Secularism in Slovenia: An Anthropological Perspective

Hannah Lake Standley

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Committee:

Laada Bilaniuk

Michael E. Biggins

James R. Felak

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Abstract

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Hannah Lake Standley

Chair of the Supervisory Committee:

Laada Bilaniuk

Department of Anthropology

Current analyses focusing on the relations between the government of the Republic of Slovenia and the Slovenian Catholic Church cannot fully account for Slovenian citizens' reporting of secular tendencies in social surveys. I supplement state-centric analyses with an anthropological examination of name-day celebrations ("gód," "godovanje") by analyzing motivation behind and the presence/absence of religious symbols in these celebrations. We observe a change in focus between socialization and religious motivation, a shift in power between name and individual, and an increase in secular names among Slovenian newborns overtime. We find that name-days are considered a rural practice, and that adults, rather than children, are more often observed to be participating in religious practices associated with name-day celebrations. Secularisms observed in small-scale, private, religious customs are likely to point towards private ontological beliefs, and by extension, the prevalence of secularism among Slovenian citizens.

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Student Information

Name: Hannah Standley Student ID #: 1828098

Graduation (Quarter/Year): Spring 2020 UW Email Account: standh@uw.edu

Name of Degree: Master of International Studies Program: Jackson School of International Studies

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According to European Social Survey (ESS), European Values Study (EVS), and "Slovensko javno mnenje" (Slovene Public Opinion Survey, SJM) data, all previous members of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia—Croatia, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, and Montenegro— experienced significant revivals in (Christian) ontological beliefs and participation in/association with religious institutions after the collapse of communism. The notable exception to this trend is Slovenia. Slovenia is unique in that a significant portion of its current population remains secular. What exactly makes the case of Slovenia so unique?

Recent survey data from the ESS, EVS, and SJM exhibit a significant amount of self-reported secularism and irreligiosity in contemporary Slovenia, in contrast to all other post-Yugoslav states, which reveal a pronounced decrease in the amount of self-reported secularism and irreligiosity. Secular tendencies are inferred from questions asked by social surveys targeting the nature of an individual's ontological beliefs (e.g., "Do you have any religious beliefs?", "Do you believe in God?", "Do you believe in a higher power?", "Do you hold any spiritual beliefs?", etc.) and their respective associations and interactions with religion in its institutional capacity (e.g., "Are you a member of a religious institution?" "Do you attend religious ceremonies, such as worship, on a regular basis?", "Do you attend religious events outside of worship, such as baptisms and/or funerals?", etc.).

Table 1
Irreligiosity Over Time in Post-Yugoslav States

	WVS 1995	EVS 1999	WVS 00/04	EVS 2008	WVS 2010	EVS 2017[1]
B & H	29.3		25.2	5.1		
Croatia	27.8	16.2		16.4		
Macedonia	27.1		15.4	16.1		
Montenegro	47.5		22.8	12.4		
Serbia	37.5		23.4	9.8		
Slovenia	29.0	29.8		27.2	28.6	

Adapted from Smrke (2017).

Current literature provides an excellent framework for understanding why Slovenia exhibits secularism in the political and public spheres. Previous research citing data from EVS, ESS, and SJM has utilized a state-centric approach in examining why a significant portion of Slovenia's population has self-reported secular tendencies. Leading scholars[2] have suggested that Slovenia exhibits secularism because of events directly involving the Slovenian Roman Catholic Church (SRCC). The Church's position of authority and its political influence have been historically challenged in the territory of Slovenia. For the sake of this study, I will consider social and political obstacles faced by the SRCC during the communist and post-communist eras in Slovenia, beginning in 1945 with the League of Communists of Yugoslavia's (LCY) marginalization of the Church, controversial social attitudes towards the Church in the 1950s and 60s, the ongoing "deaf church phenomenon" (in which a religious institution assumes the defensive posture of a victim to justify lashing out in response to public intellectual critique [Smrke, 2016b]), and the SRCC's recent "decapitation" (whereby four archbishops, who had

[1] The release of the European Values Study 2017 wave has been postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic. Data for this particular query was not available in the pre-releases. The 2017 wave is projected to be released in October of 2020.
[2] See Smrke (2017); Ramet (1992); Pelikan (2014); Črnič, A., Komel, M., Smrke, M., Šabec, K., & Vovk, T (2013); Naglic (2013).

financial holdings in the Maribor enterprise, Gospodarstvo Rast, were directly deposed by the Vatican following the enterprise's financial collapse in 2008 [Smrke 2017]).

The largely state-centric analysis of Slovene secularism, focusing primarily on church-state relations and the public's understanding of and reaction to church-state relations, provides valuable scaffolding upon which the investigation of Slovenia's unique case of self-reported secularism can be built. State-centric approaches, however, cannot fully account for the private ontological beliefs of Slovenian citizens as reported in the aforementioned social surveys.

I challenge the state-centric approach—not by overturning it, but instead by claiming it is incomplete and cannot be expected to fully explain why Slovenes are self-reporting secular tendencies in social surveys. A solely state-centric approach is too narrow to answer such a question, and while this approach has been valuable in explaining contemporary church-state relations and public attitudes towards the SRCC (in its capacity as an institution), it simply cannot be expected to fully account for private individuals' ontological beliefs.

