is essentially necessary to come to an appropriate assessment of the reliability of a given data set.

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[5] A case in point is the "The Global Religious Landscape" published by PEW in 2012. Currently we investigate whether and, if applicable, which of those data will be integrated into the SMRE.

3.3 Degree of Pluralization

Based on our concept of religious affiliation, data for 42 countries were collected in SMRE. In our preliminary analyses of the currently available data these countries were classified according to three broad categories of the structure of the religious composition of the respective population. Depending upon the availability of data, which can be qualified as plausible at least to a certain degree, each country was classified as religiously *fragmented*, *pluralized*, or *dominant*. This categorization is based on the size of the single largest religious category within the population.

Fragmented means that no religious group holds a share larger than 35 per cent of the total population. *Pluralized* stands for a country in which the largest group is in the range of 35 to 60 per cent. And any country with the largest religious group holding 60 per cent or more of the population has been categorized as *dominant*. The thresholds of 35 and 60 percent are based on historical experiences of countries in Europe having a history of religiously mixed populations in the 19th and 20th centuries (Altermatt 1989; Hellemans 1990; Lepsius 1966; Liedhegener 2006: 45-226; Lipset/Rokkan 1967). The classification reflects the findings of political culture research, which have frequently shown that the social and political role of religion varies with the proportion of the largest religious group or respective of the size of religious minorities. In addition, all cases were checked for possible classification problems occurring due to the chosen thresholds. In countries classified *dominant*, apart from the religious majority all other religious groups are exposed to a homogenizing pressure by the larger society. In a *pluralized* situation, it is highly likely that the competing (usually) Christian traditions have to find a way to accommodate their different social and political interests and to regulate differences in their way of life. And within *fragmented* societies the realities between different smaller religious groups are likely to come close to a religious market model (see literature in Höhener/Schaltegger 2012). However, our data show that there is no European country to be grouped into this third rubric so far. (In fact, there are strong indications that Switzerland is quickly moving in this direction.

3.4 Data Quality

The SMRE evaluates the overall quality of data of each country dataset included into the SMRE. For this purpose a special decision tree to make an intersubjective data evaluation was developed (cf. Figure 1).

Figure 1: Decision Tree for Testing the Reliability of SMRE-Country Data
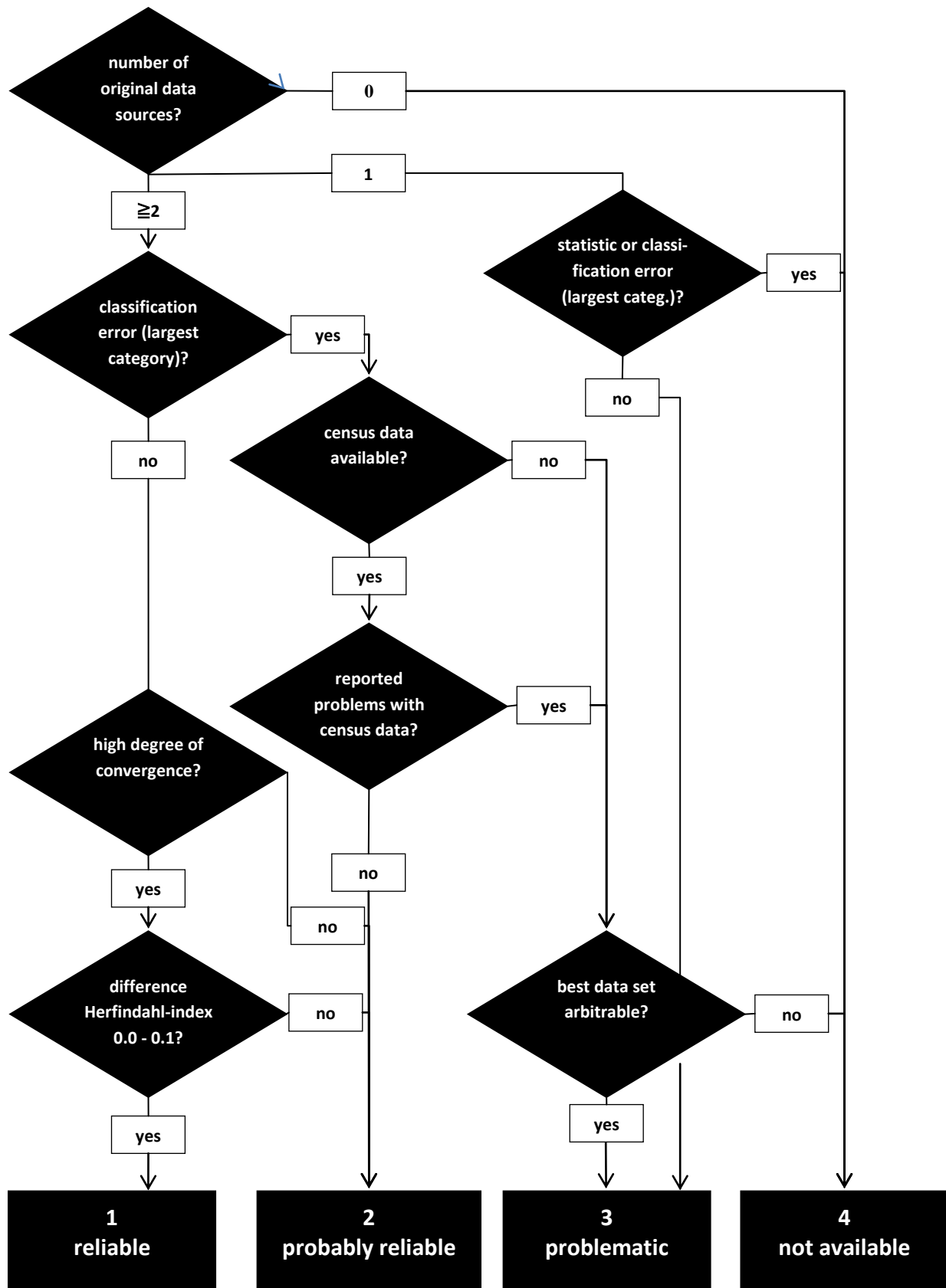
Source: own figure.

The decision tree is used as a country evaluation scheme and works as follows:

It assigns one of four possible categories to each case (i.e. a country at each period reported).

For each case the data quality is classified either as *reliable* (1), *probably reliable* (2), *problematic* (3) or *not available* (4). The category assigned to the case is the result of the various steps taken by following the sequences of the decision tree.

First, the number of original data sources is counted for each individual case. If it is impossible to name any original data source at all, the case will be classified as *no data available* (4) because it is virtually impossible to name any reliable source of information for this case.

If there is only one original data source available, the level of data reliability is at best rated as *problematic* (3). Having to rely on only a single source means that there is no other information available to double-check the figures given in this source. However, if there are additional data problems (for example: the sum of the percentages reported by the source deviates substantially from 100) the data level is classified even lower (4). The same is true if various data sets are based on the same single original data source, but the figures given for the country in question differ vastly and thus lead to contradictory judgments on the degree of pluralization of the countries' religious affiliations (4).

A failure to consistently classify a case as fragmented, pluralized or dominant is called a classification error. This judgment is based on the percentages given for the largest category/ religious tradition.

