

# SECULARISM & DECISION SCIENCE

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# SECULARISM & DECISION SCIENCE



- Philosophy
- Psychology
- Economics
- Business
- Mathematics

*What are you thinking?*

*How did you reach that decision?*

*What do you value?*

*Why did you choose that?*

*What is your selection criteria?*

*How do you value them?*

*How did you think that?*

*What motivates your choices? Your behaviour?*

Questions we ask

# SECULARISM & DECISION SCIENCE



## ➤ Philosophy

**If religion is a construct, then secularism must be a social construct.**

*Why are you religious?*

*Why are you an atheist?*

*Why that faith?*

*What's wrong with you?*

*Don't you care about your kids?  
(you clearly don't care about yourself)*

*Don't you believe in goodness, rightness, truth?*

Questions others ask

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## ➤ Economics

### Game Theory – Pascal’s Wager – Risk Analysis

Non-living risk	God exists	God doesn't exist	A different God exists
You believe	1	.5	0
You don't believe	0	.5	0
You're unwilling to neither believe/not believe	?	.5	?

$$.3 * 1 + .3 * .5 + .3 * 0 = .45$$

$$.3 * 0 + .3 * .5 + .3 * 0 = .15$$

$$.3 * 0 + .3 * .5 + .3 * 0 = .15$$

Living risk	God exists	God doesn't exist	A different God exists
You believe	.5	.5	.5
You don't believe	.5	.5	.5
You're unwilling to neither believe/not believe	?	.5	?

$$.3 * .5 + .3 * .5 + .3 * .5 = .45$$

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How would an Economist look at the question?

# SECULARISM & DECISION SCIENCE

## Game Theory – Pascal’s Wager – Risk Analysis

### ➤ Economics

Non-living risk
You believe
You don't believe
You're unwilling to neither believe/not believe

$$.3*1 + .3*.5 + .3*0 = .45$$



$$.3*0 + .3*.5 + .3*0 = .15$$

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Living risk
You believe
You don't believe
You're unwilling to neither believe/not believe

$$.3*.5 + .3*.5 + .3*.5 = .45$$



$$.3*.5 + .3*.5 + .3*.5 = .45$$



$$.3*0 + .3*.5 + .3*0 = .15$$

When you're looking at equivalent choices, this is when you must move to the next selection criterion.

- Valuation
- Utility
- Emotional comfort ("*happiness*")

How would an Economist look at the question?

# SECULARISM & DECISION SCIENCE

## ➤ Economics

Subjective Utility

$R$  = Religion

$G$  = Government

$u$  = Utility (Value)

$w$  = Weight of Importance

$i$  = all/any religions

$C$  = Choice

$$u \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n w(R_i)}{n} - u(w(G)) = C$$

How would an Economist look at the question?



# SECULARISM & DECISION SCIENCE



## ➤ Psychology

How do you define secularism?

### 1. Gov't focused perspective on locus of control.

The separation of religion and state - i.e. religion does not play a part in the running of an organisation, local council, government, country. Decisions and policies are made without the influence of religious beliefs.

Actively excluding religious considerations from decision making

A legally enforceable boundary set between churches/religions/faiths and the government of a state

keeping decision making and running of schools, councils, the government completely independent of any religious or non-religious beliefs

How would a Psychologist look at the question?

# SECULARISM & DECISION SCIENCE



## ➤ Psychology

How do you define secularism?

1. Gov't focused perspective on locus of control.
2. Separation of Church and State (rhetoric).

Secularism is the belief that religious institutions should have no say in public matters and matters of government, and government should treat all religions equally under the law, including those with no religion.

Separation of church and state in the policy making process to ensure equality and fairness. Separation of church and state in the use of public finances to ensure equality and fairness.

**If religion is a construct, then secularism must be a social construct.**



# SECULARISM & DECISION SCIENCE



## ➤ Psychology

How do you define secularism?

1. Gov't focused perspective on locus of control.
2. Separation of Church and State (rhetoric).
3. Equality of all religions and non-religions.

Democratic principles in society, enacted in politics, religion, giving freedom of speech, equal rights, abolishing privileged positions/ Lords, knights, etc

For me, secularism is about equality - freedom of religion balanced by freedom from religion. It is about subduing religious privilege and maximising freedom of speech, action, and opportunity.

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# SECULARISM & DECISION SCIENCE



## ➤ Psychology

How do you define secularism?