I propose to supplement the state-centric analysis of secularism in Slovenia with an anthropological examination of contemporary Slovenian religious celebrations–namely, name-day celebrations ("gód" or "godovanje"). The examination of name-day celebrations cannot, by itself, fully account for why Slovenes are self-reporting secular tendencies in social surveys—however, supplying an anthropological approach to the already strong state-centric analysis of Slovene secularism will amplify our understanding of the question and lead to a deeper comprehension of the interplay between society, state, and religion.

Background

The Catholic Church and Slovenian National Heritage

Before beginning, it is crucial to understand the linkage between the Catholic Church and Slovenia's national heritage. Despite the ongoing secularization of contemporary Slovenia, many elements of Catholicism remain overtly present in the social sphere. According to the 2019 national census, 57.8% of Slovenia's population identifies as Roman Catholic.

Table 2
2019 Religious Demographics of Slovenia

	% of Population
Catholic	57.8
Muslim	2.4
Orthodox	2.3
Other Christian	1.2
Unaffiliated	3.5
Other or Unspecified	23.0
None	10.1

Source: Statistični urad Republike Slovenije popis (2019a)

The linkage between Catholicism and Slovenian national heritage spans nearly four centuries. Sixteenth-century Slovenia witnessed the development of Slovene into a supra-regional literary language (where previously its uses had been extremely limited, commonplace, and prosaic) through the Protestant Reformation, thanks to the publication of Primož Trubar's *Abecedarium* (1555) and his Slovene translation of the New Testament, Jurij Dalmatin's Slovene Bible (1583), and the development of a primary schooling system whose curriculum was taught in Slovene. The Counter-Reformation of the 17th century, however, saw the Habsburg Empire's attempt to eliminate Protestantism from the Slovenian territory. The cause of the Slovene language was at that point adopted by Catholic authorities, who, in responding to the increasing demand for books in the Slovenian territory, began translating, publishing, and disseminating a wide variety

of religious texts in Slovene (Pogačnik 1984 & 1967; Ramet 1998). Through the publication of devotionals, homilies, sermons, and the translation of sacred texts, Catholicism grew to become irrevocably linked with Slovene, and by extension, Slovenian national heritage[3].

This linkage, to which I will from now on refer to as "cultural Catholicism," prevails in contemporary Slovenia despite ongoing secularization. As Catholicism continues to be the majority religion in Slovenia, Catholic traditions, rites, forms of worship, and annual customs are still widely celebrated today. As we will see, however, the motivation behind the celebration of these customs appears to have secularized, or at least, changed dramatically from the doctrines originally prescribed by the Catholic Church. I argue, however, that there exists a distinction between cultural Catholicism and doctrinal Catholicism (i.e., the practice of Catholicism as motivated by religious ideology). Catholic motifs remain a prominent part of Slovenian culture, and despite observations of secularization, the Catholic motifs do not become any "less Slovene"—the advent of secularization in Slovenia may exemplify the uniqueness in the linkage between Slovenian national heritage and Catholicism, given that Catholicism is an international identity. This phenomenon can also be observed in the perseverance of Catholicism and the SRCC through the communist era of the SFRY (Socialist Federal Republic of Slovenia), as we will see in the next section.

Religious Revival in Post-Communist Eastern Europe

Countries in Eastern Europe experienced a modest wave of religious revival as communist regimes and ideologies began to crumble in 1989 and give way to modern, democratic societies (Ramet 1992). As the political and sociological systems in the newly disintegrated post-communist

[3] For more information, see Ramet, S. (1998). "Nation and Religion in Yugoslavia: The Slovenes and Catholicism." *Nihil Obstat: Religion, Politics, and Social Change in East-Central Europe and Russia*. Duke University Press. pp. 157-159.

states underwent dramatic democratic and liberal transformations, cultural systems, too were also subject to significant adjustments. In the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia, secularism had been institutionalized and politically practiced. Practices closely associated with communist systems—such as institutionalized secularism—typically experienced the same, if not similar transformation through abandonment as the failed communist system. The coupling of the abandonment of state-mandated secular practices and cessation of the states' repression of religious practices resulted in a moderate wave of region-wide religious revival.

It is critical to note, however, that the revival itself was not necessarily an indication of religious affiliation having decreased during the era of communism—rather, the revival was partly a social and behavioral product of changes in legislation (Ramet 2014). Religious revival in Eastern Europe (particularly of Christianity; specifically, of Catholicism) was significantly catalyzed by Pope John Paul II's call for re-evangelization in response to the conflict between deteriorating communist control and religious beliefs (e.g., communist stances on divorce, abortion, etc.) (Felak 2014). The re-evangelization proposed by Pope John Paul II was intended to address the rift that had developed in church-state relations while simultaneously coaxing national attitudes into (re)alignment with the social and spiritual beliefs of the Roman Catholic Church.

The Catholic Church in Communist and Post-Communist Slovenia

While religious revival was common after the collapse of Eastern European communism, it was not universal. Slovenia stands out as one of the exceptions to this trend because of the particular nature of its observed secularism in both its public and private spheres[4]. To understand

[4] In addition to Slovenia, two other notable exceptions to the trend of religious revival in post-communist Eastern European states are Estonia and Czechia. Factors resulting in secularization are country-specific and are heavily dependent on the individual histories of religious organizations that were/are active in the state. While communism affected the secularization of these three countries, its role cannot be said to have been solely responsible for political and social secularization.

the substance of this observed secularism, I will briefly summarize the history of the Roman Catholic Church and church-state relations in communist and post-communist Slovenia.