In cases in which two or more original data sets are available, the decision tree asks for a judgment as to whether or not these data differ fundamentally, i.e. whether or not there is a classification error between them. If the data show a classification error, it will be checked if one of the sources is a census. Usually, census data produce the most reliable data on religious affiliation. If there are no census data available, it will then be checked whether it is possible to ascertain one of the differing data sets as the best source. If a particular data set can reasonably regarded as the best data available, the case will be classified as *problematic* (3). If not, it is classified as *no data available* (4). At this point it has to be made clear that the use of data on any case classified as *problematic* in further research obviously runs a high-risk of employing incorrect and thus misleading statistical data. Figures for countries rated as problematic should only be used very cautiously.

If census data are available, it will be checked whether there are any reported problems with the census under consideration. If there are good reasons to regard the census data as flawed, again, it will be checked whether one of the data sets can be considered more reliable. If this

can be established, the case is classified as *problematic* (3). Otherwise it will also be grouped as *no data available* (4).

In case the census data are fine, the figures are classified as *probably reliable* (2). Data classified as *probably reliable* (2) still leave some room for doubts, but calculations and arguments based on these figures can claim a rather high degree of reliability.

Any case which consists of two or more original data source and does not show a classification error is classified at least as *probably reliable* (2). In order to classify a case as *reliable* (1), its statistics have to pass two additional tests. First, the figures given by different sources must show a high degree of convergence, i.e. the percentages differ only marginally from each other in all categories. Second, the Herfindahl-index (which is calculated for any data set with six or more data points in the SMRE) must show very similar results: The difference between the highest and lowest figure of this index must be less than 0.1. The data for cases which have passed all these tests for data quality and data consistency are classified as *reliable* (1). These data can be used for further calculations and interpretations without problems.

In sum, the decision tree and the various tests and procedures implemented in the SMRE illustrate that the SMRE country evaluation scheme leads statistically to a «conservative» judgment on the quality of data. Thus, figures for cases classified as reliable can be taken as a highly precise approximation to the actual situation of religious affiliation in a particular European country for a given period in time.

4 Results of the SMRE

The SMRE allows a qualified view on objective religious affiliation throughout Europe.

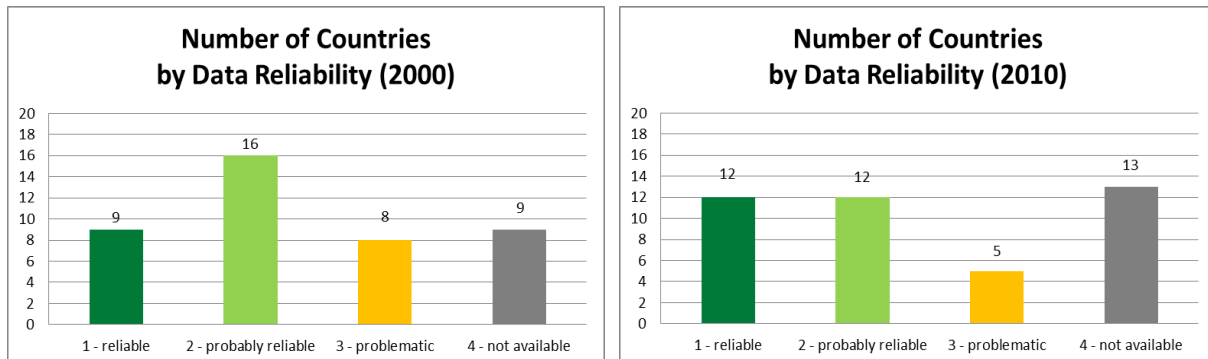### 4.1 Reliability of Data for each Country

The picture is mixed concerning the reliability of data on religious affiliation for each of the 42 countries covered in the SMRE. Taking the reporting period of 2000 first, the statistics of 9 countries can be qualified as *reliable*. Comparison of the available data sets leads to *probably reliable* statistics for 16 countries (cf. Figure 2). For 8 countries the available figures must be categorized as *problematic*. And for 9 countries statistics of religious affiliation are *not available*.

Concerning the reporting period 2010 *reliable* statistics are available for 12 countries. For a further 12 countries the data are *probably reliable*. In 5 cases they are *problematic,* and com-

prehensive data on religious affiliation are *not available* for the remaining 13 countries (cf. figure 2). Comparing the results for both reporting periods it becomes clear that the data reliability has not improved in recent time. Rather, it has tended to become less reliable.

Although it was possible to give reliable data for more countries in 2010, at the same time the number of countries for which data are *not available* rose to 13. This is an increase of 4 countries for which there is no religious affiliation in comparison to 2000. In the case of Belgium, Germany, France, Great Britain, Latvia, and the Netherlands there are no statistics available for either reporting periods 2000 or 2010. For Germany, however, at least a remedy can be offered: Disaggregating the Federal Republic into its Eastern and Western parts improves the data quality. There are more original data sources on these two due to their history from 1945 to 1989, which reflect distinct religious histories for each region. Thus, the SMRE provides separate results on the religious affiliation for the two parts of Germany for the reporting period 2010. Moreover, for both regions the statistics prove to be *reliable*. The following analysis draws on this improvement. This leads to an increase of countries or respectively regions to 43.

Figure 2: Distribution of Countries According to Categories of Data Reliability (Reporting periods 2000 and 2010)
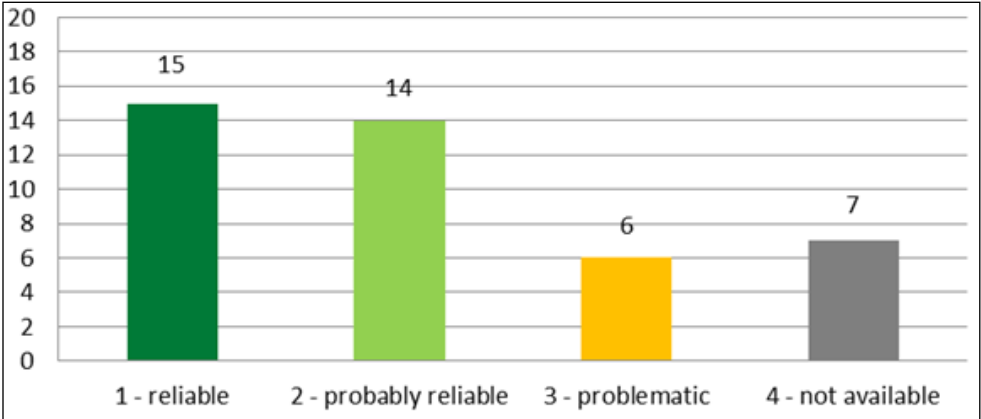

Source: own diagram based on SMRE data.

Looking at the details there are changes of data reliability for several countries between 2000 and 2010: For Serbia and Kosovo there were no reasonable data available in 2000. However, data for 2010 proved to be *probably reliable* for both countries. Whereas the data situation improved for Serbia and Kosovo, it deteriorated substantially for Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Czech Republic, Spain, Estonia, and Hungary. Data are available for 2000 but not for 2010.

A deterioration of data reliability from higher quality to *problematic* or *not reliable*, i.e. no data available, can result from different causes and thus can have very different significance.

