


Secularisation and pluralisation in Europe

Secularisation – definition

- ▶ process of gradual, systematic separation of society and individuals from religious logic
 - ▶ refers to diverse contexts of human activity: economy, state and politics, law, traditions, moral values, family patterns, education
 - ▶ Materialistic concept of life
 - ▶ Acting *as if God did not exist*
 - ▶ Desacralisation of morality
- 

Secularisation – definition

- ▶ individualised religious model consisting of certain elements of faith, ethics and rituals
- ▶ decrease in religiosity and religion's significance
- ▶ needs and conditions of the *modern* society
- ▶ secularisation as a *socio-structural relevance of privatisation of religious choices*

Secularisation – definition

- ▶ Simultaneously with:
commercialisation,
improvements in life standards,
social individualisation/atomisation,
pluralisation
- ▶ *product of West European Christian culture*
- ▶ *mainly in modern industrial societies* but:
only in Europe?



Key factors

- ▶ the influence of the Enlightenment,
- ▶ the French Revolution
- ▶ the Reformation

Enlightenment

- ▶ rationalisation, scientific progress, the development of the modern idea of state
- ▶ A. Soroush: in the Enlightenment the meaning and the mutual relations between rights and responsibilities changed– rights became the priority

French Revolution

- ▶ the idea of the laic state
- ▶ ‘civil religion’ – *religious* elements of ‘civil thought’
- ▶ T. Asad: although many forms of political life include certain kinds of practices, symbols and rituals, they do not determine nor indicate the *religious* character of nationalism

Reformation and development of Protestantism

- ▶ Individualism
- ▶ idea of separation of church and state
- ▶ J. Beckford: correlation between the increasing dominance of Protestant communities and the formation of modern states based on the idea of mutual sovereignty of state institutions and religious communities

Geopolitical determinants of secularisation

P. Norris & R. Inglehart:

- ▶ the tendency towards secularisation correlates positively with wealth
- ▶ increase in religiosity on a global scale and demographic factors: more children are born in developing countries → the demographical discrepancy between traditionally religious societies and western secularised culture deepens

Security and religiosity (Norris, Inglehart)

Security:

- ▶ freedom from military conflict,
- ▶ Freedom from the hazards caused by environment, natural disasters, diseases, famine, violence, fear and poverty

Cultural traditions and religiosity (Norris, Inglehart)

Cultural traditions:


- ▶ religious factors influence each nation's tradition and history, identity and culture
- ▶ E.g. secularised western societies like Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands, have strong religious (Christian) traditions and values
- ▶ historical background and cultural tradition of a nation also influence the shape of the confessions in society

Cultural traditions and religiosity (Norris, Inglehart)


- ▶ Religious similarities, e.g. in the areas of the ethics of work, attitudes toward sexuality, perception of democratic principles
- ▶ norms and values represented by certain *cultures*, e.g. rooted in the tradition of Islam, Hinduism, Confucianism or Orthodox Church, were shaped by *religious* ideas → influence on those who do not identify themselves with certain religious communities
- ▶ Critics of their theory!