The events of World War II and Slovene societal trends in the decades preceding it created an environment in which societal support of clerical institutions became divided and eventually polarized: individuals identifying with more conservative alignments tended to be in favor of maintaining the clergy's role as a political and social influencer, while those of more liberal persuasions (especially those supporting the LCY [League of Communists]) were not. The SRCC's adamant opposition to the LCY and its desire to preserve the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and its powerful position of political and social authority in Slovenian territory were two major reasons that influenced it to enter into collaboration with the Axis powers during World War II[5] (Kranjc 2013). The Church's collaboration with the Axis powers proved to be more detrimental than it could have anticipated— The Kingdom of Yugoslavia gave way to the establishment of the Socialist Federalist Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) in 1945, wherein the centuries-old European doctrine of "cuius regio, eius religio" ruled. In the newly created SFRY, the "eius religio" was secularism. The SRCC thus entered into the new era of Yugoslav Communism both encumbered by its direct association with the Axis powers—a decision that continues to heavily influence societal attitudes towards the SRCC today—and repressed by the establishment of political secularism beginning in 1945.

During the period immediately following World War II and the installation of the Communist regime in Slovenia, the SRCC was considered to be the only organized social force of opposition against the new regime While the LCY feared international intervention from the

[5] Historical trends suggest that the Catholic Church is prone to collaborate with regimes who exert unquestionable authority within a territory. Both Germany and Italy occupied Slovenia at this time during World War II, so it was in the best political interest of the Catholic Church to cooperate with their indisputable power. See Kranjc (2013) for more information.

Vatican more than it feared the SRCC, the Church's opposition towards Yugoslav Communism proved to be formidable enough that the regime decided to found a new national religious organization in which all ordained clergy members were vetted and verified as supporters of the regime (Ramet 1992) . Established in 1949, this organization was named the Cyril and Methodius Society, and was directly controlled by the stringent authority of "Uprava Državne Bezbednosti" (Yugoslavia's secret state police, UDBA)[6]. The regime's initiative in creating in the creation of the CMD proved to be fruitful, as more than half of the SRCC clergy had joined the CMD by the beginning of the 1950s. The UBDA's control over the CMD was by no means discreet. Under their authority, all SRCC publications (e.g., newspapers, periodicals, and magazines) were discontinued and the University of Ljubljana's Faculty of Theology was barred from state funding. SRCC clergymen who were not members of the CMD were publicly harassed, occasionally physically attacked, and even sometimes purged from society (e.g., apprehended and sent to prison labor camps) (Griesser Pečar 2005). According to official archives of the Republic of Slovenia, the UBDA actively worked to decrease enrollment numbers of the Faculty of Theology and was determined to turn anyone who graduated from the seminary into their "collaborator" (Pelikan 2014).

During the period in which the CMD and the UBDA overthrew the authority of the SRCC (roughly 1945-1952), the SRCC suffered a gradual loss of the privilege of being an institutional authority in both political and social realms. In response to this loss of privilege, the SRCC honed its habit of poorly responding to its victimization by the Slovenian public to engender (what it considers) due restoration of social privileges and the preservation of its authority" (Smrke

[6] Some sources cite the CMD as a national religious organization for priests and clergy men (Ramet 1992) while others cite it as a "new national church" (Pelikan 2014). The CMD did not function as true church, however, and instead was a means by which the LCY could attempt to regulate and monitor religious ideologies that conflicted with communist principles.

2017:155). This habit (which is not unique to either the SRCC or the Catholic Church), in which a religious institution defensively views criticism by public intellectuals as direct attacks on both the Church as an institution and the sovereignty of its practiced religion, garnered little sympathy from political and societal spheres. For most of history, the victimization of the Church has led to stronger societal support of it—yet negative factors including the SRCC's collaboration with the Axis powers during WWII and the SRCC's adamant opposition to the LCY only acted as proponents for further intellectual criticism.

In 1952, the SFRY officially severed ties with the Vatican. Ironically, around the same time, the CMD's membership, having reached its highest point, began to gradually decline (Griesser Pečar 2005). By the end of the 1950s, the SFRY was beginning to observe the effects of dissociating from Soviet Communism and beginning to embrace its policy of self-management socialism[7]. Conflict between the Vatican and the SFRY began to thaw in the 1960s, and Popes John XXIII and Paul VI began to (re)establish Vatican relations with communist countries. In 1966, a concordat was signed by the Holy See and the SFRY, restoring relations between the two, though the period of the LCY's repression of the SRCC in Slovenia continued until the late 1980s (Minnerath 1998).

The SRCC did not actively participate in Slovenia's democratization process of the 1980s. Theorists attribute the SRCC's lack of participation in the Slovenian democratization process to be one of the leading factors resulting in the Church's position in contemporary Slovenian society (Ramet 1992 & 2014; Pelikan 2014, Črniš et al. 2008, Toš 1993). When comparing the case of Slovenia to Poland, for example one considers the extremely different role of the Catholic Church

[7] See Kardelj (1976).

in promoting and protecting independent Polish culture, supporting labor protests, and maintaining ties with the opposition intellectuals and labor activists. (Felak 2019).