1. Gov't focused perspective on locus of control.
2. Separation of Church and State (rhetoric).
3. Equality of all religions and non-religions.
4. Personal perspective of religion.

IMHO, secularists can be religious in a personal capacity so long as they appreciate the distinction of keeping religious views separate from legislation etc.

religion is seen as a personal choice and mandatory observance removed from schools.

If religion is a construct, then secularism must be a social construct.

# SECULARISM & DECISION SCIENCE



## ➤ Psychology

How do you define secularism?

1. Gov't focused perspective on locus of control.
2. Separation of Church and State (rhetoric).
3. Equality of all religions and non-religions.
4. Personal perspective of religion.
5. Atheist perspective.

everything that is not religious

The knowledge that there is no god or gods overlooking the humans on this planet.

A worldview/philosophy that is not religion-based.

If religion is a construct, then secularism must be a social construct.

# SECULARISM & DECISION SCIENCE



## ➤ Psychology

What is appealing about secularism?

### 1. Logic / Fair / Equality argument.

Secularism counteracts unfair treatment which is often dealt out by religiously partisan, or outright theocratic governments, towards those of a different faith.

Secularism also protects the rights of atheists, one of the worlds most historically persecuted groups, of which I am one.

It is a reality-based, logical and fair system for all people.

I was always part of an equality concept.

represents a social, political, economic viewpoint, related to common ground everybody can meet here

...Level playing field

Secularism appeals to me because it promotes plurality and provides a social framework in which people of all faiths and none may flourish equally. I am freed from the need to argue that my worldview is better than anyone else's; I am also freed from the burden of having to listen to others argue that their worldview is somehow better.

**If religion is a construct, then secularism must be a social construct.**

# SECULARISM & DECISION SCIENCE

## ➤ Psychology

What is appealing about secularism?

1. Logic / Fair / Equality argument.
2. Religion is bad for the greater good.

Growing up and living in Scotland, I have been surrounded all my life by those who wish to impose their religious strictures on me, to satisfy their need for power and authority, and in the worst cases "for my benefit". I have been aware of this most of my life and have been fighting it for decades. There was no one moment that changed me. It had been lingering under the surface since childhood. It is a good ethos as it promotes equality.

In the area in which I live... there are both perceived and actual restrictions on what individuals can do, say, and perhaps even think if those are contrary to the dominant religious beliefs. I consider that this has a negative influence on the viability on the future and sustainability of a fragile community.

Whilst I consider myself a considerate member of society, I do not consider it appropriate that a number of people who believe in a god can impose their views on all members of that society.

**If religion is a construct, then secularism must be a social construct.**



# SECULARISM & DECISION SCIENCE



## ➤ Psychology

What is appealing about secularism?

1. Logic / Fair / Equality argument.
2. Religion is bad for the greater good.
3. Personal argument.

What appeals about secularism is the freedom to listen to others beliefs/decisions and to make up my own mind whether or not I think it is codswallop.

it is easier to think about difficult issues if the emotional and very personal tug of religion is removed. It is better to resort to our own moral compass than be told what we should be thinking, doing and deciding by a religious body.

If religion is a construct, then secularism must be a social construct.



# SECULARISM & DECISION SCIENCE



## ➤ Psychology

What is appealing about secularism?

1. Logic / Fair / Equality argument.
2. Religion is bad for the greater good.
3. Personal argument.
4. Anger towards religion.

*Because religion ruins everything*

Growing up in a place with an insidiously toxic brand of Christianity made me want to keep it out of all public office/services and prevent our children being indoctrinated.

If religion is a construct, then secularism must be a social construct.

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➤ Psychology      Average age of adopting a secular ethos

CHILDHOOD*	ADOLESCENTS	20s	30s	40s	50s +
25%	50%	~5%	< 1%	20%	< 1%

\*Childhood includes those brought up in secular or atheist households.

If religion is a construct, then secularism must be a social construct.

