Population Changes and Identities in Europe

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Cf. **Europe and the Gospel:** *Influences, Developments and Mission Challenges.*

London, De Gruyter 2013

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Population Changes and Identities in Europe

National and European

European and non-European

Religious and non-religious

1. National and European

Europeanisation of Europe

Cultural fraternisation

Internal migration

> 1.5 million per year in average

> Effects in our churches

European awareness

> *Eurobarometer, November 2015.*

> 64 % of the EU population considers themselves as citizens of the European Union.

> 53 % are optimistic about the future of the EU.

> 37 % have a positive image of the EU

1. National and European

Towards a civil European identity?

    Policy of EU institutions

    Passport, driver's license, flag, symbols

Barriers

    Absence of European state

    Linguistic diversity: 'Europe is translation'

    No common 'national story (myth)'

    Lack of common 'enemy'

    Although: the war against 'terrorism'

    And in the East, perceived 'threat' of Russia

Complementary identities

    Most people feel 'European' only in a secondary sense. It is a wider frame of reference, complementary to their national and regional identities.

1. National and European

'National' reactions

-        Europe enhances national identity (e.g. sport events)

-        Eurosceptic movements, against loss of national sovereignty

-        Populist movements, against loss of national culture

Nation and nation-state

All European nations have dominant 'ethnic cores.' Historically, nations have been identified by a common language, ethnic and cultural affinity, and in some instances by a common religion.

Nation-states are also differentiated by their tax systems, currencies, citizenship and immigration laws.

The relation between the nation and its (imagined) past

Nationalism and patriotism

A 'European' perspective on our national histories

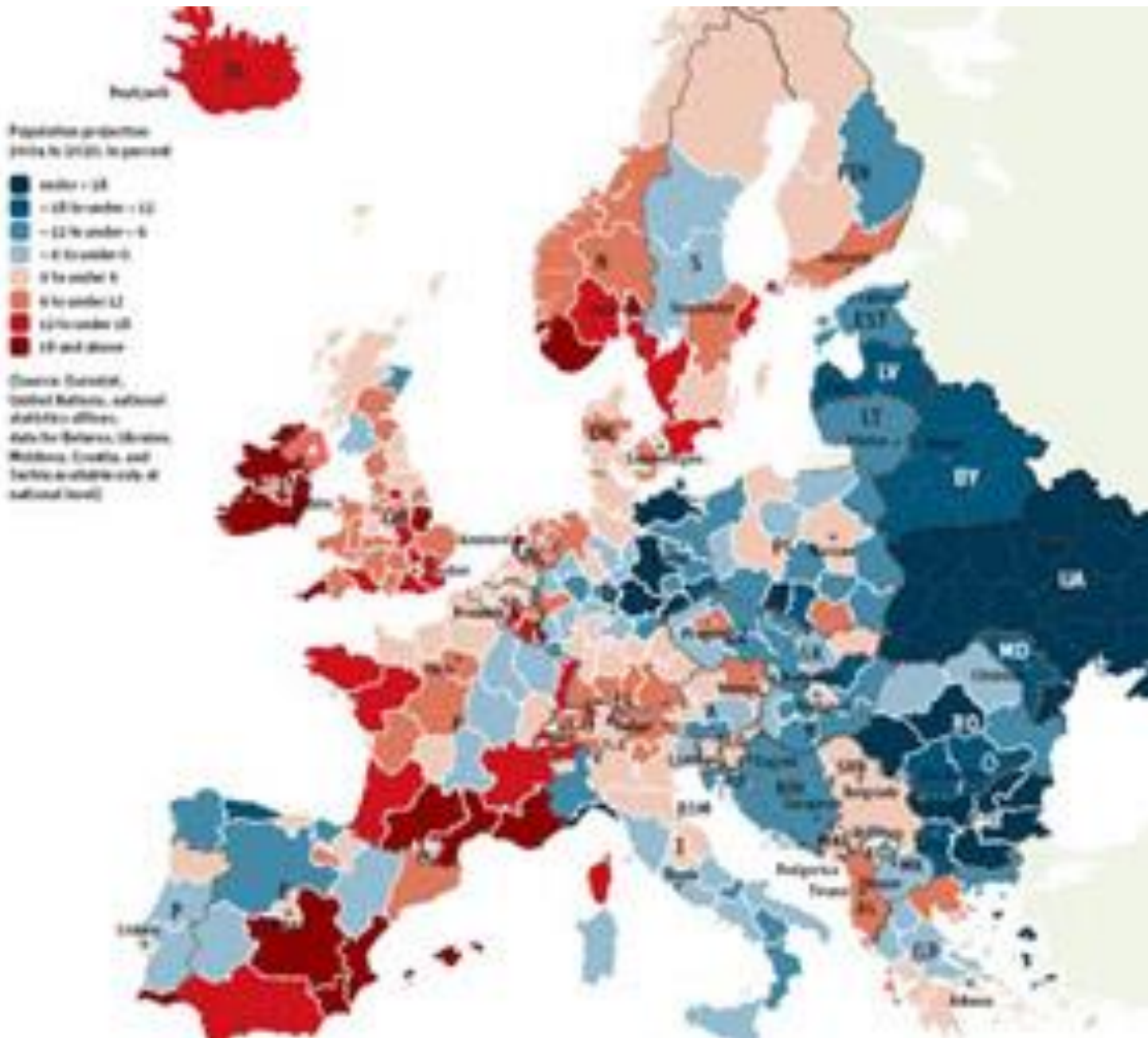What have we done to each other in the past?

