
In the land of the ‘nones’, the man with one God is fool

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Résumé

Within the studies of contemporary (non)religiosity, Czech Republic and Estonia have been successful in advertising themselves as peculiar cases of the least religious countries”. Yet, this trope is not something unique – the same label is sometimes used to describe Denmark, Sweden, Netherlands and former East Germany. Nevertheless, Czech Republic and Estonia indeed stand out since in these cultures irreligiosity is associated with national identity. Another feature, a continuation of the tradition created during the Soviet occupation, is the almost complete lack of religion in public sphere in Estonian case. As a result, already three generations have not been socialized into religion or have been socialized minimally. Thus, Estonian context seems to be suitable for studying the impacts of (forced) secularization and the context of low or no visibility of religion. The paper gives an overview of the origin and development of the idea of Estonians as nonreligious nation and sheds some light on the contemporary Estonian (ir)religious landscape. My particular interest is what kind of peculiarities arise from the situation where there is seemingly ”no religion” – how people perceive religion and nonreligion, how it influences their concepts and language, and finally, what happens when religion suddenly ”kicks in”?

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