WELFARE AND RELIGION IN 21ST CENTURY EUROPE
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Welfare and Religion in 21st Century Europe
Volume 2
Gendered, Religious and Social Change

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Preface

This book is the second of two volumes, both of which can be read in different ways.¹ At their simplest, they constitute an account of a comparative study on welfare and religion across eight western European nations. This study—Welfare and Religion in a European Perspective: A Comparative Study of the Role of Churches as Agents of Welfare within the Social Economy (WREP)—is itself the second of three related projects, all of which have emerged from the Uppsala Religion and Society Research Centre. The genesis of each of these projects is briefly set out in the following chapter, as are the details of WREP itself.²

These books quite deliberately bring together very different fields of social-scientific enquiry—welfare, religion, gender and the social economy—which have, all too often, been kept apart. The reasons for these enforced separations are not hard to find. In terms of the first two (welfare and religion), they lie in an understanding of the modernization process in which one of these replaces the other as the dominant player in the field. This is especially true in those parts of Europe where the welfare state has substantially taken the place of the church as the effective means of care for European people—a process unlikely to be reversed in the foreseeable future. Why, then, should there be a study which focuses specifically on the interconnections between welfare and religion in the early years of the twenty-first century? Has something significant happened to demand this? And if so, how can this shift be explained?

The question of gender adds a further dimension. Even a cursory glance at the institutions of welfare and religion in Europe reveals a strikingly similar pattern: in both systems, women are disproportionately present at the point of delivery, but under-represented in management. Once again, it is important to ask why this is the case and how it is best understood. Is this a persistent pattern, or is it likely to change; and, if so, when? How, moreover, is this pervasive imbalance legitimized? Is the legitimization process the same in each area of enquiry, or is something rather different at stake? Such questions will resonate repeatedly in the following pages.

All of these interests come together in a specific ‘field’—the sector that is variously termed civil society, the third or voluntary sector, or the social economy. Welfare is ‘relocating’, but in different ways in different places; the churches have increasingly ceased to be a ‘sacred canopy’ for the whole of society, but remain

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¹ For the first volume, see Bäckström and Davie, with Edgardh and Pettersson (2010).
² A much fuller account is given in Volume 1.
both active and effective at local level; and women – both paid and unpaid – are more likely than men to be engaged at the level of delivery which is necessarily local. It is this that accounts for the stress in our writing on both the individuals and organizations that make up the social economy and the variety of forms that this takes in different parts of Europe.

There is, however, a further dimension to our work: that is, its theoretical significance. The logic of WREP demands that we address not only the changing nature of the institutions in question, but also the conceptual frameworks that must be brought into play if we are to understand fully what is happening in late modern European societies. It is clear that conventional theorizing about the welfare state, just like the welfare state itself, has come under strain in recent decades. Pressures from within the system (notably the marked changes in European demography) and outside it (a shifting global economy) require that we rethink the assumptions on which the welfare state is built – a fact that becomes ever more urgent, almost by the day. Coincidentally, or perhaps not, standard theorizing about religion has been subject to similar pressures. No longer is it possible to talk simply in terms of secularization. The patterns of religion across Europe are changing rapidly as the religious factor once more asserts itself in public as well as private life – the outcomes of this situation are increasingly uncertain.

Hence one of the central questions of the WREP enquiry: what is the place of religion in Europe at the start of the third millennium, and what role does it play in the wider society? In engaging these issues, the final chapter of this volume places the findings of our research and our subsequent analyses into a broader theoretical perspective. In so doing, it draws on a wide range of ideas, some of them innovative, and becomes in itself a creative exercise. At the same time, it reveals the incompleteness of the work and the need for further developments in the field. One of these can be found in a further study from the Uppsala stable – Welfare and Values in Europe (WaVE) – which is introduced briefly in Chapter 1; a second lies in the work currently being carried out in a recently established Centre of Excellence at Uppsala University. This is a major interdisciplinary programme concerned with the continuing impact of religion on modern European societies.3