I will now consider the SRCC's role in Slovenia's process of proclaiming and defending its independence. The Vatican, under Pope John Paul II, did not outwardly advocate for Slovenia's independence until 1991. Although the collapse of the SFRY would indicate the end of one-party Communist rule, the dissolution of the SFRY would also compromise the social, political, and economic integrity of Europe. Instead, Pope John Paul II promoted domestic reform movements within the SFRY, calling for the restructuring of policies that jeopardized equality, justice, and peace (Pelikan 2014). However, the advent of the Ten-Day War of Independence swiftly resulted in the Catholic Church's reconsideration of the situation. Upon hearing of the Yugoslav People's Army's armed invasion of Slovenia on June 28th, 1992, the Vatican announced its support for the Slovenian independence movement.

The Catholic Church's support for Slovenian independence cannot simply be reduced to its objection to violence, however. The Vatican's support was a premediated response to two outstanding factors: the UBD's significant, communist presence within the SRCC through the CMD and the fact that the SFRY, as a whole, was a predominantly Eastern Orthodox Country. Support for Slovenian independence indicated both opposition towards the UBD's conspicuous position of power within the Catholic Church in Slovenian territory and a desire to break the principally Catholic territory of Slovenia away from the other chiefly Orthodox SFRY states (Pesek 2007). Despite the SRCC's calculated role in Slovenia's struggle for independence, their motives were not entirely realized, as I will explore below in a perusal of contemporary church-state relations in Slovenia.

Church-State Relations in Contemporary Slovenia

In this section, I will explore current research that suggests indications for Slovenia's status as a secular outlier in light of the trend of post-communist religious revival. Constitutional separation of church and state in Slovenia has, in its post-communist state of modernity, been perpetuated by a number of factors. One of the greatest factors among these is the financial collapse of the SRCC, an event known as the "decapitation" of the SRCC. Four archbishops (Archbishops Alojzij Uran, Franc Kramberger, Anton Stres, and Marjan Turnšek) were deposed by the Roman Catholic Church between 2009 and 2013, an event, when considering the short amount of time in which it occurred that remains "unprecedented in modern European history" (Smrke 2017). The "decapitation" was the result of the financial collapse of the Maribor Archdiocese's enterprise Gospodarstvo Rast, in which at least three of the four deposed archbishops had investment holdings. Gospodarstvo Rast and its nearly 60,000 investors experienced extreme pecuniary damages due to Slovenia's economic crisis of 2008, resulting in a significant decline in trust in the institution of the SRCC[8].

Alongside the SRCC's financial collapse, its direct collaboration with the Axis powers during World War II is still a hotly contested question today. The SRCC's defense of its decision (that it hoped to preserve the integrity of the nation of Slovenia rather than see it succumb to communism) has garnered little sympathy in the shadow of the SRCC's association with the Axis powers, which has inspired negative attitudes that persist today among political and social spheres. (Pelikan 2014).

An additional factor that continues to be vigorously discussed today is the issue of privatization of Church property that had been seized under the SFRY. Privatization (that is, the

[8] Smrke (2017) cites this financial crisis as the main reason why, in a contemporary and post-communist context, the public and political spheres began to lose trust in the authority of the Church as a institution.

returning of property that had been nationalized by communist governments) is one of the many reparations agreed upon after the fall of communism in Eastern Europe. The intent of privatization is to restore property to its original private owners and to "repair an injustice committed by [a] former regime… [and] restore the confidence of public opinion towards private property." Paradoxically, restitution of private property can also result in quite the opposite effect: in many instances, the public interprets this restitution (i.e., privatization) of property rights as an action that strictly benefits the original property owners, while failing to compensate for any inequities experienced by the broader public at the hand of the communist regime (Karadjova 2004). Privatization of Church property, of course, is a direct source of capital. It can therefore be argued that restitution of Church property (and by extension, financial capital) is beneficial largely, if not wholly, to the SRCC, and does not necessarily address further related injustices experienced by the broader Slovenian public.

The above outline that I have given of the history of the SRCC in communist and post-communist society and contemporary church-state relationships in Slovenia has provided factors that suggest why secularism is prevalent in contemporary Slovenian society. Drawing on the secularism theorist, David Martin, to summarize, when a society's support for clerical institutions is polarized (i.e., individuals of conservative alignment tend to support clerical institutions, while individuals of liberal alignments do not), and when this polarization is acted out in the form of civil conflict, church-state relations have the potential to either strengthen or fracture. In the context of the SFRY, this was observed in the ethnic Slovenian territory when the SRCC was marginalized to pave the way for institutionalized communist secularism. In a post-communist context, this polarization of societal clerical support has been manifested in antagonism of Slovenian public intellectual discourse toward the SRCC, the financial collapse of the SRCC via

the Maribor-based enterprise, Gospodarstvo Rast, negative attitudes surrounding the SRCC's history of collaboration with the Axis powers during World War II, and ongoing contestation of privatization of property rights.