Secularisation: socio-cultural factors

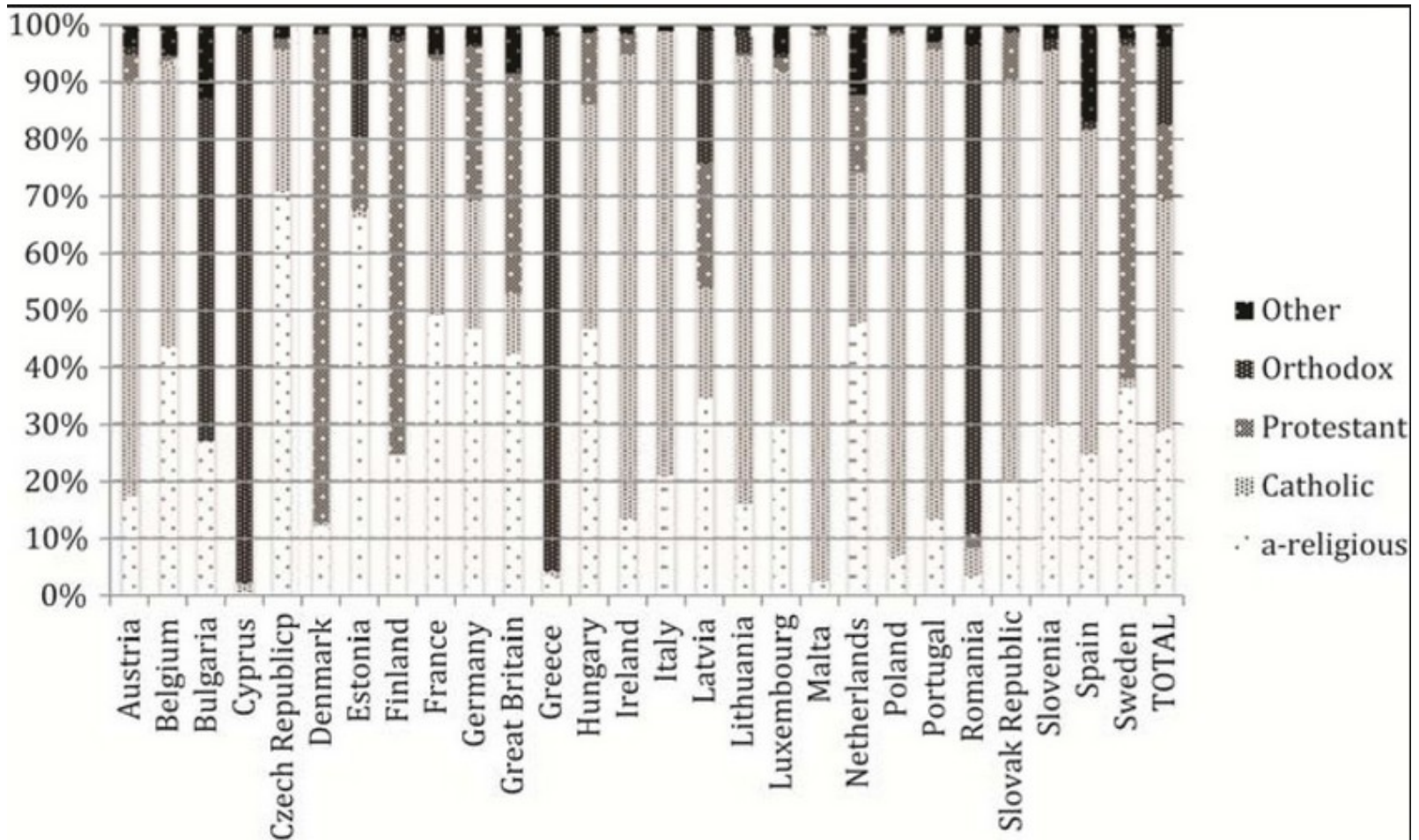
- ▶ National tradition
 - ▶ Religious tradition
 - ▶ Age
 - ▶ Education
 - ▶ Gender
 - ▶ Material status
 - ▶ Rural/urban areas

 - ▶ Critics of the secularisation thesis
- 

Religiosity

- ▶ Faith
 - ▶ Belief (in God, Heaven and Hell, „the spiritual”)
 - ▶ Church attendance
 - ▶ Prayer
 - ▶ Moral issues
- 