It can result from a smaller number of original data sets available for the country under investigation. In that case there were simply fewer surveys and censuses in 2010 than in 2000. However, the deterioration can indicate that real changes in the religious scene of a given country took place. Leaving the possibility of different question techniques and wording aside, it is possible that consecutive surveys and censuses measure a genuine trend of change over a certain time period. If this trend takes place *within* of one the two SMRE's reporting periods, the differing statistics may produce a category error in the SMRE categorization scheme, thus resulting in a *problematic* or worse coding of data reliability Therefore, future analysis of the SMRE should pay special attention to all those countries for which the data reliability in 2000 and/or 2010 is *problematic* or *not available*.

**Figure 3: Reliability of Country Data Overall
(Reporting Period 2000 and 2010 Combined)**

Source: own diagram based on SMRE data.

The SMRE aims to provide a concrete judgment on the data reliability for as many as possible countries for at least *one* reporting period. Therefore, the SMRE introduced its categorisation scheme of data reliability and applied it to all cases. By combining both reporting periods, the SMRE allows the available data for a couple of countries for at least one period to qualify as *problematic* or better (cf. Figure 3). Combining both reporting periods and using the highest level of data reliability for each country, the overall picture of reliability of statistics on religious affiliation in Europe improves somewhat.

Based on the SMRE 15 country statistics are reliable, 14 are probably reliable, 6 are problematic, and for 7 (respectively 6)[6] reasonable data are not available.[7]

Figure 4: Reliability of Data

Reliability of data of the SMRE-countries; own figure based on SMRE-Data, origin of map: Omnia 2009.
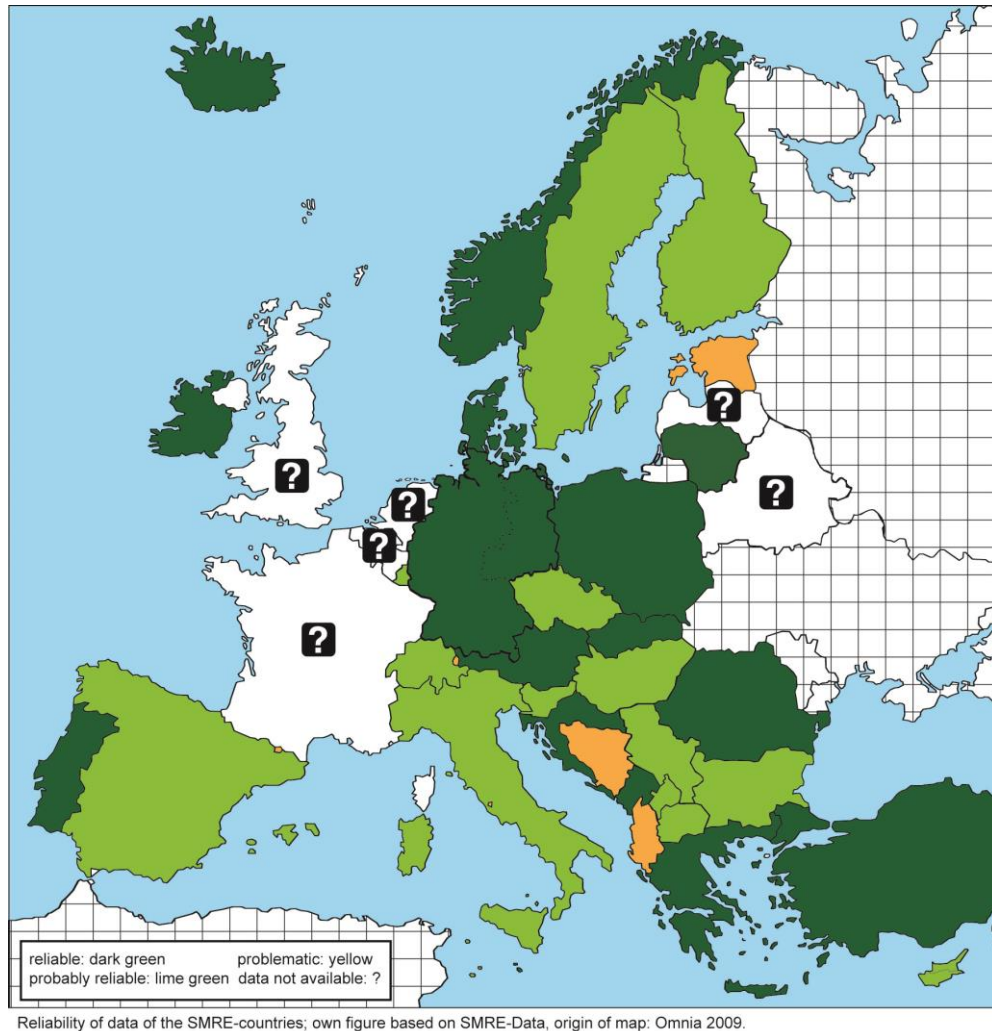
Source: own diagram based on SMRE data.

On the one hand, on this basis statistics on religious affiliation are *reliable* or *probably reliable* for 29 European countries. But on the other hand, for 6 countries the data reliability is so poor that they must be considered as 'white areas' on the religious landscape of Europe (cf.

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[6] The number is lower when Germany is disaggregated into its Eastern and Western part. Cf. the description above.

[7] Cf. Appendix D.

figure 4). The visual depiction of data reliability on a European map reveals regional contours. 'White regions' can be found in Eastern Europe (Belarus and Latvia) as well as in Western Europe (Belgium, France, Great Britain, the Netherlands). In all of these countries, differences between the data sets led to classification errors for both reporting periods.

Since censuses are missing or substantially flawed for all of these countries it is impossible to name a statistical basis which would allow for their categorisation as *probably reliable* or even *problematic*. In addition, the map shows that smaller countries especially must be categorized as *problematic*. These countries are: Albania, Andorra, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Latvia, Liechtenstein, and Vatican City. For Andorra, Liechtenstein and Vatican City there are too few original sources to allow for a higher category.[8]

## 4.2   Degree of Pluralization

All countries which showed a level of data reliability of at least *problematic* where included in an analysis of the religious composition of their population. Based on the data sets of the SMRE these countries were categorized in respect to their degree of religious pluralization (cf. figure 5). The results are interesting and maybe somewhat surprising. In 30 countries a single religious tradition or denomination was the dominant factor within the given population. In other words: More than 60 percent of the population belonged to one denomination or religious group.[9]

The Eastern part of Germany also belongs to this group. Thus, about three quarters of the European countries can be classified as religiously *dominant*.

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[8] Due to the small size of these countries and their population and due to the widespread perception of their 'well known' denominational composition, there are most probably no real incentives to include these countries into international survey programs. Research on the two even smaller states Gibraltar and Monaco is so spurious that they could not be included into the SMRE.

[9] Cf. Appendix D.