Literature Review

I return now to the data of the EES, EVS, and SJM surveys. The survey data to which I am referring (and to which Smrke and other scholars[9] have referred within their work on the subject of secularism in Slovenia) presents individuals' self-reports of personal beliefs and attendance at services performed at religious institutions—actions which take place largely within the private sphere (as opposed to the public spheres, to which I previously referred in my brief outline of the SRCC and contemporary church-state relations in Slovenia). The survey data have been collected in order to reflect the anonymous presentation of the self in the face of the survey questions. While I agree that the study of the polarization of contemporary societal clerical support and of religious institutions actions and behaviors during a period of marginalization is a useful tool in examining the presence of secularism in private life, I do not believe that previous research conducted on secularism in Slovenia can fully account for the self-reported presence or absence of secularism in individuals' private lives. The extension of secularism into private life would be an extension of political institutions into private life, and that is not the issue this study is foremost concerned with. I believe, rather than questioning the secularism of private lives of Slovenians, I am questioning (as I believe the surveys were questioning) the religiosity of private lives.

The history of a religious institution and the public's attitudes towards the religious institution cannot be expected to fully account for the (ir)religiosity (i.e., ontological beliefs) of an

[9] See Ramet (1992 & 2014) and Črnič et al. (2013)

individual's private life. This statement proves to be true for contexts outside of Slovenia: for example, the sexual abuse of children remains as a prevalent problem in the Catholic Church in several countries, including the United States. The revelation of child abuse by authorities within the Catholic Church has certainly resulted in negative discourse surrounding the institution of the Church and has affected the United States' relations with the Church (a relationship with a secular valence)—yet many American Catholics privately (or, at least independently of the Church as an institutional capacity) continue to engage in and express religiosity, independent of negative discourse surrounding the institution. Still, secularism may be an indicator of (ir)religiosity, though I submit that it is certainly not the sole defining indicator.

In this literature review, I will clarify the definition of secularism to which I am adhering and define (ir)religiosity in the context of the question I seek to answer. Secularism has become an increasingly popular subject of study, largely due to its increasing prevalence in the modern world. Secularism has not been comprehensively adopted by scholars as a mandatory criterion for defining the modernized state (as have democracy and liberalism). There exist ongoing debates aiming to determine a hierarchy in the relationship between secularism and modernity. José Casanova's *Public Religions in the Modern World* details a thesis of secularization which includes three key points: (1) increasing structural differentiation of social spaces resulting in the separation of religion from politics, economy, science, and so forth; (2) the privatization of religion within its own sphere; and (3) the declining social significance of religious belief, commitment, and institutions (Casanova 1994). In a Weberian respect, all three elements are crucial to the development of modernity. In essence, there appears to exist a kind of complementary (though disproportionate) relationship between secularism (the *opus operatum*) and modernity (the *modus*

operandi): modernity is (at least, in part) achieved through the practice of secularism, while secularism is advanced through modernity.

If we revisit David Martin's seminal monograph on secularism, *On Secularization Towards a Revised General Theory*, in which he expands on Casanova's concept of the "deprivatization of religion[10]," we will see that he argues that public and private spheres are shaped by modernity, and it is religion in its fully deprivatized capacity (i.e., in its refusal to accept its marginal and privatized roles assigned to it by secularization) that shapes the effectiveness of secularism. Examining secularism from the perspective of deprivatized religion moves one closer to beginning to answer the question that I have posited: given a secular state, how can one account for the private practices of (ir)religiosity? I suggest following the thought methodology suggested in Talal Asad's impressive monograph on secularism, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity*.

In order to understand how public and private spheres are shaped by modernity, and how religion in its fully deprivatized capacity shapes the effectiveness of secularism, one requires an interdisciplinary method of examination. Asad argues that understanding secularism and religiosity in ontological and epistemological capacities will allow scholars to better understand and compare the "forms of life that articulate [secularism and religiosity, and] the powers that they release or disable" (Asad 2003).

A socio-anthropological approach to the secular, that which inhabits the world of secularism, and agents that undergo (rather than cause) secularization will lead to better understanding of secularism and secularization theory in the context of modernity. In the interest

[10] Casanova describes the "deprivatization" of religion as "the fact that religious traditions throughout the world are refusing to accept the marginal and privatized role which… theories of secularization [have] reserved for them." See Casanova, J. (1994). *Public Religions in the Modern World*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 5.

of the application of Talal Asad's thought methodology of consideration of agency, allegory, symbolism and representation of that which is mythical and that which is secular in Slovenia, I suggest the examination of the public and private significances of name-day celebrations. In the next section, I will outline the religious and social significances of name-day celebrations and explain why I have chosen them as a form of studying secularism in contemporary Slovenia.

Name-Days ("Gód," "Godovanje")

Name-day celebrations are much like birthdays, but with strong roots in Christianity. An individual celebrates his or her name-day on the day of the death or martyrdom of the Christian saint after which they were named. Of course, Christian name-day celebrations are not exclusively celebrated in Slovenia—yet before the institutionalization of secularism in the SFRY, they were an integral part of Slovene social life, marked by distinctly Catholic sacral motifs (Baš 2011).

Today, name-days are still celebrated in Slovenia[11], but have mostly been replaced with the sole celebration of birthdays. Name-day celebrations today provide a rich context in which to observe ideology, narrative, language, and symbolism[12] surrounding private and individual attitudes towards religion that are not necessarily directly influenced by behaviors of the state.