2. 'European 'and 'non-European'

Demographic shift

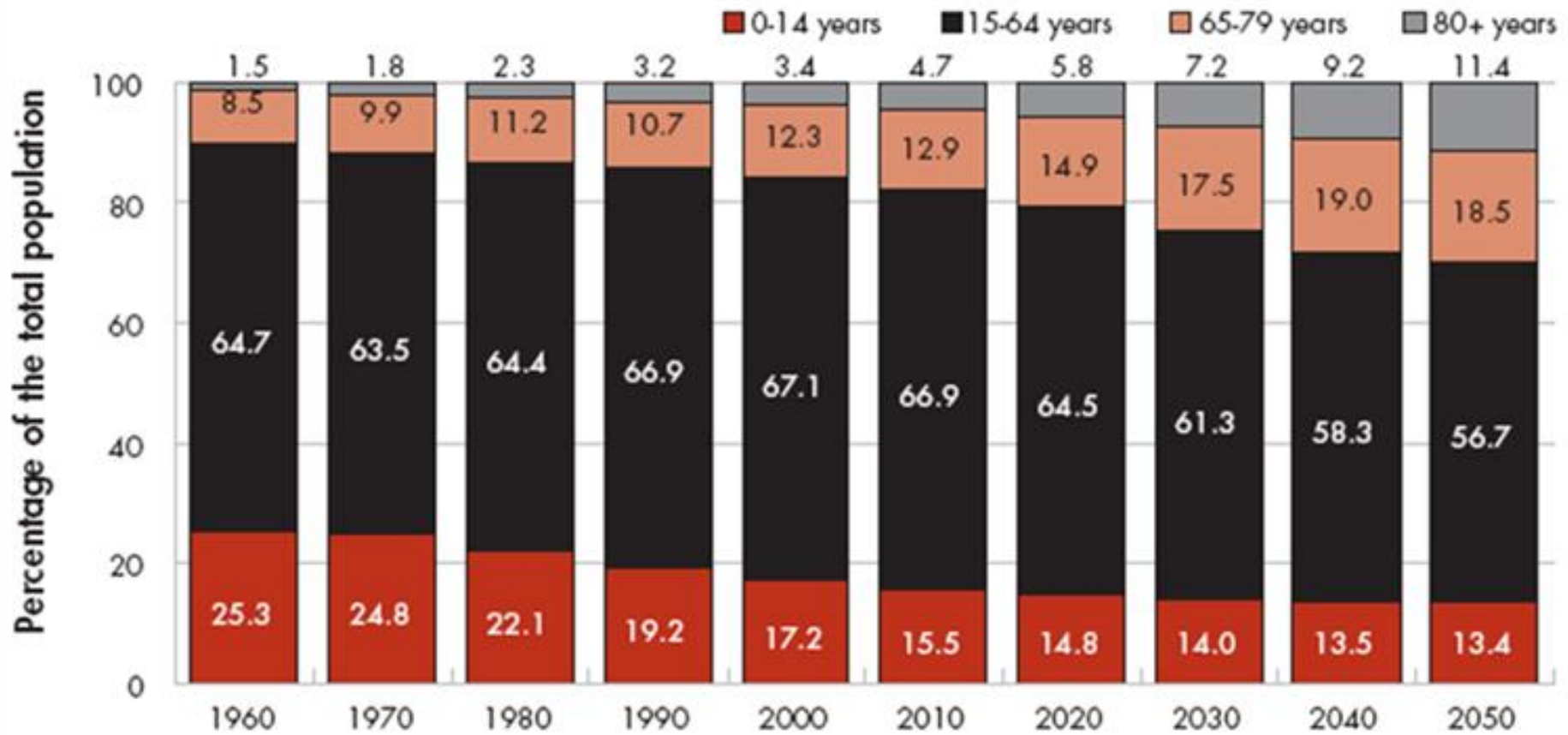Low fertility rate, less than 2.1 per woman.

Aging of European autochthon population

Negative natural growth since 2015, first time in history

Europe's Population –fertility rates (+/- 2.1 per woman)

Population structure by major age groups, EU-25; 1960, 1970, ..., 2050

Legend: 0-14 years | 15-64 years | 65-79 years | 80+ years

Y-axis: Percentage of the total population

Year	0-14 years	15-64 years	65-79 years	80+ years
1960	25.3	64.7	8.5	1.5
1970	24.8	63.5	9.9	1.8
1980	22.1	64.4	11.2	2.3
1990	19.2	66.9	10.7	3.2
2000	17.2	67.1	12.3	3.4
2010	15.5	66.9	12.9	4.7
2020	14.8	64.5	14.9	5.8
2030	14.0	61.3	17.5	7.2
2040	13.5	58.3	19.0	9.2
2050	13.4	56.7	18.5	11.4

Sources: Eurostat – Demographic statistics (1960-2000) and 2004-based Eurostat population projections, trend scenario, baseline variant (2010-2050).