It is important to grasp that the two volumes emerging from the WREP project embody different approaches. Volume 1 set out the parameters of the project in some detail. The introductory chapters described the background to the study, including its genesis, structure and scope. They also explained the details of the methodology – not least the advantages and disadvantages of the comparative method as it was used in this project. The core of the book resides, however, in the eight case studies, each of which described the connections between welfare, religion and gender in a ‘representative’ town in eight European societies. The final chapter contained some initial reflections on these data. Volume 2 tackles the

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3 This Centre of Excellence – The Impact of Religion: Challenges for Society, Law and Democracy – is funded by the Swedish Research Council. Its work began in 2008 (see http://www.impactofreligion.uu.se for more details).
same material from a thematic point of view. Three approaches are taken in turn to identify and to explain the various strands within the data. A sociological analysis comes first, followed by an approach which concentrates on gender. The third way of working is somewhat different: it looks at the material from a theological perspective, asking in particular what motivates and sustains the actions of the churches in the field of welfare, and how the formal or ‘official’ statements of the churches are worked out in practice.

The last point requires a little expansion. The theological dimension is not an optional extra tagged on as an afterthought; it has been integral to the study right from the start, and is carefully referenced in almost all of the case studies. As the churches engage in welfare, for example, theological ideas are present in the motivations of both individuals and organizations – though not always in similar or predictable ways. Quite apart from this, it is clear that different theologies account for both commonality and difference across Europe. Greeks and Finns, for instance, quote similar verses from the Bible in seeking justification for their work, or more precisely their care for those in need; conversely, Luther’s doctrine of the ‘two kingdoms’ leads to a considerably more amicable division of labour between church and state in the Nordic countries than that found in, say, France.

None of these activities would have been possible without a number of key people – most of all the international and interdisciplinary team brought together in Uppsala in order to carry out the project. The details of the team and their respective responsibilities can be found in the Appendix. Here, however, it is important to acknowledge the core group – those who conceived of the idea in the first place, set about finding the necessary resources and dealt with both the intellectual organization and the day to day management of the project. They are Anders Bäckström, Grace Davie, Ninna Edgardh, Thomas Ekstrand and Per Pettersson. Between us we represent a range of different disciplines and have – consequently – made different contributions to the project, which has been housed in the Uppsala Religion and Society Research Centre. The support staff of the Centre, notably Barbro Borg and Maria Essunger, deserve our warmest thanks; in sustaining the ongoing administration of the Centre, not to mention the numerous research meetings held there, they have played a vital role in the success of the whole undertaking. It is important, thirdly, to acknowledge the financial support given to the project from the Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation and the Foundation Samariterhemmet – without whose exceptionally generous assistance very little of the work would have been possible. Additional grants came from the Academy of Finland (for the Finnish research) and the Diakonische Werk Württemberg (for the German case study). When it came, at last, to publication, Sarah Lloyd at Ashgate has proved an imaginative and very helpful editor. Rebecca Catto and Susannah Cornwall have put in long hours perfecting our English and Anders Sjöborg worked tirelessly on a complex multilingual bibliography.

This preface must include a final point, which reflects our way of working: that is the training element built into the WREP project and its successor, WaVe. Each national team had a senior and junior member: the senior member is an
established scholar in the field (trained for the most part in sociology or theology); the junior researchers were doctoral or post-doctoral students. One of the most pleasing aspects of the whole venture has been the emergence of a new generation of scholars, as, one by one, these ‘junior’ researchers acquire their doctorates and launch their careers. Their enthusiasm, and a growing rapport between them, has been a crucial factor in sustaining not only themselves, but their senior partners – indeed, in permitting the project as a whole to come to a successful conclusion. In total, 24 researchers from Sweden, Norway, Finland, Germany, England, France, Italy and Greece have been involved – a team with growing competence in the field. Their names, the institutions in which they are based, and their disciplinary backgrounds are listed in the Appendix.

As the Director and Assistant Director, we would like to thank all those who have contributed to WREP in whatever way and have helped us to bring the project to a successful conclusion.