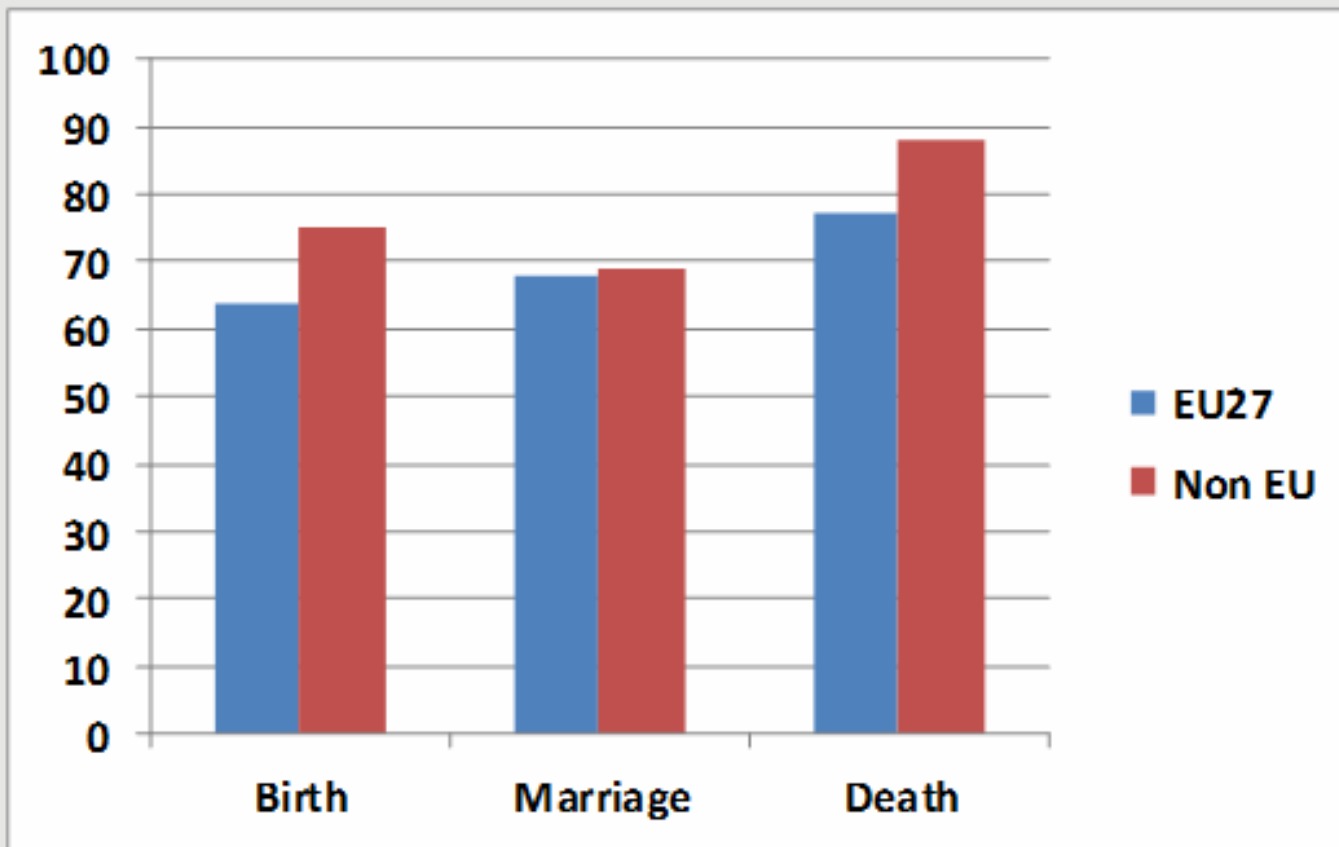
Religious affiliations in Europe



Source: A. Schnabel, M. Hjerem, *How the Religious Cleavages of Civil Society Shape National Identity*