Name-days are celebrated across many Christian traditions around the world (most notably in Europe and Latin America). A name-day is celebrated on the feast day (most often the day of the martyrdom or death) of an individual's patron saint. A person is said to have a patron saint when he, she, or they bear the name of a particular saint. Historically, name days were often

[11] Unfortunately, no concrete data has been collected regarding the statistical frequency of name-day celebrations in Slovenia—this information would be extremely valuable for further research on the subject.
[12] I have adapted these categories from Talal Asad's variables suggested in *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity*. For the purpose of this study, I have chosen to replace *agency* with *ideology* in order to specifically analyze motivations behind religious celebrations.

celebrated more frequently and more seriously than birthdays by practicing Christians. In Slovenia, name days ("gód," "godovanje"[13]) are celebrated most often within the Catholic tradition. According to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, "God calls each one by name. Everyone's name is sacred. The name is the icon of the person. It demands respect as a sign of the dignity of the one who bears it."[14] (#2158, Catholic Church 1994). The Catechism thus expects that a name and the very act of naming itself is a sacred and ritualistic tradition within the institution of the Church.

It is a common practice for churches (at the individual, parochial, diocesan, and universal levels) to create and distribute unique name-day calendars. These calendars are unique in that they include the feast days of saints that community and/or clergy members have specifically selected. Most, if not all calendars, share a few feast days in common—particularly of those saints who are considered to be essential in liturgical celebration (e.g., St. Michael [September 29th], St. Martin [November 11th], St. Nicholas [December 6th], etc.). The act of creating a unique name-day calendar, however, allows different communities to emphasize figures who embody virtues, traditions, and most notably, geographical locations that they closely identify with—for example, the feast day of St. Maximus of Emona ("sv. Maksim Emonski"), a canonized Catholic bishop who lived in what is now modern-day Slovenia during the 4th century C.E., often occupies the date of May 29th on many Slovenian name-day calendars, while other Christian churches and traditions may choose to recognize a different feast on that day. The uniqueness and relative flexibility of

[13] Archaically, "godovina" and "godovno". The word "godovanje" originates from the proto-Slavic root "g^{h}ed^{h}–", meaning, "to unite, to hold together, to be closely connected." The proto-Slavic root's Slovenian descendant, "gǫ̑d–", encompasses the meanings, "hour, right time, holiday, and year" (Snoj 1997). It is worth noting that the word "godovanje" has no explicit etymological relations to Christian traditions, and etymologically denotes a recurring annual celebration. Semantically, however, the word has come to represent the celebration of the feast day of any particular saint included on the liturgical calendar.

[14] "To Him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear His voice: and He calleth His own sheep by name, and leadeth them out" (John 10:3).

name-day calendars covertly encourages elements not necessarily and/or directly influenced by religious beliefs to present themselves in an environment of religious worship (such as non-religious cultural traditions, racial/ethnic identification, and support of national heritage).

As reviewed above, the practice of celebrating name-days has largely been replaced by the celebration of birthdays in many communities. Slovenians, however, report that it is common to celebrate both birthdays and name-days in contemporary society. Name-day celebrations are often viewed as a folk tradition and celebration of national heritage, and the methods in which they are celebrated have shifted in the wakes of socialism, modernization, and globalization (Kuhar & Reiter 2014).

Name-day celebrations vary from tradition to tradition, from nation to nation, and even from community to community. Within the Catholic Church, the objective of each celebration, as indicated by the Catechism, is to recognize the sanctity of a saint's name. Naming traditions have also undergone a shift in Slovenia: according to Slovenian ethnologist Niko Kuret, from around the 13th century to the 15th century, only the father or godfather of the infant was permitted to select a name for the child. Male infants were typically given the Christian name of the father or godfather, while female infants were given the Christian name of their mother. Towards the end of the 15th century, it became more common for infants to be christened after a Christian saint whose feast day was celebrated on or near the day of the infant's birth. Today, the entire family is permitted to engage in the decision of naming a child, and name selections are not exclusively Christian[15].

[15] It is estimated that nearly 400 Christian names (i.e., names directly associated with saints or religious figures) prevail in the Slovenian territory today (Statistični urad Republike Slovenije 2020).

Slovenian Name-Day Celebration Customs and Traditions

Following liturgical expectations, recognition of the saint in the context of a name-day celebration would be carried out through ritual worship and prayer, perhaps invoking icons of the respective saint(s). It would be expected, based on the prescription of liturgical values by the Catholic Church, that the motivation behind the celebration of name-days would be of religious influence. This is not necessarily the case. The religious celebration of name-days is separate from the Church as an institution (in that it does not take place in a space of worship, nor is it explicitly supervised by an ordained clergyman). A project entitled "Cultural Capital Counts" (a part of the Central Europe program and financed by the European Regional Development Fund) reports that the focus of name-day celebrations was socialization:

> "*Once, time was made for socialization that brought people together and enriched their daily life on the farm. Because there was no money for gifts, and they were not in the habit [of giving gifts], they would uplift each other in other ways."* (Cultural Capital Counts 2014).

In Slovenian name-day celebrations, it is apparent that a dialectical relationship exists between motivations based in religious themes and motivations based in social themes (especially themes of the family and of the immediate community). Social motivation can act as a catalyst of communal religious celebration (veneration of God, of the relevant saint, etc.), while religious motivation can encourage the coming together of communities.