Anders Bäckström
Grace Davie
2011
Chapter 1
The WREP Project: Building Bridges

Anders Bäckström, Grace Davie, Ninna Edgardh and Per Pettersson

This book, together with its partner volume (Bäckström and Davie 2010), is concerned with the project known as Welfare and Religion in a European Perspective – or WREP for short. The goal of the project is easily summarized: it is to discover exactly what happens on an everyday basis in the fields of welfare and religion in Europe in the first decade of the twenty-first century, and to ask what our findings can tell us about the changing nature of European societies.

WREP was designed to build bridges – between different research fields (notably welfare and religion) and between different disciplines (the social sciences, gender studies and theology), bearing in mind that research fields and disciplines are overlapping categories at least to some extent. Very fruitful syntheses have emerged from these collaborations. This introduction is designed however to build a bridge in a different sense: its primary aim is to ‘connect’ the first and second volumes of Welfare and Religion in a European Perspective. In so doing it works on a ‘need to know’ basis. In other words it introduces sufficient contextual material for this book to make sense as a free-standing volume. The reader who wishes to know more should refer to Volume 1, where thegenesis and development of WREP are set out in detail and where both the rationale and the methodology of the project are described in full.1

The chapter starts by reviewing the case studies that lie at the heart of the WREP project. This is followed by a short section that underlines the increasingly apparent links between Europe’s major theological traditions and the different welfare regimes that have been identified in different parts of the continent. In this, two distinct bodies of literature (those relating to welfare and to religion) are brought together in innovative ways. A third section introduces the thematic analyses that form the core of Volume 2. What insights emerge if the extensive data produced by WREP are examined from the perspectives of sociology, gender and theology? The final section is in two parts. It looks first at the common themes that emerge from the preceding chapters; it then introduces the developed theoretical analysis that will form the conclusion to the project as a whole.

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1 See also the final section of this chapter where the organizational elements of WREP are summarized.
Eight Case Studies in Eight Medium-sized Towns

The core of WREP lies in a detailed examination of the social economy of a single locality in eight European countries: Sweden, Norway, Finland, Germany, England, France, Italy and Greece. Our intention has been to map the place of both welfare and religion in the town in question; to note the similarities and differences across Europe regarding the responses of the state (in its local forms), the churches, and a range of voluntary organizations to the current situation; and to ask what this information can tell us about the changing nature of European societies, which are clearly facing similar issues. Our questions included the following. How do these various actors respond to the pressures that they face, and what resources do they have at their disposal? To what extent do these resources depend on the fact that the modern welfare state has developed differently in different parts of Europe – developments which leave distinctive ‘spaces’ not only for the churches to contribute, but for their role to adjust as circumstances require? And how, finally, might this situation evolve?

The case studies themselves are described in detail in the partner volume; so also are the reasons for choosing these particular examples and the various methodologies employed to understand them better. Here they are simply summarized, as a backdrop to the thematic analyses that follow. The precise location of each town can be seen in Figure 1.1. In terms of timing, it is important to note that the detailed fieldwork took place between 2004 and 2005 – in what follows the contextual information has been updated where appropriate, but not the data themselves.

The Swedish case was located in Gävle, a town situated near the east coast of Sweden, and approximately 180 km north of Stockholm. Since the 1950s this former industrial town has gradually metamorphosed to become part of the new service economy. As in Sweden generally, Gävle is a place where the labour movement and the Social Democrats have dominated politically. Also typical is the numerical dominance of the Church of Sweden, to which about 75 per cent of the population belong and pay an annual fee (about one per cent of their income). Currently 92,000 people live in the municipality of Gävle, including 10 per cent from outside Sweden (mostly refugees from the Middle East and Africa); three quarters of the population reside in the urban area. The WREP enquiry concentrated on the latter and drew on a variety of sources, including a close analysis of documents concerning the welfare situation and the role of the church within this and a series of interviews with both employed and elected representatives from the public authorities and the Church of Sweden. Group

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2 Reference should also be made to the very detailed working papers of the WREP project (Edgardh Beckman 2004; Yeung et al. 2006a; 2006b). Much of the data cited in the following chapters comes from these papers.