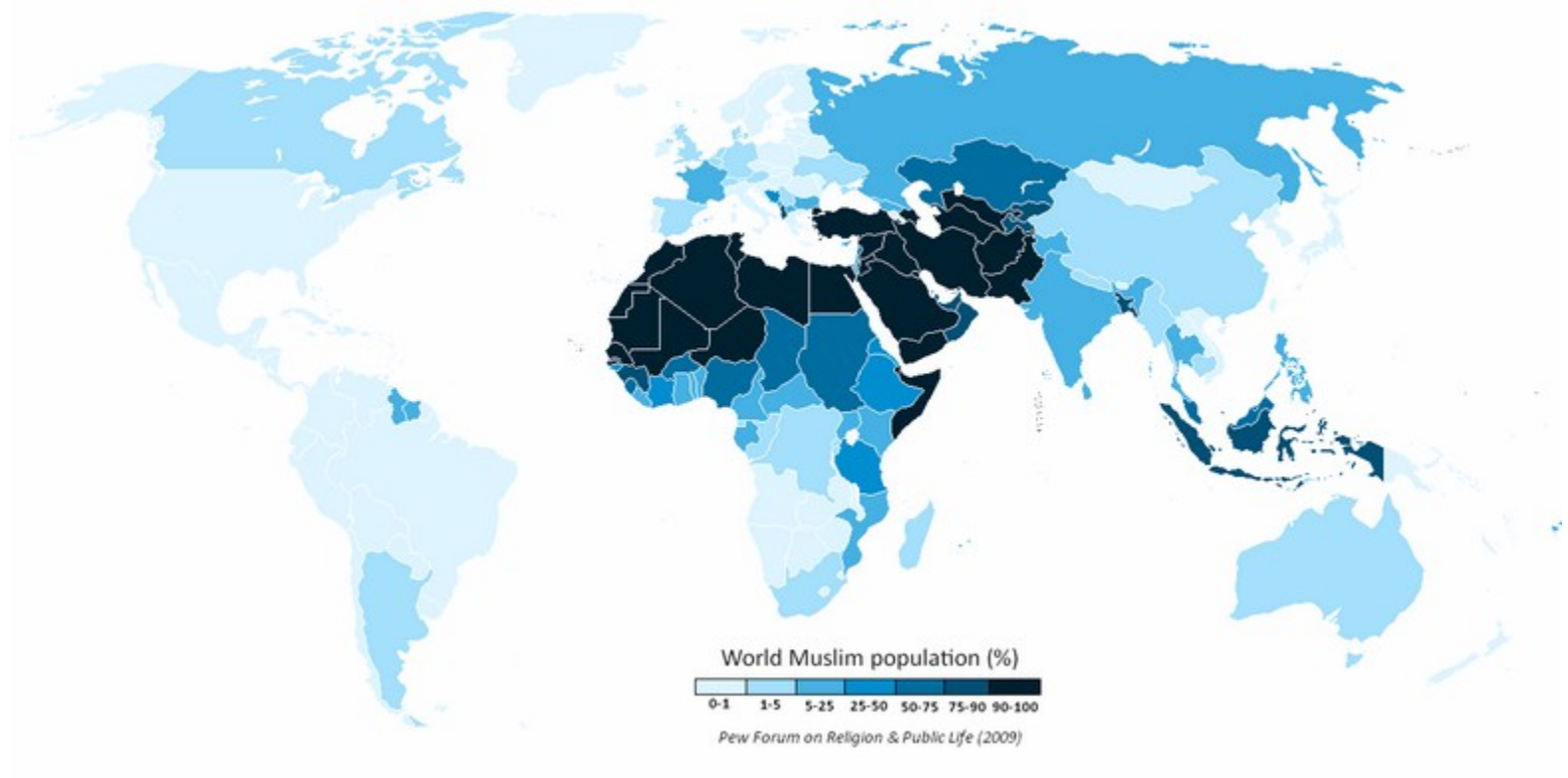
Religious ceremonies

Figure 4—Percentage of people who find it important to hold a religious service at birth, marriage and death