Figure 5: Degree of Pluralization

Degree of pluralization of the SMRE-countries; Own figure based on SMRE-Data, origin of map: Omnia 2009.
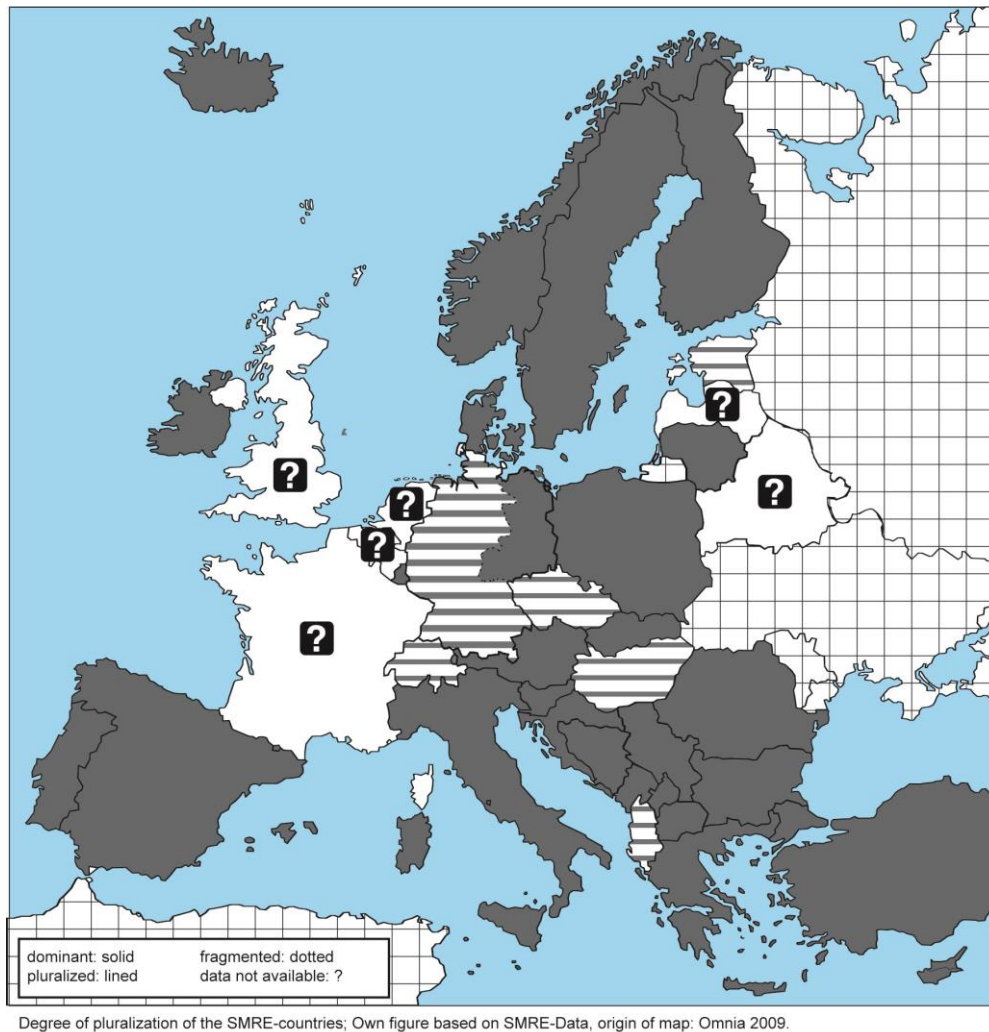
Source: own diagram based on SMRE data.

Five countries and the Western part of Germany can be qualified as *pluralized*. No tradition is dominant, but at least one denomination or religious tradition holds a population share of 35 to 60 precent. None of the European countries can be regarded as *fragmented* in terms of the SMRE categorisation thus far. Once again, the data reveal the long shadows of the peculiar religious history in Europe. In Europe religious traditions differentiated in the late medieval ages and early modern times carved sharp confessional vault lines. The results of this early processes of regional differentiation and segregation are still visible today, even after the turmoil of two world wars and the end of communism. However having said this, it is of course not to deny that the changes in Europe's religious landscape after 1945 have been profound and far reaching (Henkel/Knippenberg 2005; Kippenberg 2005).

Due to a lack of reasonable data, there are currently no reliable statistics of religious affiliation for the Netherlands and for Germany in general.[10] The various data sets included in the SMRE, however, allow for the assumption that meanwhile these two countries must be considered as religiously *fragmented* countries. It is highly likely that on the national level no religious group or tradition comprises of more than 35 per cent of the population. A strong tendency towards a *fragmented* situation is present in Switzerland as well. This can be seen by comparing the country data for 2000 and 2010 for Switzerland. However, these assumptions need to be investigated more closely by country specific reports.

4.3   Some Considerations on Data Problems at the Subnational Level

Almost all information integrated into the SMRE use countries or states, i.e. territories defined by political borders, as the basic unit of investigation. This central methodological decision is deeply rooted in Europe's historical heritage. From the early modern times onwards states figure prominently in European history. Especially in the 19th and early 20th centuries the nation state became – for better or worse – the dominant model of political and societal organisation in Europe. Although there is some debate on the end of statehood in present times, national borders still constitute rather stable entities in general. Even today, the state is the central point of reference to constitute a specific society in contrast to other state-based societies. Thus, there is good reason to use countries as the basic cases in comparative research by various scientific disciplines. Technically, in many research designs the national level is the only appropriate level of data aggregation in order to make the otherwise unrestricted pool of data manageable.

However, when it comes to religion and religious affiliation, there are relevant regional differences within many European countries. The only exception in the SMRE data may illustrate this fact. Due to its peculiar history the Eastern and Western part of Germany developed very different patterns of religious belonging. Whereas in Western Germany a large but declining majority belongs to the Catholic Church or the former established Protestant regional

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[10] Wolf 1999 also did not give statistics for religious affiliation in Germany; figures provided by the census of 1978 are used in Wolf 2000. Results of the latest census, taken in 2011 as a micro census, are unfortunately inconsistent due to the problematic wording of the questionnaire.

churches, in Eastern Germany in general and in Berlin in particular the great majority of the population is not affiliated to any church or religion at all.[11]

Generally speaking, such regional differences are sometimes rooted in a country's history in the aftermath of the age of reformation, sometimes in the history of later modernization and state building. And of course both historical processes can be overlapping or intertwined. More recently, new international and global migration has caused additional changes in the social and religious structure of European societies. However these recent changes do not recast all areas of a given state at the same time. Frequently, cities and especially the large cities are at the centre of this more or less rapid social change. It is plausible to see cities at the heart of a process of religious pluralization in Europe.

Methodologically this assumption is hard to prove when it comes to comparative research on religious affiliation on a subnational level, be it regional or local. Except for special case studies and particular surveys directed to one or at best a few subnational units, there are few data sources available to tackle the problem in general. Many of our data on religious affiliation are from large cross-national survey programmes. Typically, 1000 to 2000 respondents are asked for each country. Sometimes the number of respondents is even less. Thus there is not much potential in the data to disaggregate them for subnational analysis.

Even recent censuses pose sometimes serious, probably unsolvable problems to statistics on religious affiliation at a subnational or regional level. Micro censuses especially share to a certain extent the problems of survey research because the number of respondents is higher, but still restricted. The latest Swiss census is an example of the limitations to producing reliable regional, not to mention local, statistics on religious affiliation.

But even traditional population censuses may cause problems which also affect regional comparisons. The British census of 2001 may illustrate this. Its results on religious affiliation where not only restricted by a missing distinction between the major Christian traditions. Moreover, the questionnaire differed substantially between England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Looking at the problem of subnational statistics on religious affiliation in general, however it is still clear that a well-performed national census will be the best source of information

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[11] For Germany cf. also the descirptions given above on its particular data problems.

