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Religion and Identity. From a Lutheran Civil Servant's State
to a Secular and Religion Tolerant State



Four phases

- 1814-1870/80: The Lutheran Civil Servant's state
- 1870/80 to the mid war period: The Liberal Protestant State
- 1935 to 1990: The Private Religion State
- 1990-2017: The Secular and Religion Tolerant State



1814-1870/80: The Lutheran Civil Servant's state

- 1537: The Lutheran Reformation
- 1660-1814 the Lutheran confessional absolute monarchy
- 1814 Constitution § 2: *The Evangelical-Lutheran religion remains the public religion of the State. Those inhabitants, who confess thereto, are bound to raise their children to the same. Jesuits and monastic orders are not permitted. Jews are still prohibited from entry to the Realm."*
- No freedom of religion

Small steps towards freedom of religion

- 1842: The ban against private prayer's meetings and religious assemblies lifted
- 1845: The Law on Christian Dissenters
- 1851: The ban against Jews lifted



1870/80-1935: The liberal protestant state

- 1878 liberalisation of §92 making exemptions from the original demand that all Civil Servants must be member of The Evangelical Lutheran Church
- 1897: Ban against monastic orders lifted (for the Jesuits only in 1956)
- 1902: Baptism no longer mandatory
- 1911: Confirmation no longer mandatory
- At the end of 19th Century non-Lutheran Churches active in social welfare activities
- The Evangelical Lutheran Church privileged and prioritised, but no longer exclusive
- The Church was not liberated from the state, but the state was increasingly liberated from the Church

1935-1990: The Private Religion State

- The role of the Labor Party in the post World War II period
- Religion as welfare politics?
- An ambiguous politics of religion:
 - Religion a private matter
 - The State Church continued
- State influencing Church development
 - Case: First woman ordained to ministry in the Church in 1961



A new model?

- 1964: Freedom of religion into the Constitution
- 1969: “Registered religious communities are entitled to an annual grant from the Treasury. The grant shall be proportionately approximately equivalent to the sum budgeted for the Church of Norway, and shall be calculated on the basis of the number of members of the communities.”
- A hybrid model

1990-2017: The secular and religion tolerant state



Recent developments

- 1997: Knowledge of Christianity, Religion, and Philosophies of Life in School
 - Christianity as cultural heritage
 - Religion as fundament for social cohesion
- 2012: Constitutional Change
 - §2: *The basis of our values remains our Christian and humanist inheritance. This Constitution is to ensure democracy, the rule of law and human rights.*
 - §16: *All inhabitants of the realm have the right to free exercise of their religion. The Norwegian Church, an Evangelical-Lutheran Church, remains Norway's Church and supported as such by the state.*

Religion, conflicts and social cohesion

- The hybrid model – can it survive?
- The secular state and freedom of religion
- Conflicts between religious identity politics and national political norms and values
- Should the state take active steps in order to promote gender equality and LGBT rights within faith communities?
- Can Church of Norway continue as a constitutional recognised Church?
- The ambiguity in Modern politics of religion

Images of normative conflicts?