3 At the time of the fieldwork, this figure was noticeably higher (80 per cent) – a reduction in membership that is repeating itself all over Sweden.
interviews were also carried out with representatives from the population as a whole. Broadly speaking, these methods were repeated in every case, bearing in mind that the available documentation varied very considerably from place to place – the reasons for these differences are worth pondering.

The Norwegian enquiry was carried out in Drammen, a town of about 57,000 inhabitants some 40 km south of Oslo. Drammen is an old port, closely connected to a range of industrial and commercial activities in the southeastern part of Norway. The town, however, has undergone significant structural change in the last 20 to 30 years to become primarily a regional service centre. Traditionally, the Social Democrats have had a majority in the town but this is also changing. Drammen is noteworthy in that it hosts a wide variety of religious (both Christian and non-Christian) and philosophical communities. The Church of Norway, however, is by far the largest of these, comprising 77 per cent of the population.

Unsurprisingly, the further south that you go in Europe, the sparser the documentation becomes. There is also a close relationship with finance: wealthier churches have more resources available for this kind of work.
Also present are Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, Sikhs and Jehovah’s Witnesses. Unsurprisingly, Muslims comprise the largest religious group outside the Church of Norway, which reflects the significant immigration of ethnic minorities into Drammen. Among the Christian denominations outside the Church of Norway, the Norwegian Pentecostal movement is the largest. The presence of Muslims and Pentecostals in Drammen corresponds more or less to the relative strength of the two groups at national level. It is important to note that the local parishes and the voluntary organizations of the Church of Norway have a long tradition of engaging in social work.

The Finnish case study took place in Lahti, a town with circa 98,000 inhabitants and located 100 km north of Helsinki, with a history dating back to the fifteenth century. In recent years, Lahti has undergone rapid and troublesome economic change. Currently the main source of employment lies in service provision, and the majority of the municipality’s employees are social and health care workers (53.9 per cent). At the time of the fieldwork, the local council was dominated by Social Democrats together with the National Coalition Party, a typical collaboration in towns of this size. Lahti is also representative of Finland with respect to socio-demographic variables and in the fact that 84 per cent of the population belongs to the Evangelical Lutheran Church. The parishes have a long tradition of engaging in social work, in cooperation with the municipality and other organizations. And as in the rest of Finland, the church has assumed an increasingly active role as the town has faced economic challenges. Lahti contains examples of all the major issues represented in this project: structural change, difficult economic adjustments, pressures from outside as well as within and a desire to find new (and affordable) ways of organizing the welfare sector.

The German case is one of the most striking in WREP given the distinctive and highly significant role of church-related organizations (both Catholic and Protestant) in the welfare systems of Germany. About 60 per cent of welfare is provided in this way, financed by a variety of insurance schemes. This situation was very apparent in Reutlingen, a town with 110,000 inhabitants. From the early sixteenth century, Reutlingen was a bastion of the Reformation and a strongly Protestant identity still persists. After the Second World War, however, the town became more and more mixed from a denominational point of view. Currently, the Protestants remain the largest religious group with 42.8 per cent of Reutlingen’s citizens belonging to the Evangelical-Lutheran church compared with 23.9 per cent who are Catholic. Over and above these two groups, public statistics also reveal the so-called ‘others’ (33.3 per cent). This highly varied category comprises other Christians (such as the Orthodox or members of the free churches), Muslims, Jews, Buddhists and Hindus, but also people who do not belong to any religion at all. Interestingly the last named are the most numerous among ‘the others’ in Reutlingen (Stadt Reutlingen 2005). Immigrants make up approximately 10 per cent of the population and are mainly of Turkish or Greek origin. It is also important to note the presence of ethnic Germans who have returned from the former Soviet Union.
The town is situated in the industrial region known as the ‘Mittlerer Neckar’ (in Baden-Württemberg) which is currently dominated by the car industry. Following crisis and decline in the textile industry the biggest employer in Reutlingen today is Robert Bosch GmbH (a hi-tech firm). In the field of higher education Reutlingen offers a recently founded college for economic studies; conversely a college for teachers was closed in the mid 1980s. Independent welfare organizations in Reutlingen are represented by (among others) a large diaconal institution which employs about 2,500 people, who work as carers for the elderly and disabled and in education. The current re-organization of the local welfare model into smaller units is also significant. Increasingly public welfare authorities, independent organizations and commercial firms compete to provide services within these units. On the one hand this change encourages greater co-operation, but on the other it increases the economic regulation of social work and health care. It has also undermined the monopoly of the diaconal institutions in certain areas.