While name-day celebrations can vary from family to family, research suggests that there are common customs and traditions that exist within most Slovenian name-day celebrations. The most common customs and traditions include "tablanje" (noisemaking), the presentation of food and drink to the individual whose name-day is being celebrated, the singing of folk songs, and the playing of folk games.

"Tablanje" (also referred to as "ofranje" or "rumplanje"), or noise-making, is a folk tradition (predominant in rural, countryside communities) in which neighbors, friends, and family members appear outside the house of the individual whose name-day is being celebrated (traditional on the night before the actual feast day of the saint). The crowd is almost always accompanied by an accordion player. They strike up a noisy musical frenzy by shouting, clapping, using various objects such as whistles, chains, wooden ratchets, spoons, pots, pans, sticks, and baking sheets, sometimes singing folk songs, until the owner of the house (i.e., the individual whose name-day is being celebrated) greets them and allows them to enter the house.

Upon entering the house, the individual whose name-day is being celebrated is traditionally gifted with food and drink. One of the most common gifts of food is "bosman" (also referred to as "pleteni kruh," braided bread; and/or "obredni kruh," ritual bread), a light, braided, ceremonial bread[16]. The significance of "bosman" as an important gift lies in the history of the luxury of its ingredients, as white flour was once a treasured commodity that was extremely difficult to procure. Although white flour is easy to purchase in contemporary Slovenia, the sentiment of the luxury of the gift remains in its complex and rich decorations. Children whose name-days are celebrated are often gifted with fruit (especially oranges) and chocolate—once again, nonessential treats that were once challenging to obtain, especially in rural areas.

Finally, following the motivation of socialization, a name-day celebration is not quite complete without engaging in games. Both adults and children participate in folk games (though often the generations are separate from one another) such as "prstna igra z vrvico" (known

[16] "Bosman" is painstakingly difficult to make, and in addition to the braids, is often decorated with ornamental folk decorations. Braided breads, such as "bosman," are not exclusive to Slovenia, nor to the tradition of name-day celebrations. These intricately decorated ceremonial breads are common throughout Eastern Europe, and are typically gifted to individuals during weddings, christenings, and other annual celebrations (often religious in nature), such as Christmas and Easter (Kilpatrick 2015).

commonly as cat's cradle in English: a game in which two or more players take turns creating various string figures), *go* (an ancient Chinese table-top game popular around the world), and others. The playing of games is motivated by the desire to socialize and is not overtly connected to any kind of religious ritual or worship.

Why Name-Days?

Secularization has the potential to alter motivation and attitude behind religious events and celebrations and shift ontological beliefs—likewise, motivation and attitude behind religious events and celebrations can have profound effects on the process of secularization (Asad 2003). Empirically, religious symbolism and ideology behind Slovenian name-day celebrations has likely remained constant while the motivation, narrative, and language of these customs have likely changed in the wake of the ongoing phenomenon of secularization in Slovenia. Still, I expect that ontological beliefs of private citizens can be analyzed by observing the ideologies and symbolism of name-day celebrations in contemporary Slovenia.

Online media—especially video documentation— of name-day celebrations can provide useful context in which the anthropological categories of ideology and symbolism can be analyzed. I have examined online videos and visual media with a focus on name-days using an interpretive ethnographic methodology. While the examination of name-day celebrations cannot realistically fully explain secular moods presented in social survey data, the attitudes and language surrounding the events can be projected onto the dynamic study of secularism and (ir)religiosity in Slovenia and supplement state-centric analyses.

One of the online videos selected for this study was created by students from a secondary school as a club project. The motivation behind the creation of this film has the potential to indicate

contemporary youth attitudes towards name-day celebrations (and whether or not the attitudes behind the dissemination of name-day customs are religious in nature or tending more towards the promotion of national folk heritage). Narrative and language can be observed within these videos as well—certain speech and presentation of visual information are obviously scripted, while video documentation of actual celebrations is not. Several videos show a distinct separation between younger and older generations and suggest that while religious rituals and symbols might be present, the attitude of the participants towards the celebration may not be as religious as expected, given the origin and the nature of the custom. Instead, it seems that the focus of contemporary name-day celebrations might fall more so on social relations.

Biases of examining name-day celebrations include, firstly, the fact that it is possible that they are only celebrated in contemporary Slovenia by the portion of the population *not* self-reporting secular tendencies in the social surveys. However, it remains critical to examine name-days in the light of the significantly secular mood that data from the social surveys exhibits—it is likely that the attitudes and moods of those who still celebrate name-days have changed since 1945, and do not adhere to the prescribed rituals and customs of name-day celebrations promoted by the Catholic Church.

Secondly, an analysis of the celebration of name-days in Slovenia focuses specifically on the deprivatization of Christianity (particularly of Catholicism). While Catholicism is the majority religion in Slovenia, it is important to note that other traditions and faiths are present in the country (Orthodoxy, Islam, etc[17].). While name-days are a valuable custom through which to observe how

[17] Name-days are also celebrated within Orthodox traditions and some Protestant traditions. As Catholicism is the majority religion in Slovenia, however, I have chosen to focus my study on name-days celebrated in the Catholic tradition.

secularism in Slovenia has affected religious practices, it might be difficult (or, in some cases concerning non-Christian traditions, impossible) to draw conclusions regarding the deprivatization and secularization surrounding other religious practices.