Non-Christian denominations in Europe

Islam

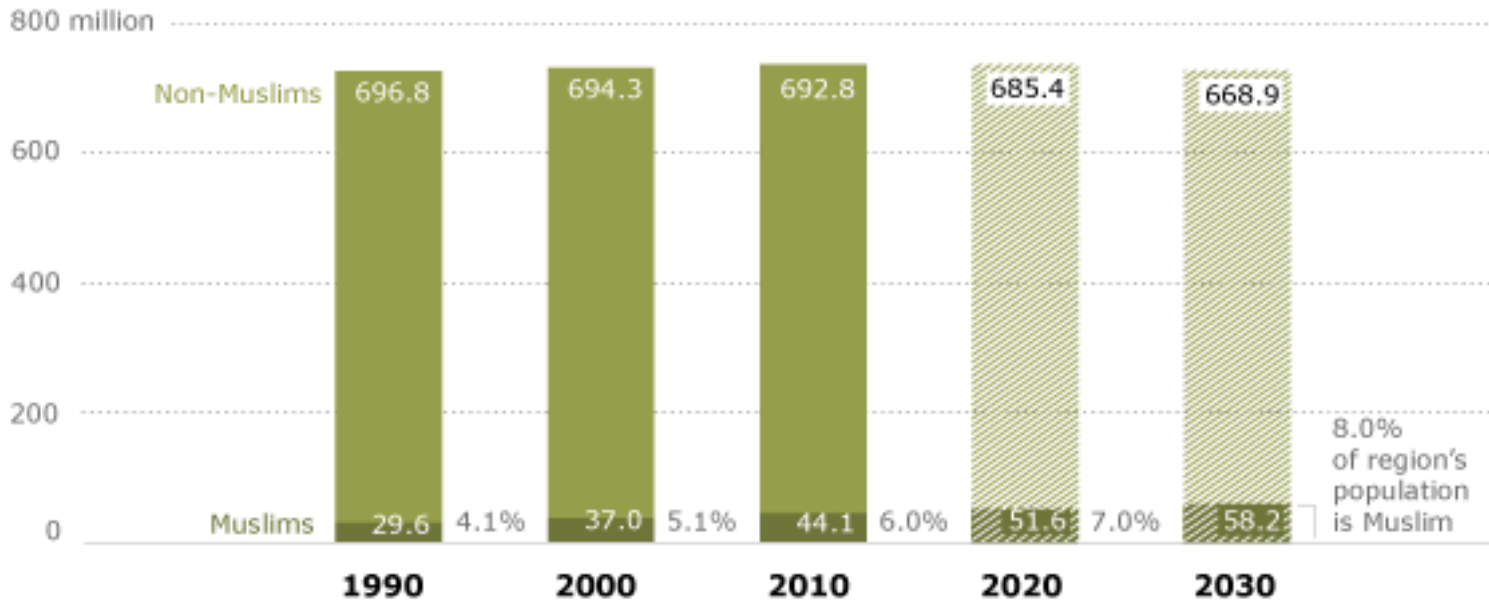


Source: Pew Forum 2009 report

Muslims in European population

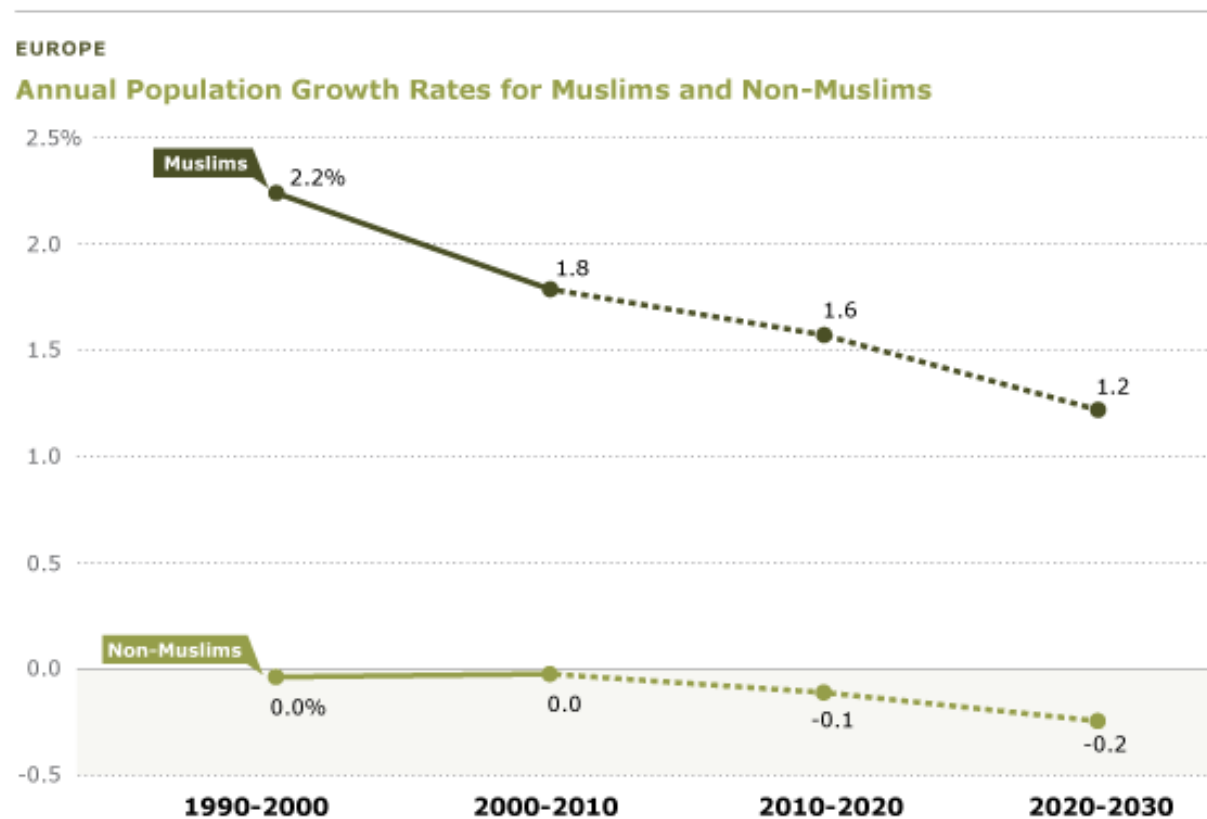
EUROPE

Muslims as a Share of Overall Population, 1990-2030



<http://www.pewforum.org/2011/01/27/future-of-the-global-muslim-population-regional-europe/>

Trends in the population growth: Muslims and non-Muslims