The English case is very different – here the presence of volunteers rather than paid employees is at its most developed. It was carried out in Darlington in the northeast of England. Once a manufacturing town, Darlington has undergone significant change during the late twentieth century. In 2004 the town had a population of about 98,000 and 80 per cent of jobs were in the service sector. The relatively deprived northeast is traditionally a Labour stronghold and this is also true of Darlington, though the presence of Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrat representatives on the local council witnessed to the mixed social make-up of the town. As in most of our cases, Darlington mirrored the nationally relevant issues that derive from the shift from an industrially-based to a service-oriented society – these include an ageing population, unemployment and inequalities in health and wealth. There are examples of real social need in the area. Quaker families played a major role in the social history of Darlington, but a Church of England presence has also been significant. Our enquiries revealed that the local parishes are involved in both independent and cooperative initiatives in the areas of social welfare and community development; the role of the church in education is particularly important in the English case.

The French enquiry took place in the town of Evreux, which lies 100 km northwest of Paris, and has approximately 100,000 inhabitants. This formerly provincial city is gradually being incorporated into the suburbs of Paris; the city has, however, considerable significance in France both politically and religiously. In 2002, after more than 20 years of Communist government, the city elected as député Jean-Louis Debré – a prominent, and at times controversial, member of the political right, and from 2002 to 2007 the President of the French National Assembly. In 1995, Monsignor Gaillot (the Catholic Bishop of Evreux) was sharply criticized by the Vatican, and eventually removed from his post, for (amongst other things) his views on contraception and the ordination of women. His condemnation raised unexpectedly strong reactions throughout France. The Evreux case study reflects on the influence of this episode on Catholic activities at local level. That said, Catholic organizations have been present for a long time
in this city. Very largely, they concentrate their efforts on those who are deemed marginal in French society: on prisoners, on long-stay patients in hospital (notably in psychiatry and geriatric medicine) and on the new immigrant populations (especially the *sans-papiers*). The presence of Islam is of particular significance in France, as it is in Évreux itself – most Muslims in the town live in the district known as La Madeleine.

The Italian case study was conducted in Vicenza, a city in the Veneto famous for its outstanding Palladian buildings. Today it is a medium-size town of 110,000 inhabitants, typical of the urban northeast of Italy, a region which is experiencing rapid socio-economic change. Traditionally it was a bastion for the Christian Democratic Party. At the time of the WREP enquiry, however, it was governed by a centre-right majority, composed of Forza Italia, Alleanza Nazionale and Lega Nord. The church’s presence in welfare includes a wide variety of agents: first of all the many parishes, with their various charitable practices, which are difficult to know and to classify even for the Diocese of Vicenza; then the religious institutions of many different kinds (including the religious orders), operating mainly in the field of education; and finally the heterogeneous world of Catholic associations – among them Caritas-Diaconia, which is currently the principal church-related actor in Vicenza’s welfare system. Central to the Italian case is a continuing debate about who or what constitutes ‘the church’ – a question that reflects ongoing confusions between the religious and the secular.