(Bilska-Wodecka, 2012: 288). Especially in smaller religious communities, a census is the best source to provide 'accurate' numbers on their membership. To measure religious affiliation and to analyse religious diversity in regions and large cities means to start with individually reported memberships or formal belongings of the population under investigation.

4.4   Result: Religious Category and Degree of Pluralization for each Country

What are the results for all countries and respective regions in detail? Which religious tradition prevails in the religious composition of the countries under investigation? To answer these questions the SMRE categories of religious pluralization were combined with its information about the single largest religious group among the 8 categories of religious affiliation (cf. figure 6).

This combination reveals the following picture of Europe's landscape of religious affiliation: In 17 countries and in the Western part of Germany Catholics are the largest religious group within the population. Among these 18 territorial units are three – Switzerland, Hungary, and Germany (West) – which are *pluralized-Catholic*.[12] In these regions Catholics account for 35 to 60 per cent of the population. Compared to the next largest group their share makes Catholicism the majority religious affiliation. Seven European countries are *dominant-Orthodox*.

A *pluralized-Orthodox* country does not exist thus far. Five countries are *dominant-Protestant*. Again, no European country can be classified as *pluralized-Protestant*.

Five countries consist of a Muslim majority. Among these, Albania is the only *pluralized-Muslim* country.

Estonia and the Czech Republic are the only European countries which are *pluralized non-religious*. In these two countries the proportion of people without religious affiliation is between 35 and 60 per cent, and this group takes the largest share within the population.

In the Eastern part of Germany all religious groups are a minority compared to the largest group of persons without a religious affiliation. Throughout Europe, this part of Germany is the only region which is *dominant non-religious*. In this area this peculiar religious composition of the population is a result and heritage of a long history of secularization starting far back into the 19th century and which was accelerated by the Nazi and Communist dictator-

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[12] Cf. for this chapter also Appendix F.

ships which were inclined to remove religion and Christianity from the public sphere (Gabriel et al. 2012; Liedhegener 2012).

Figure 6: Largest Religious Category and Classification of Pluralization
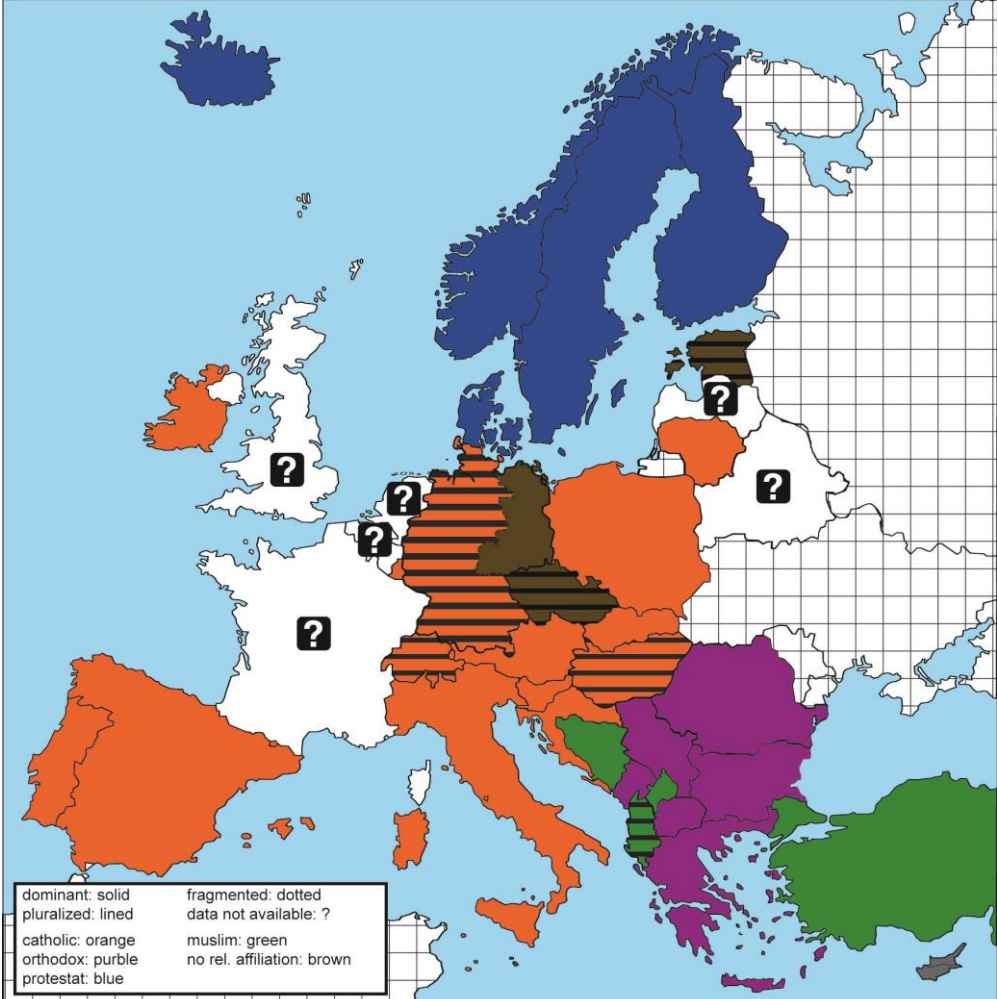
Classification of pluralisation and largest religous category of the SMRE-countries; Own figure based on SMRE-Data, origin of map: Omnia 2009.

Source: own diagram based on SMRE data.

The prominent role of the remaining protestant congregations in the peaceful revolution of 1989/90 demonstrates that the statistics of religious affiliation as such cannot be taken as an indicator for the vitality of the remaining religious groups in civil society and politics (Pollack u.a 1998; Pickel/Pollack 2000; Pickel/Sammet 2011; Pickel/Sammet 2012; Pollack 2012).

This first general analysis of the SMRE data reveals at least two surprising results in so far that they do not completely correspond to the existing body of knowledge in the field of empirical research on religion: First, the analysis of the SMRE categorizes the Czech Republic

only as a *pluralized-non religious* country. According to former research on this country, in Europe the Czech Republic would be a candidate for a country with a dominant non-religiously affiliated population (cf. e.g. Hamplová/Nespor 2009). This result is based on the SMRE-rule of an upper limit of 60 percent for the category of a pluralized situation. According to the SMRE the data on the Czech Republic are *probably reliable*. This is due to a national census of 2001. From this census the proportion of people without any religious affiliation is reported within the small range of 58,1 percent and 59,1 percent.

The small differences result from the decision on which number of the total population to use for the calculation of the proportions on religious affiliation. The census itself and the statistics of Eurostat on the population of the Czech Republic differ slightly on the actual number of inhabitants. However, in sum the percentage of persons without a reported religious affiliation is, while only narrowly, certainly below the SMRE threshold of 60 percent. Secondly, the Western part of Germany has been categorized as *pluralized-Catholic*. This is surprising because due to the religious history of Germany – the country of the reformation – a larger share of Protestants compared to Catholics would have been expected. This relative majority of the Catholic share of population is, as far as one can see, a rather recent development.