# SECULARISM & DECISION SCIENCE

## World Happiness Report

### ➤ Business

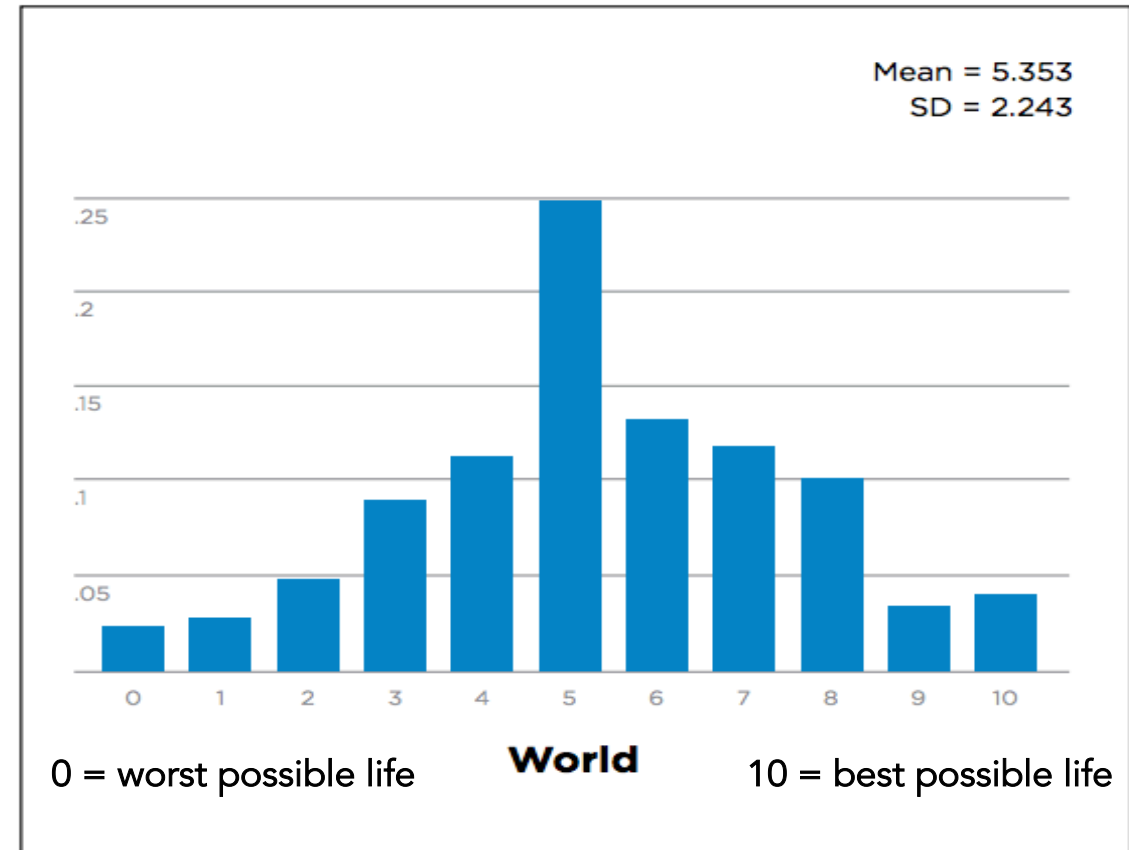
*Do secular states make better decisions overall?*

#### Measures:

- Based on individual life evaluations
  - Satisfaction with their current lives
  - 2-3 affect questions
  - \*Purpose or meaning in their lives

Proportion of population

**Figure 2.1: Population-Weighted Distributions of Happiness, 2012-2015 (Part 1)**



\*Human flourishing  
"eudaimonic"