The Greek case study – our only example of the Orthodox tradition – took place in Thiva and Livadeia, towns which are located 85 and 135 km, respectively, northwest of Athens. They are the two largest towns in the prefecture of Viotia. Thiva has approximately 23,000 inhabitants and Livadeia is a little smaller. A moderate Socialist party has prevailed in the area for a considerable period. The main sources of income in both places are agriculture and industry. Major social problems include unemployment following factory closures in the 1990s; financial concerns specific to the agricultural industry; the integration, employment and social inclusion of immigrants; family-related problems, especially care for children and the elderly; and drug abuse. As such, Thiva and Livadeia are broadly representative of the social difficulties present in Greece more generally – difficulties which came to a head in 2010. The local church and monasteries are, however, unusually active in the domain of social work, as are some local and national governmental agencies. Attitudes towards the local church are correspondingly positive, whereas the national church incurs considerable criticism – a point explained in detail in the Greek case study.

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5 Prefectures are regional divisions introduced by the Greek state; there are 51 prefectures in Greece.
The WREP Project: Building Bridges

Theological Traditions and Welfare Regimes

It is clear even from this short résumé that the WREP case studies were selected in order to cover the major theological traditions of European Christianity: Lutheran, Anglican, Catholic and Orthodox, though there was no direct representation of the Reformed or Calvinist tradition, which is regrettable (see Manow 2004 for a discussion of this point). A second omission must also be noted: the WREP enquiry did not deal in detail with Europe’s religious minorities, whether indigenous or recently arrived. It is not that such minorities are insignificant – they most certainly are in a complete analysis of religion and welfare in Europe. Quite apart from anything else such minorities have increased the visibility of religion right across Europe. Indeed for precisely this reason, they became the topic of a separate enquiry by the Uppsala team, known as WaVE (Welfare and Values in Europe). The material from WaVE is referenced in passing in the present volume, but it is not developed in detail (see below).6

At the same time, care was taken to ensure that the WREP cases covered the different welfare regimes of post-war Europe, as these are identified by Esping-Andersen (1990). These include the social democratic model of northern Europe, represented by Sweden, Norway and Finland; the conservative model found in the Catholic countries of Europe, including the more rudimentary forms of this located in southern and southeastern Europe (the former are represented by Germany and France, and the latter by Italy and Greece); and finally the liberal model typical of Anglo-Saxon countries, represented by the English case. From this point of view the spread of case studies is good, though a little over-weighted towards the Nordic countries – an imbalance explained by the location and funding of the project as a whole. It is widely recognized that Esping-Andersen’s work is pivotal for the understanding of Europe’s welfare systems, a fact dealt with in some detail in the early chapters of Volume 1, which includes an overview not only of Esping-Andersen’s own contributions, but also of the major criticisms of his work and his responses to these (Jeppsson Grassman 2010). There is no need to go over that ground for a second time. It is important, however, to appreciate the connections between the two factors so far outlined in this section: theological traditions on the one hand and welfare-regimes on the other.

The conclusion to Volume 1 began to reflect on this relationship, building on the relatively recent work of Philip Manow (2004; Van Kersbergen and Manow 2009a) and Sigrun Kahl (2005), both of whom recognize the significance of religious ideas in the formative period of the welfare state from the nineteenth century onwards. Attention should also be paid to the contributions of Birgit and Elisabeth Fix who emphasize very similar connections, but employ a very

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6 For more details, see ‘Welfare and Values in Europe’ (WaVE), a project funded by the European Commission (EU) through the 6th Framework programme – see http://www.crs.uu.se/Research/Concluded+projects/Welfare_and_Values/.
different methodology in their empirical investigations (Fix and Fix 2002; 2005).7 Most important of all for the WREP enquiry, however, are the links between Gösta Esping-Andersen’s analyses of welfare-regimes on the one hand, and David Martin’s work on secularization on the other, noting especially Martin’s magisterial *A General Theory of Secularization* (1978). Social policy experts are very familiar with the former; scholars of religion continue to engage with the latter. Very seldom, however, are the two bodies of literature brought together.