According to the C&R (Survey 2006), Protestants still hold a narrow majority of 43,4 percent of the total population. However, the Religion Monitor (Survey 2007) and the ISSP on Religion (2008) reported a relative majority of Catholics of 36,7 percent and 40,7 percent respectively. Overall the most surprising result of the SMRE lies in the field of data reliability. It is astonishing to realize how unsteady and doubtful the data on religious affiliation are for many European countries. The SMRE demonstrates that even with an enormous effort it is currently simply impossible to give any reasonable figures on the religious affiliation of no fewer than seven European countries.

5   Summary and Perspectives

Precise statistics on religious affiliation in Europe are a pressing desideratum of current research on religion. The SMRE demonstrates how problematic this is. At the same time the SMRE is an attempt and a proposal to the scientific community to handle the problematic situation of European statistics on religious affiliation in a reasonable and comprehensible manner. For the first time, the SMRE has collected data on religious affiliation in Europe

from many various sources in a single database, thus allowing for a comparative analysis on (formal) religious belonging in Europe.

The SMRE scheme to categorize the European countries provides the means to assess the data reliability for each country in two reporting periods (2000 and 2010) with a comparatively high degree of certainty, and moreover, to do this in a new and intersubjectively verifiable way. In so far the data available allow for a categorization of at least *problematic* or better, the single largest category of religious affiliation was identified for each country. Combining this information with the degree of religious pluralization, a new classification of European countries was reached, highlighting the main features of their particular structure of religious affiliation among its population.

Surprisingly, in most European countries the religious pluralization – judged by a proportion of the single largest religious group or tradition of more than 60 percent of the entire population – does not seem to have made much headway. In 30 out of 42 countries a single religious group or tradition dominated within their social structure. And almost exclusively this single largest group is one of the traditional Christian churches or denominations prevailing in European history.

Only a few countries are pluralized in respect to the threshold of less than 60 percent of the largest religious category. Not taking into account the Eastern part of Germany, which was analysed as a separate territorial entity due to data problems, in today's Europe the Czech Republic and Estonia are the only countries where the persons not affiliated to any religion constitute the largest segment among the total population. These findings point to the conclusion that the 'soul of Europe' – to use the frequently cited metaphor of Jacques Delors – cannot be understood without a deeper knowledge and inclusion of the different Christian traditions and that the European Union cannot be built without seriously taking them into account.

The findings of this working paper remain interim results. They are the outcome of the current status of the SMRE and a first comparative analysis of the data integrated into the SMRE so far. It was thus a deliberate decision not to give exact numbers on religious affiliation across Europe. This decision arose from the fact that currently the data of only 15 countries can be categorized as *reliable*. And even in the case of these 15 countries the problem remains to be solved as to which one of the congruent, but still differing data sets included in the SMRE should be judged as the best one available. Accordingly, the problem of deciding about the most accurate figures becomes even more prominent for those countries for which the data reliability is worse. Country data categorized as *probably reliable* or *problematic* consist of

much more divergent statistics on religious affiliation. However, in the long run the SMRE aims for a reliable and exact statistic of religious affiliation for as many states in Europe as possible. Therefore a second phase of the SMRE project is planned in which to make the data sets collected so far available to the scientific community. Currently, we are looking for a suitable data interface which will allow use of the SMRE data online. This data interface should become a platform for collaboration towards better statistics on religious affiliation in Europe. The SMRE team invites other researcher to collaborate on this task.

Although many social-science studies and a great wealth of statistical material including many census results have already been integrated into the SMRE, there should be a good chance to further improve the data and its quality on many countries. Specific country experts especially might want to comment on the problem of data reliability and/or to bring in more data from national censuses, case studies and specialized research literature originally written in the various languages of Europe. A special emphasis should be given to those countries for which the data quality is poor in both reporting periods. These countries are: Albania, Andorra, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Czech Republic, Germany, Estonia, France, Great Britain, Hungary, Kosovo, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Macedonia, the Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Vatican City. In addition, it would be sensible to prepare special country reports based on the SMRE. This reports could illustrate and explain the meaning of data and categories of religious affiliation in the historical and cultural context of the country under investigation. This could vastly help in interpreting the data on religious affiliation and maybe to understand the problems of coming up with reliable statistics in this field of empirical research.

It seems to be likely that some of the European countries will give us additional surprises statistically. Finally, it is a puzzling question as to why exactly those countries which are regarded as rather secularized, such as France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, or Great Britain are countries with a lack of data or with contradicting data. It may be the case that mainly in these countries the 'objective' and 'subjective' meaning of religious belonging have become rather independent from each other for larger segments of society. One consequence could be that standardized questions on religious affiliation will lead to a high degree of uncertainty among the respondents what is actually meant by the question. At the same it must be kept in mind that many representatives and researchers in charge of censuses or surveys have either neglected or underestimated the problem of measuring religious affiliation.

At least there is a chance that better surveys – i.e. surveys with larger numbers of cases, higher respondents rates or better regional fitting – will lead to more reliable results. Based on such prospective improvements of our empirical data, it might be reasonable to venture a new general statistical estimate on religious affiliation in Europe and in European countries. Such an estimate should cover all or at least almost all European countries and should include numbers and percentages on religious groups and main traditions including non-affiliation, which will give an appropriate representation of the weights of these religious groups within the social structure of these countries. After being enriched by such data improvements, case studies and country reports, the SMRE would be able to present reliable and internationally comparable statistics of religious affiliation for the first time in recent history. This would open up new opportunities to address fundamental research questions on religion on a dependable empirical basis. Any kind of question regarding, for example, the crucial relationship between religious affiliation as a collective social identity and religious belonging as an individual religious identity must be based on reliable statistics of religious affiliation as an integral part of a given social structure. The hope is to contribute the data needed to present a more precise picture of the religious landscape of Europe today. The debate about the cultural identity and future of Europe and an enlarged European Union will benefit from this research.

6   Literature

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7 Appendix

Appendix A: Glossary of the *SMRE*

Reporting Period (2000 and 2010): The available statistical sources and surveys report on different years and were also published in different years. Using the historically well-established assumption that in peaceful periods religious affiliation is a rather stable social characteristic and thus changes only gradually, the SMRE defined two reporting periods. Data sets reporting on the years 1996 to 2005 were integrated into the reporting period 2000, data sets reporting on the years from 2005 to the present (2012/ prospectively 2015) into the reporting period 2010.

Cases: The SMRE covers the existing 42 states of Europe including Turkey and excluding Russia. Since the database holds statistics on the two *periods of reporting* (2000 and 2010), the SMRE consists currently of 84 *cases*. The number of *data sets* on each case differs from case to case according to the number of sources and secondary statistics available.

In part, the analysis differentiates between the Eastern und Western parts of Germany. Thus the number of countries and respective regions goes up to 43.

Data Set: Each *data set* consists of all numbers or percentages on religious affiliation in a given case by a single data source. These data sources are censuses, surveys, generic data compilations (e.g. *World Christian Encyclopedia*) and statistics and tables published in secondary scientific literature. Within the SMRE each single number on one of the religious categories is counted as a data point. Technically, each *data set* is represented by a single row within the database. A stable, systematic scheme of categories of religious grouping is a prerequisite of any comparative analysis of the various data sets. The SMRE consists of a special *categorial* system. All data sources were as far as possible adapted to this categorial system which includes non-religious affiliation and missing answer as categories.