# SECULARISM & DECISION SCIENCE

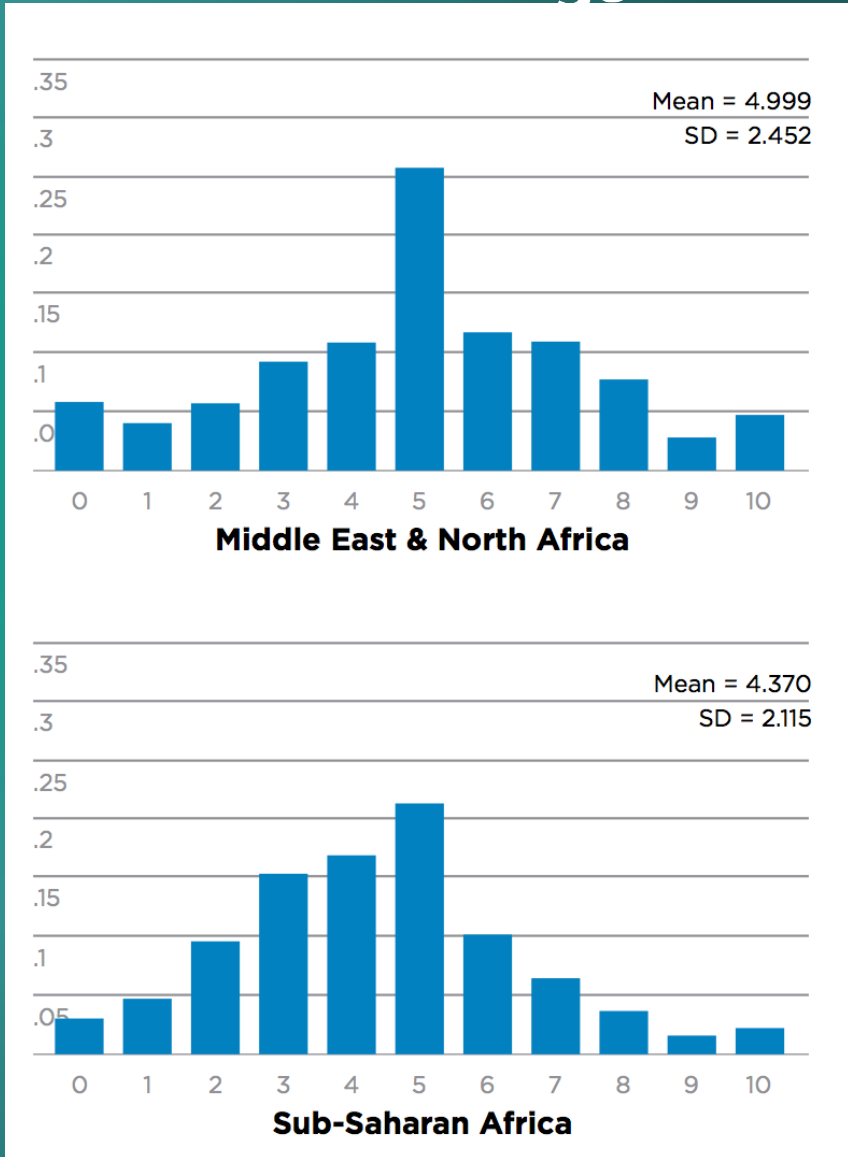


## Secular states of the world

### ➤ Business

Middle East & North Africa – 19/32 (59%)

Sub-Saharan Africa – 7/22 (32%)