<http://www.pewforum.org/2011/01/27/future-of-the-global-muslim-population-regional-europe/>

Judaism

- ▶ EU: about 1,100,000 Jews



Sikhism (UK)



Jehovah Witnesses



Hare Krishna movements



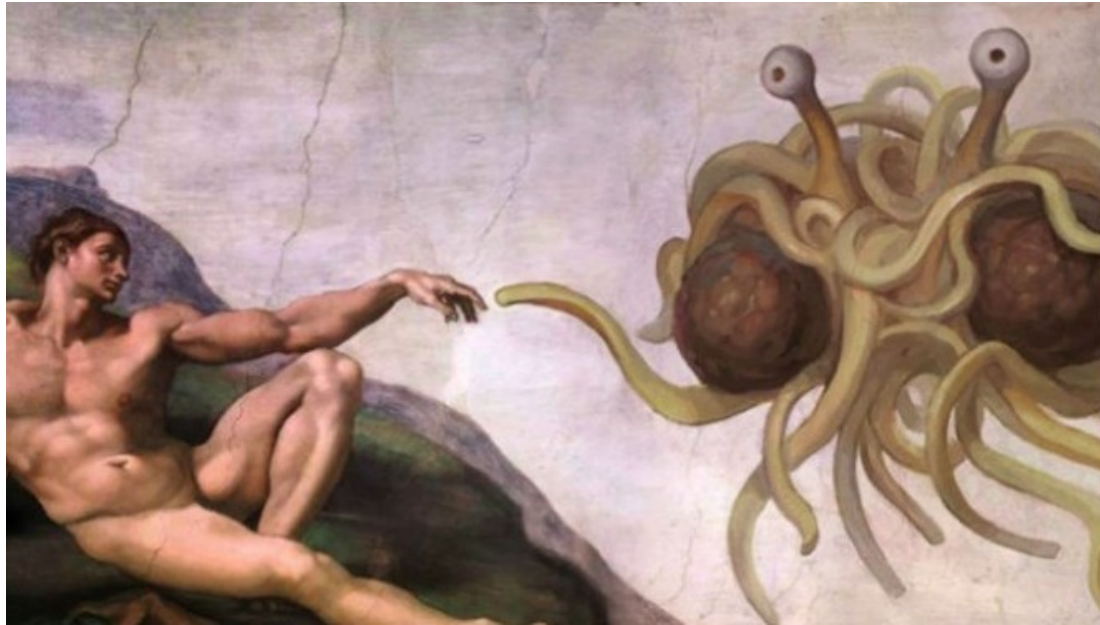
Scientology



New Age and Yoga



Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster: Atheistic pop culture?



Atheism vs. Theism

Agnosticism vs. Gnosticism