Martin’s central thesis is easily summarized: the process of secularization – strongly associated in the European case with the onset of industrialization and urbanization – is common to the continent as a whole, but unfolds differently within particular cultural contexts (Martin 1978: 4–5). These contexts are determined by identifiable factors, for example the precise timing and the nature of what Martin terms ‘crucial events’ – namely the English Civil War and the American, French and Russian Revolutions, and the place of religion in these. Did these cataclysmic struggles occur over religion, against religion or through religion? The absence of such an event in the Lutheran countries of Northern Europe is just as significant. The details are complex, but the underlying idea is simple enough. Emerging, in the fullness of time, from these various upheavals, are specific – and up to a point predictable – variations in the secularization process.

The crucial point is the following: these variations mirror very closely the regime-types initially identified by Esping-Andersen and exemplified in the WREP case studies. The pathways of secularization on the one hand ‘match’ the distinctive patterns of welfare that emerge on the other. Had there been a Calvinist example in WREP, yet another variation would have become apparent. It is simply that the story is told from different points of view: one scholar documents the influence and the adjustments of a territorially-based church to the upheavals and dislocations of the industrialization process; the other observes the emergence of the secular institutions required by a modern industrial society. The reasons for this parallel thinking are clear enough: they lie in the fact that both ‘theories’ (the contrasting processes of secularization and the very different welfare regimes that have emerged in different parts of Europe) draw on the same underlying alignments and cleavages in European society, initially identified by political sociologists in their work on the nineteenth century. Especially significant in this respect is the pioneering work of Lipset and Rokkan (1964). Such cleavages are, in turn, determined by the ‘crucial events’ already outlined.

One element in this transformation is the process of institutional separation or differentiation, in which tasks or areas of activity traditionally undertaken by the churches move bit by bit into the secular sphere.8 Such areas of activity include education, healthcare and – of course – welfare. In each situation, a particular

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7 Fix’s and Fix’s conclusions are based on survey data collected in 2001–2002; the questionnaire was administered at national level in six European societies (Austria, Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway and Switzerland).

8 See Casanova (1994) for a full discussion of this point.
variant of the welfare state emerges, as a similar goal (the separating out of welfare from the influence of the churches and the creation of an autonomous sphere with its own institutional norms) is achieved, or semi-achieved, in somewhat different ways. As we have seen, the role of both theology and ecclesiology in determining these pathways – albeit as one factor among many – is not only increasingly recognized in the literature but is more than apparent in the material emerging from the WREP case studies.

This leads us to a crucially important question. What happens, or will happen, when the work of the churches in the sphere of welfare begins to expand rather than contract? Or to put the same point even more directly: what will happen as the role of religion as a whole becomes more rather than less visible in modern Europe both as a social provider and as a significant voice in public debate? This possibility was alluded to briefly in the final paragraphs of Volume 1. It will be developed in detail in the conclusion to this book. In the meantime, it is important to engage the cross-cutting themes that constitute the central chapters of Volume 2. There are three of these, written from the points of view of sociology, gender and theology.

Cross-cutting Analyses

In Chapter 2, Per Pettersson sets the empirical results from the eight European localities into a sociological context, paying particular attention to the pressures of globalization, the processes of religious change, and the role of religion in late modern society. The chapter works at three levels. It starts with societal factors, noting in particular the position of the majority churches as unique institutions in European societies, in the sense that (despite everything) they still attract the passive allegiance of a large majority of Europeans – far more than any other institution apart from the state. The chapter then turns to organizational questions, examining in some detail the role of the churches themselves, together with the many different associations linked to them, in the social economy of each of the WREP case studies. From this point of view, the churches are seen as simply one organization amongst others. Interestingly, very different opinions emerge regarding the role (or more accurately roles) of the churches – this is even more the case if their contributions to the practical provision of welfare are distinguished from their involvement in public debate. Thirdly, the chapter engages the parts played by individuals as both the providers and recipients of welfare. In this respect one point is very clear: individuals matter and a particular person can make a considerable difference to the profile of the churches in welfare activities at the local level. For precisely the same reason, however, some (though by no means all) church-related welfare has an ad hoc and rather personal character.

In the final section, these analyses are drawn together and reset into the broader debate regarding religious change and the role of religion in late modern societies. What emerges, both from WREP itself and from the growing body of material