# SECULARISM & DECISION SCIENCE



## Secular states of the world

### ➤ Business

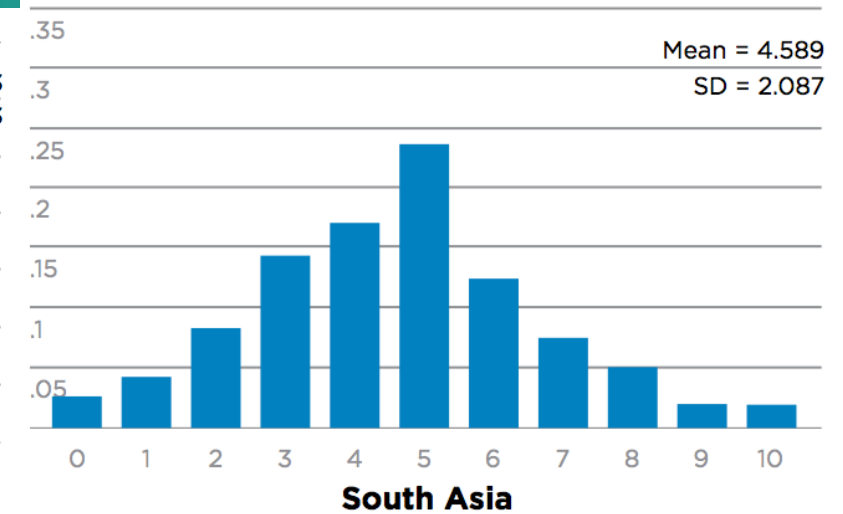
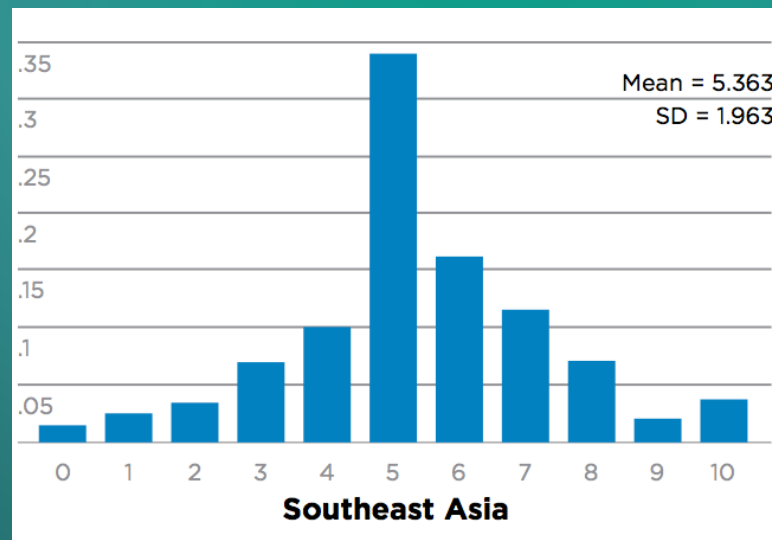
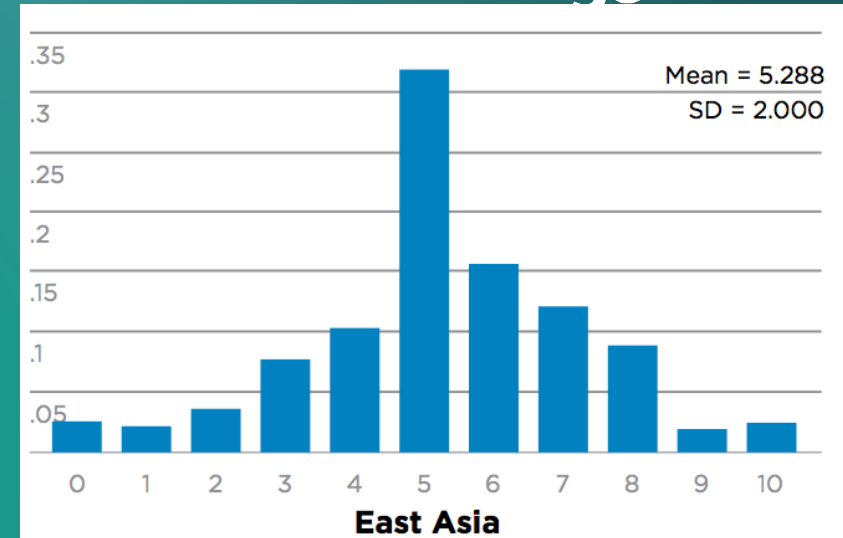
Middle East & North Africa – 19/32 (59%)

Sub-Saharan Africa – 7/22 (32%)

South Asia – 3/8 (38%)

Southeast Asia – 4/11 (36%)

\*East Asia – 4/6 (67%)