2.   'European 'and 'non-European'

External immigration

Makes up for the natural demographic loss

Distinction between 'old-stock' and 'new-stock' Europeans (Philip Jenkins)

Or: autochthon and allochthon

Or: European and non-European culture groups

Integration becomes an issue

Europe's Population is changing – immigration

The Atlas of the Real World

International immigrants

The size of each territory indicates the number of international immigrants living there. The United States receives the highest number of international immigrants, while Andorra has the highest proportion - four out of five people in Andorra are immigrants. The Philippines and Guyuna have the lowest proportion - just one in 500.

2.   'European 'and 'non-European'

Hidden factor

Europeans of non-European background have larger families than 'old-stock' Europeans. Percentage hardly ever mentioned in statistics

Cultural shift

Rising percentage of the population has a non-European cultural background. Many of them wish to maintain their religious-cultural tradition while living in Europe

Migrant communities, 'in between' identities

Their place in a multicultural society

Multicultural society and multiculturalism, fact and ideal

Integration or assimilation?

Reaction

Concerns to maintain 'European' character of society as a whole

Expected growth of Muslim population

Will they shift the balance to a non-European character of society?

3.   Religious and non-religious

Secularisation, 'exceptional Europe'

Overall decline of Church membership and religious practice

Classic secularisation theory: inevitable result of modernisation and individualisation.

Secular and religious identities

Intellectual elites work to reduce the influence of religion

Education, family, sexual behaviour

Assumption: religion is of the past. Follow the evolution of moral standards.

Difference between West and East

What is the place of religious identity in our society?

Perhaps the prospects are more promising than we might think, especially in the West

3. Religious and non-religious

'Exceptional Europe'

In other regions of the world same processes without massive secularization

Secularisation, a second look

Percentage of practicing Christians is not declining so rapidly

Young people, higher percentage of belief God than decades ago.

Urban and rural, secularised and religious? Today the picture is inverse

Religious to non-religious, and inversely

Dropout of Church members becoming non-religious

Agnostics and atheists becoming Christian or Muslim

3. Religious and non-religious

Demographic shifts and religion

Immigrants are more religious in belief and practice than old-stock Europeans.

Natural population growth and religion

Religiously practising families have more children than secularised families.

Immigrants and autochthon Europeans

...and traditional, conservative religion

In all religions, traditional and conservative streams have larger families than liberal and progressive streams.

Also larger retention rate.

Will the religious inherit the earth? (Eric Kaufmann)

Debate

Challenges

Danger of Eurocentrism

Religious or national identity, which comes first?

Towards a distinct and inclusive national identities

Anthony Smith: Developing and shaping a cultural identity that is distinct as well as inclusive, differentiating yet assimilative may yet constitute the supreme challenge for a Europe that seeks to create itself out of its ancient family of ethnic cultures.

Participate in the ongoing European experience

Cultures are not static, they develop through the contribution of all who participate

Challenges

Integration and assimilation

Ricardo Lumengo: Someone integrated is someone who accepts a way of life that is similar to the average autochthon citizen. This is the case when a foreign person takes part in social life, shows a willingness to learn the language that is spoken in his region, and makes sufficient efforts to attain financial independence by a money earning job, respects the usages and customs, the law and the judicial order of his host country.

Every demand that goes beyond these requirements is no longer a matter of integration but amounts to assimilation.

Integration provides the foreigner with the possibility to conserve his cultural identity while at the same time adopting or adding the culture of the host country. This constitutes richness, not only for the foreigner himself, who finds his person and his dignity confirmed, but also for the host country that can now benefit from the cultural and intellectual contribution of the integrated foreigner.

Challenges

Defend and reinforce basic values of our own cultural tradition

Tendency to downgrade traditional Western values and to excel in tolerance towards other ideas.

Joseph Ratzinger: Europe needs a new – and certainly a critical and humble – acceptance of itself, if it wants to survive. Multiculturalism…is sometimes little more than the abandonment and denial of what is one's own, flight from one's own heritage. But multicultural society cannot exist without shared constants, without points of reference based on one's own values. It surely cannot exist without respect for what is sacred. We can only respect what is sacred to others, if we ourselves have respect for what is sacred. We can do this only if what is ultimately sacred, God Himself, is not foreign to us. The God who has compassion on the poor and the weak, on the stranger.

He Himself became a suffering man, who by suffering together with us gives dignity and hope to pain. If we don't do this, we not only deny the identity of Europe, but we also deprive others of a service to which they have a right.

Questions

1. **What can Churches do to avoid Eurocentrism?**

2. **What do we expect from newcomers in our churches: integration or assimilation?**

3. **Can a local Church really be multicultural?**

4. **How can we stimulate new populations to become an integral part of the ongoing European experience?**

5. **How do we value and reinforce 'European' values based on Christian roots?**