Categories of Religious Groups: Any kind of statistic on religious affiliation must categorize the multiplicity of religions and denominations into larger groupings. Only by reducing the multiplicity to categories such as (established) Christian Churches, other Christian traditions, other religious communities ("world religions"), other religions ("natural religions") or "no religious affiliation/atheists" are social sciences able to investigate religious affiliation as an integral part of the socio-demographic structure of a given society. The categorial system of the SMRE is made up of 8 categories (for details cf. Appendix C). All original data for each

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data set were integrated into this categorial system. For each single data set it was confirmed as accurately as possible that none of the inconsistencies and uncertainties between the various data sets reported in the results of this working paper are caused only by a problem of adjusting the original data to the categories of the SMRE. This means that all differences and contradictions reported in this working paper are caused by the original data themselves and not by the process of integrating them into the database and it categorial system of religious groups.

Data Points: Each *data set* consists of several data points. Each number in one of the 8 categories of the SMRE is counted as a data point. The number of data points varies theoretically and practically between 1 and 8. The number of data points was also used as a criterion for the quality of a data source or data set in the SMRE. The more data points, the more complete are the statistics on religious affiliation. In case there are more than 5 data points available, the SMRE calculates the value of the Herfindahl-index for the respective data set based on the usual formula of this index figure. A high degree of concurrence between the Herfindahl-index of different *data sets* within the same reporting period was used as an criterion of congruence to asses the reliability of the data sets for the case under investigation.

Country Classification: according to basic structure of religious affiliation: The best case would be that the comparison of the various data sets on a given case would show very similar figures and would result in a comprehensive and reliable statistic of religious affiliation.

As described in this working paper, however, for many countries the variation between the data sets is so vast that there is currently no responsible way to offer any reliable estimates on religious affiliation by numbers and percentages. The two primary investigators of the SMRE decided ultimately to give a qualitative assessment at this stage of research. However, this assessment is based on the data quality and percentages available.

Where appropriate, the composition of religious affiliation of a country is classified by three fundamental categories: Countries are considered as *dominant* in case the largest category of religious groups accounts for more than 60 percent of the total population. If its share is between 35 and 60 percent, the country is named a religiously *pluralized* country. If none of the religious groups accounts for more than 35 percent, the country is considered as religiously *fragmented*.

Original Data Source is a technical term of the SMRE to name the final or original source of the data of a particular data set. All data sets of the SMRE were reviewed on the question from which data source the numbers of a data set originate.

The SMRE lists separately for each data set what is the original source of the figures reported. To know the original data source is a must for a reasonable assessment of the data quality of a given data set.

Appendix B: List of Countries Covered by the SMRE

The 42 European countries in the SMRE are:

Albania ALB; Andorra AND; Austria AUT; Belgium BEL; Bulgaria BGR; Bosnia-Herzegovina BiH; Belarus BLR; Switzerland CHE; Cyprus CYP; Czech Republic CZE; Germany DEU incl. Germany East DEU-O and Germany West DEU-W; Denmark DNK; Spain ESP; Estonia EST; Finland FIN; France FRA; Great Britain GBR; Greece GRC; Croatia HRV; Hungary HUN; Ireland IRL; Island ISL; Italy ITA; Kosovo KOS; Liechtenstein LIE; Lithuania LTU; Luxembourg LUX; Latvia LVA; Macedonia MKD; Malta MLT; Montenegro MNE; the Netherlands NDL; Norway NOR; Poland POL; Portugal PRT; Romania ROM; Serbia SRB; Slovakia SVK; Slovenia SVN; Sweden SWE; Turkey TUR; Vatican City VAT.

Appendix C: List of *SMRE*-Categories Including Religious Groups Covered

Catholic: Greek Catholic Church, Roman Catholic Church, Old Catholic Church

Protestant: Anglican Church incl. Church of Ireland, Baptists, Calvinists, Dutch Reformed Church, Evangelical Church, Lutheran, Protestant

Orthodox: all national churches, i.e. Greek Orthodox, Russian Orthodox, Armenian Apostolic Church

other Christian: Arminianism, Charismatic Episcopal Church, Mennonites, Pentecostalism, Presbyterianism, Quaker

Jewish: Judaism

Muslim: Shiite, Sunni

no religious affiliation: Agnostics, Atheists, no denomination, no religion

other: Bahà'i, Buddhism, Chinese Universalism, Hindu, Jain, Confucian, Mormonism, Shinto, Sikh, Spiritualism, Taoism, Jehovah's Witness, Zoroaster

Also be counted among the other are those who have not given an answer or were classified as undefined.

Appendix D: Data Reliability of the *SMRE*

1 – reliable	2 – probably reliable	3 – problematic	4 – not available
Austria (2010)[1]	Bulgaria	Albania (2000)[1]	Belarus
Croatia	Cyprus	Andorra[2]	Belgium
Denmark	Czech Republic	Bosnia-Herzegovina	France
Germany (E) (2010)[1]	(2000)1	(2000)[1]	Germany as a whole[3]
Germany (W) (2010)[1]	Finland	Estonia (2000)[1]	Great Britain
Greece	Hungary (2000)[1]	Liechentstein[2]	Latvia
Ireland (2010)[1]	Italy	Vatican City[2]	the Netherlands
Island (2000)[1]	Kosovo (2010)[1]		
Lithuania (2010)[1]	Luxembourg		
Malta	Macedonia (2000)[1]		
Montenegro (2000)[1]	Serbia (2010)[1]		
Norway (2010)[1]	Slovenia (2010)[1]		
Poland (2000)[1]	Spain (2000)[1]		
Portugal	Sweden		
Romania (2010)[1]	Switzerland (2000)[1]		
Slovakia (2010)[1]			
Turkey			
15 (excl. the Eastern and Western parts of Germany)	14	6	7

Remarks:

1 Years shown in the parentheses indicate that the level of reliability has been achieved only in the respective reporting period and that the level of reliability is consequently lower in the other period.

2 Vatican City, Andorra and Liechtenstein are problematic because of too few original sources. This lack of data is mainly due to the small size of the population of these countries which are thus left out by many international surveys.

3 For Germany as a whole no data are available yet. The last census taken in 2011 did not change this. However, due to the presence of enough original sources specific to the Eastern and Western parts of Germany, the reliability of data for Germany separated into these two regions are reliable for both cases.