\*N.Korea is unknown

# SECULARISM & DECISION SCIENCE

## ➤ Business

### Secular states of the world

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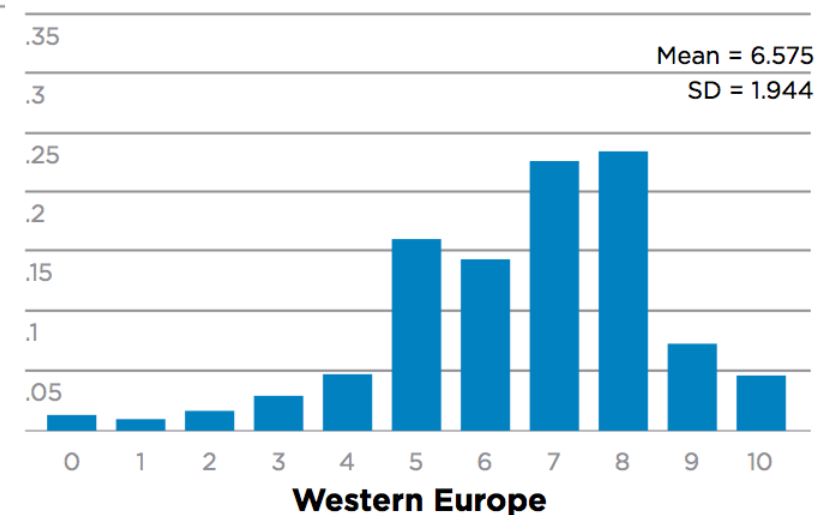
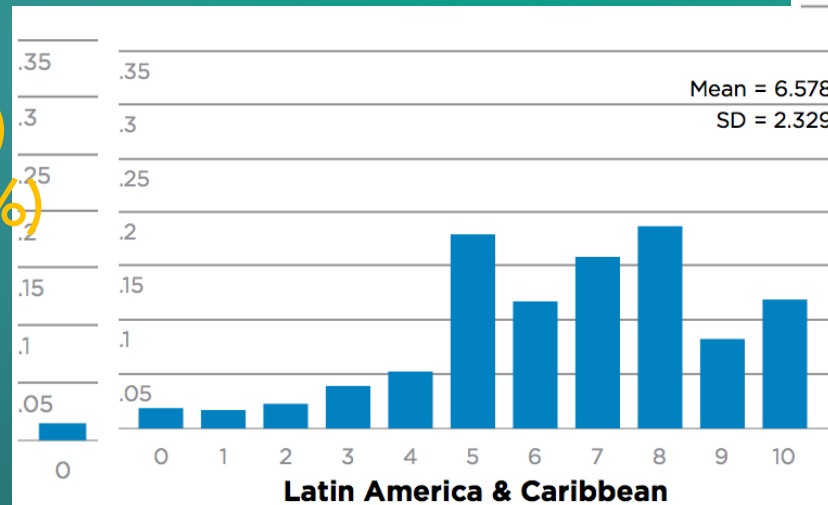
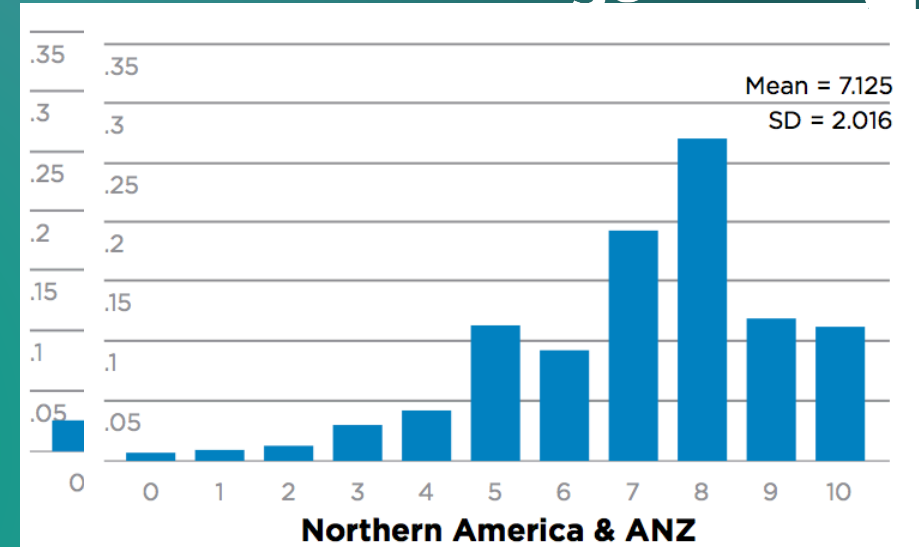
\*East Asia – 4/6 (67%)

N.America+ – 4/4 (100%)

Wester Europe – 4/8 (50%)

Latin America – 10/25 (40%)

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## Secular states of the world

### ➤ Business

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ME & N Africa	59%	4.999
SS Africa	32%	4.37
S Asia	38%	4.585
E Asia	67%	5.288
SE Asia	36%	5.363
W Europe	50%	6.575
L America	40%	6.578
N America	100%	7.125

