

### Viewpoints

1. Pluralism of secular multi faith countries cause no one truth to exist and dominate the society. This produces the conditions where one religion is questioned against another and is positively impacting religions themselves since it's causing religious institutions to modernise and their beliefs to progressively change into more appealing and liberal versions. For example, many mainstream Christian denominations today have abandoned the ideas that sins must be punished and are accepting of homosexuality or having sex before marriage.
2. Secularisation is linked with increased rationalisation of societies. Scientific explanations have replaced and clashed with religious explanations. Secularisation means development of scientific worldview based on reason and evidence and consequently the change in legislation and structural organisations of our societies that are increasingly based on rational evidence-based approach and are not burdened by some tradition that holds fixed and unchangeable truths. For example, when the Church dominated the public sphere, philosophers or scientist who discovered new knowledge that went against the official theology were risking to be deemed heretics and be executed (e.g. Giordano Bruno or Galileo Galilei).
3. The biggest pro of secularism is more religious freedoms and tolerance. Secularisation allows both freedom of religion and freedom from religion. By separating the Church and the State and consequently not having one dominant official state religion that is promoted and privileged, it allows people from different religions to practice whatever religion they choose, or to be free from religion if they so choose. Secularisation prevents any religion special privileges over any of the other, and a specific religion is not forced onto other people. It allows people from different religious persuasions, or lack of it, to live together peacefully since the state is not marginalising religious groups of other faiths by privileging and favouring one official state religion. For example, modern secular countries are some of the most peaceful and tolerant societies. The top performing countries in the Global Peace Index all have a very strong emphasis on secularism.
4. Secularisation has brought pluralism and with pluralism it brought relativism with many comprehensive systems of belief that has distorted the moral compass of the society. For most religious people their religion is not only the source of moral guidance but also it is divinely commanded and it offers the best moral teachings. If the majority of people in one society are of one religious' denomination, we should have established state religion and promote the best way of life that will give us the best society to live in and this should apply to all.

5. Secularisation has diminished the social cohesion and national unity of the society. Having a state that is secular and neutral towards religions negatively impacted social cohesion by fragmenting society into many equal and competing religions that are now naturally in ideological conflict. It would be far better for society to have one uniformed and standardised religion shared by all. This would promote stronger cohesion in society and more social solidarity as everyone shares the same basic beliefs.
6. Different religions in pluralist multi faith societies are competing for members in market of ideas which causes unnecessary conflict. Secular society allows everyone to be equal but this has a negative consequence as each religious group is trying to win the war of ideas and expand their religion at the expense of other religions by winning converts. Society is religiously divided and this can cause internal conflict. It is better to have one religion for all as this will remove the need for competition and the consequent divisions.

### **Questions**

1. Think of three positive ways secularisation has specifically impacted on society or the religion you are studying.
2. Think of three negative ways secularisation has specifically impacted on society or the religion you are studying.
3. Rank the viewpoints from the strongest to the weakest.
4. Which one is the strongest and why?
5. Which one is the weakest and why?
6. Secularism brought scientific and technological worldview where “truth” is something that changes over time as better theories and knowledge replaces the old ones, whilst religious worldview does not change its fundamental truths. Which worldview would be better fit for modern pluralistic and democratic societies? Why?
7. Secularisation forces religions to change themselves. Is this a good or bad thing? Why?
8. There is a correlation between societies that are most secularised and the most tolerant with high Global Peace Index. Why is this the case?
9. Have our societies lost the moral compass as they become more secularised? Why?
10. Should we force one religion on all if there is a slight majority of people of one faith? Why?
11. Is social cohesion and solidarity negatively impacted by secularisation? Why?
12. Is there anything else in secularised society that brings social cohesion and solidarity?
13. What could be good about having one religion for all or at least one dominant religion? What could be negative about it?