Appendix E: Countries by Degree of Religious Pluralization in the *SMRE*

Dominant *The largest religious group (category) accounts for at least 60 percent of the total population.*	Andorra, Austria, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Germany-E, Greece, Ireland, Island, Italy, Kosovo, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Macedonia, Montenegro, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Sweden, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey, Vatican City
Pluralized *At least one religious group (category) accounts for 35 to 60 percent of the total population.*	Albania, Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany-W, Hungary, Switzerland
Fragmented *No religious group (category) exceeds a proportion of 35 percent of the total population.*	*Currently no country in this category*
Data not available	Belarus, Belgium, France, Germany as a whole, Great Britain, Latvia, the Netherlands

Appendix F: Countries by Degree of Pluralization and Religious Tradition in the SMRE

	Catholic	Orthodox	Protestant	Muslim	no religious affiliation
Dominant	Andorra Austria Croatia Ireland Italy Liechtenstein Lithuania Luxembourg Malta Poland Portugal Slovakia Slovenia Spain Vatican City	Bulgaria Cyprus Greece Macedonia Montenegro Romania Serbia	Denmark Finland Island Norway Sweden	Bosnia-Herzegovina Kosovo Turkey	Germany-East
Pluralized	Germany-W Hungary Switzerland			Albania	Czech Republic Estonia
Fragmented					
Data not available	Belarus, Belgium, France, Germany as a whole, Great Britain, Latvia, the Netherlands				

Appendix G: Example 1, SMRE Data on Austria (AUT)

Reporting Period 2000

Data set	Source	Original Source	Year
Gerhards 2006	EVS 1999	Survey - EVS	1999
Minkenberg 2010	Maréchal/Dasseto 2003; Noll 2002; Fischer Weltalmanach 1999, governmental data	Data collection without references	2001
WCE	Diverse (institutional data & census)	WCD – institutional data & census	2000
CIA World Factbook	Census	Census	2001
Encyclopaedia Brit.	Barret et al: World Christian Encyclopedia (2001) / World Churches Handbook (1997)	WCD – institutional data & census	2001
eurel (N. Dim/W. Wieshaider)	Statistik Austria	Census	2001
Fischer WA 2009		Census	2001
Statistik Austria		Census	2001
Worldmapper	World Christian Database	WCD – institutional data & census	2005

Data Set	C	P	O	oCh	J	M	nra	Oth	Sum-Cont.	D-Pt.	Herfin-dahl
Gerhards 2006	80.6	5.2	0.7			0.0	12.5	0.9	99.9	6	
Minkenberg 2010	73.6	4.7	1.9		0.1	4.2		15.5	100.0	6	
WCE	75.5	5.1	1.9	7.3	0.1	2.2	7.7	0.2	100.0	8	0.58
CIA World Factbook	73.6	4.7				4.2	12.0	5.5	100.0	5	
Encyclopaedia Brit.	75.6	5.4					8.6	11.1	100.6	4	
eurel	73.0	4.7	2.2	0.2	0.1	4.2	12.0	5.2	102.2	8	0.54
Fischer WA 2009	73.6	4.7			0.1	4.2	12.0		94.6	5	
Statistik Austria	73.6	4.7	2.2	0.9	0.1	4.2	12.0	2.2	99.9	8	0.56
Worldmapper	73.8	4.7	1.3		0.1	3.6	15.8	0.8	100.0	7	0.57

All numbers in percentages; K: Catholic; P: Protestant; O: Orthodox; oCh: other Christian; J: Jewish; M: Muslim; nra: no religious affiliation; S: Others

Reporting period 2010

Data set	Source	Original Source	Year
Religion Monitor 2008		Survey – Religion Monitor	2007
EVS		Survey – EVS	2008
ISSP		Survey – ISSP	2008
PEW (Global Christianity & Global Muslim Population)	Census 2001	Own estimate of survey & census	2010
WRD	Diverse (institutional data & census)	WCD – institutional data & census	2010
WCD	World Christian Database	WCD – institutional data & census	2010

Data Set	C	P	O	oCh	J	M	nra	Oth	Sum-Cont.	D-Pt.	Herfin-dahl
RM 2008	74.6	5.7	0.8	1.6	0.0	1.0	15.0	1.0	99.8	8	0.59
EVS	72.7	5.3	1.2	0.3	0.0	1.9	17.0	1.7	100.0	8	0.56
ISSP	73.2	4.4	0.0	1.7	0.0	2.4	17.3	1.1	100.0	8	0.57
PEW (GC & GMP)	75.3	5.1	2.3	0.3		5.7			88.7	5	
WCD	66.7	4.5	2.1	0.9	0.1	5.1	16.9	0.4	96.7	8	0.51
WRD					0.1	5.1	16.9	0.4	22.4	4	

All numbers in percentages; K: Catholic; P: Protestant; O: Orthodox; WCh: other Christian; J: Jewish; M: Muslim; nra: no religious affiliation; S: Others

Appendix H: Example 2, SMRE Data on France (FRA)

Reporting period 2000

Data Set	Source	Original Source	Year
Gerhards 2006	EVS 1999	Survey – EVS	1999
eurel (A. Zwilling)	EVS	Survey – EVS	1999
Minkenberg 2010	Bowden 2005 → Barret et. al. (2001) Maréchal & Dasseto -> FWA (2004)	Data collection without references	2000
WCE	Diverse (WCD)	WCD – Institutional data & Census	2000
Encyclopaedia Britannica	Barret et al: World Christian Encyclopedia (2001) / World Churches Handbook (1997)	WCD – Institutional data & Census	2001
eurel (A. Zwilling)	CSA / La Vie / Le Monde	Survey	2003
Worldmapper	World Christian Database	WCD – Institutional data & Census	2005

Data Set	C	P	O	oCh	J	M	nra	Oth	Sum-Cont.	D-Pt.	Herfindahl
Gerhards 2006	52.7	1.3	1.2			0.1	42.6	2.1	100.0	6	
eurel 1999	91.9	2.4	1.9	0.7	2.4	0.2		0.6	100.0	7	0.84
Minkenberg 2010	78.8	1.6	0.3		1.1	8.5		9.7	100.0	6	
WCE	82.3	1.6	1.1	0.0	1.0	7.1	19.7	1.5	114.2	8	0.55
Encyclopaedia Brit.	63.4	1.2			1.0	6.9	19.0	5.4	96.9	6	
eurel 2003	65.0	2.0			1.0	5.0	25.0	2.0	100.0	6	
Worldmapper	63.4	2.4	1.0		1.0	8.2	23.1	2.3	101.4	7	0.45

all numbers in percentages; C: Catholic; P: Protestant; O: Orthodox; oCh: other Christians; J: Jewish; M: Muslim; nra: no religious affiliation; Oth: Others

Reporting period 2010

Data Set	Source	Original Source	Year
Religion Monitor 2008		Survey – Religion Monitor	2007
EVS		Survey – EVS	2008
ISSP		Survey – ISSP	2008
FWA 2009		Data collection without references	2009
PEW (GC & GMP)	Generations & Gender Survey / WRD	Own estimate of survey & census	2010
WCD	Diverse	WCD – institutional data & census	2010
WRD	World Christian Database	WCD – institutional data & census	2010
CIA World Factbook		Data collection without references	2011

Data Set	C	P	O	oCh	J	M	nra	Oth	Sum-Cont.	D-Pt.	Herfindahl
RM 2008	58.0	0.6		2.4	0.0	3.0	34.0	2.0	100.0	7	0.45
EVS	44.8	1.3	0.3	0.0	0.6	3.1	48.9	1.1	100.0	8	0.44
ISSP	51.5	1.3	0.3	0.0	0.7	0.9	44.8	0.7	100.0	8	0.47
FWA 2009	75.0								75.0	1	
PEW (GC & GMP)	60.4	1.8	0.6	0.2		7.5			70.5	5	
WCD	71.8	2.1	1.2	2.9	1.0	8.5	23.0	1.7	112.2	8	0.46
WRD					1.0	8.5	23.0	1.7	34.2	4	
CIA World Factbook	85.0	2.0			1.0	7.5	4.0	1.0	100.5	6	

all numbers in percentages; C: Catholic; P: Protestant; O: Orthodox; oCh: other Christians; J: Jewish; M: Muslim; nra: no religious affiliation; Oth: Others