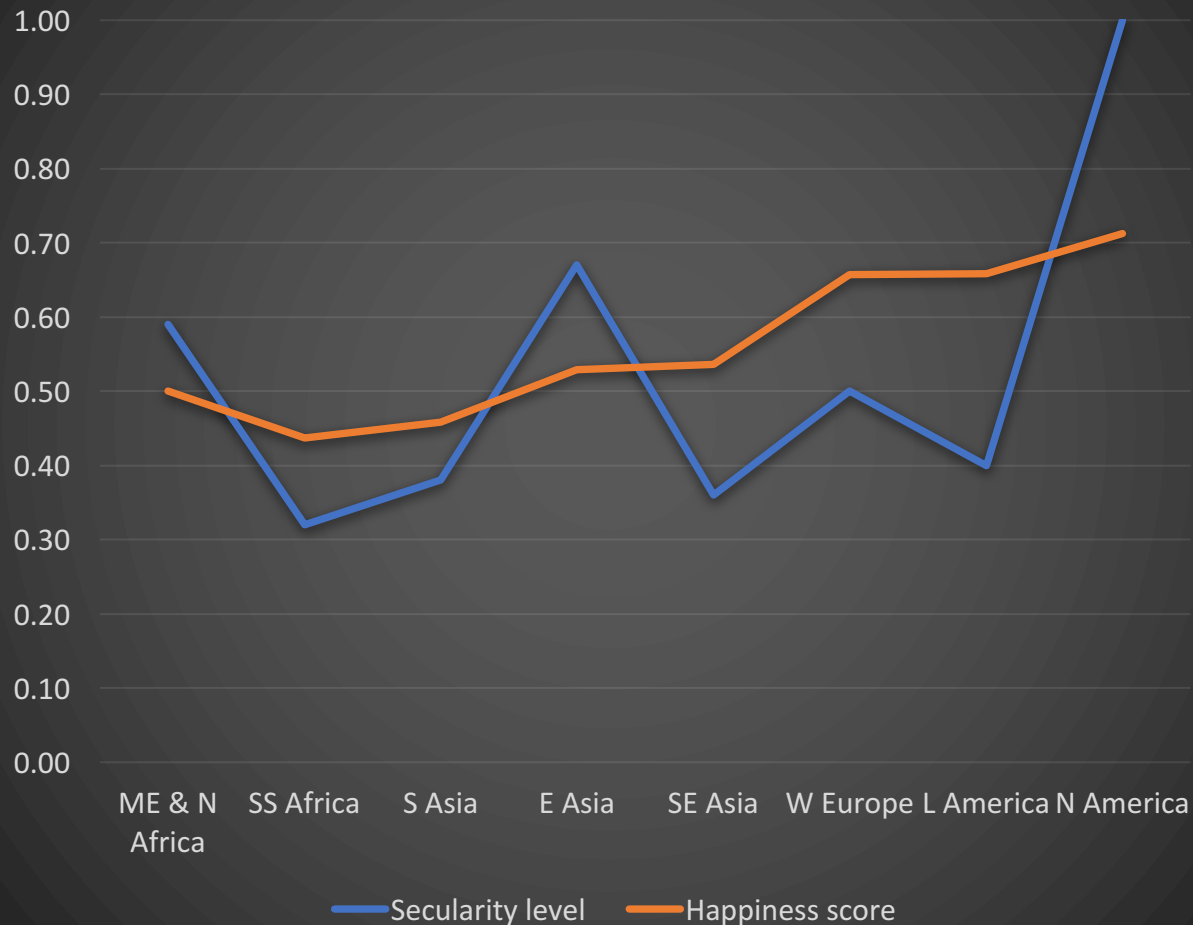
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# SECULARISM & DECISION SCIENCE

## Secular states of the world

### ➤ Business

Chart Title



ME & N Africa	59%	4.999
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# SECULARISM & DECISION SCIENCE

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This paper makes three claims. First, human beings are by their nature oriented toward broader notions of happiness that are intimately tied to the common good. Second, with the turn toward the individual, post-Enlightenment political and economic developments have stripped the common good of all substantive content. Third, *by restoring the centrality of the common good, Catholic social teaching offers a coherent and internally consistent framework for human flourishing that applies principles to particular circumstances in a way that does not depend on agreeing with the confessional claims of the Catholic Church.*

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As the Dalai Lama has put it, "For all its benefits in offering moral guidance and meaning in life, *religion is no longer adequate as a basis for ethics.* Many people no longer follow any religion. In addition, in today's secular and multicultural societies, any *religion-based answer to the problem of our neglect of inner values could not be universal, and so would be inadequate.* We need an approach to ethics that can be equally acceptable to those with religious faith and those without. We need a secular ethics."<sup>4</sup>

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Organisations for ethical living Not all readers will agree with the greatest happiness principle. But we can all agree on one thing. *In an ever more secular society we urgently need non-religious organisations which promote ethical living in a way that provides inspiration, uplift, joy and mutual support*— through regular meetings of like-minded people. Such organisations should not be anti-religious— *they should simply meet a human need which, for many people, religion cannot meet.*

# SECULARISM & DECISION SCIENCE

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So there are two key questions that need answering.

1. First, what ethical beliefs could best represent universal values in a way that is based on human need and not divine command?
2. And, second, what kinds of secular organisation are needed to promote and sustain ethical living in the way that churches, mosques and temples can?