Finally, by limiting data collection to an online environment, I risk restricting my case selections to sources that have been potentially created intentionally for an online and/or digital audience. Actors in videos published online may engage in scripted dialogue—however, scripted dialogue will likely prove to be just as valuable as unscripted dialogue, because the agents and actors have consciously and intentionally prepared for the verbal dissemination of any knowledge that they wish to impart to their audience. Scripted dialogue has high potential to indicate how knowledge is transferred from generation to generation, and how knowledge is expressed to an online and/or digital audience.

I believe evaluating the qualitative categories of ideology and symbolism encircling name-day celebrations using an interpretive ethnographic method valuably supplements the previously engaged state-centric analysis of secular moods that the social surveys present. I also hope to provide an example with which secularism in other regions might be studied through an anthropological and cultural lens.

Methodological Design

In order to facilitate an anthropological perspective of secularism embedded in contemporary religious celebrations in Slovenia, I have evaluated the qualitative categories of ideology and symbolism, adapting the suggestions of Asad (1003). Below, I will briefly define the three qualitative categories selected for evaluation in this study and outline the methodological design in which I identified these categories within selected cases.

One of the original elements suggested by Talal Asad, *agency*, refers to the conducting of intentional actions (Anscombe 1957; Davidson 1963). In the interest of examining secularisms in religious celebrations, I have instead considered the much broader category of *ideology*. Where *agency* refers to the social means of conducting actions, *ideology* more broadly refers to the reasons and motivations for conducting such actions. It is important to note that *agency*, in a specifically anthropological sense, is not a natural category—rather, agency centers on the paradigm of forcing an actor to be accountable for the power attributed to a completed, personal action (Asad 1003). In my analysis, I have examined the ideologies and motivations of individuals and communities that require them to consider their responsibilities in the acting out of name-day celebrations. Questions that arise when contemplating the ideologies behind and motivation of an individual's celebration of a name-day include, (1) "Why is the individual celebrating the name-day?", (2) "Are there any external or internal benefits or consequences attributed to the individual's participation?", (3) "What is the perceived nature of the participant's celebration of the name-day (e.g., religious, secular, promotion of national folk heritage, familial, social, etc.)?" Of the two variables selected for analysis within this project, ideology is likely the most complex and subjective.

The second category to be analyzed in the selected case-studies of name-day celebrations in Slovenia, *symbolism*, may be considered the most rudimentary element of human communication. A symbol is something that, by convention, stands for something else. The kinds of symbols to be analyzed for the purpose of this study will be the presence or absence of symbols attributed to religion, the promotion of national folk heritage, social and familial themes, and themes of temporality. It is worth noting that cases notably lacking religious symbolism are be considered more irreligious and secular than others.

Narrative, a subcategory of symbolism, refers to the virtues, standards, morals, allegories, and beliefs that are depicted through various forms of human communication: verbal utterances, singing, written text, images, etc. (Reck 1983). In the context of this project, the narrative of each selected case is the story that is told through the celebration of the name-day. For the purpose of this study, various scopes of narrative will be examined: the narrative of the individual, the narrative of the group, and the narrative of the celebration (including temporal contexts that extend beyond the selected time of the celebration). Finally, each video case will be analyzed by determining the kind of written and/or spoken language observed. Language will be categorized into scripted and unscripted dialogue and examined for religious motifs, signs of underlying ideology and motivation, and attitudes towards name-day celebrations.

Case Selection

Three publicly published videos that were found and accessed online via search engines (Google, Najdi.si) and social media (YouTube, Facebook), were selected for this study. These cases were chosen specifically because each one contains a clear narrative from which I have interpreted underlying motivations behind the celebration and/or discussion of name-days. Not all available online media contained clear narratives—most footage relevant to name-day celebrations in Slovenia featured folk music and dancing, but few indicators of location, attitudes towards the celebration, or symbols. Each video was chosen based on its relevance to the subject of name-day celebrations, the ages of the participants and/or speakers in the video, whether the video was filmed in rural and/or urban parts of Slovenia, whether a clear narrative existed within the footage, and whether the video included scripted and/or unscripted dialogue. Ideally, videos with children, adults, and older adults were selected in order to examine any possible differences in motivation, narrative, and language among and between different generations. Most available online footage of name-days was set in rural areas of Slovenia. Footage of traditional name-day celebrations in

urban areas was non-existent, although footage of large, public religious celebrations in cities was widely available. The lack of media including name-day celebrations taking place in urban areas suggests that traditional name-days may be more commonly (if not almost exclusively) celebrated in rural areas, though more research would be required to confirm this.

The first video selected for analysis was a brief documentary-style film created by students from Veliki Gaber Elementary School in Slovenia, entitled *Godovanje*. Students directing the film define name-day celebrations and document various ways in which name-days are celebrated in the village of Veliki Gaber. Children, adults, and older adults are featured in the film in both scripted and unscripted scenes. The scripted dialogue portions of the film include two students discussing the practices of name-day celebrations and an informal survey conducted within the village about general knowledge of name-days.

The second video selected for examination was a film of a play created, produced, and filmed by the Folklorno društvo Holmec (The Holmec Folklore Society). The play, entitled, *Kako smo včasih praznovali gód* (*How We Used to Celebrate Name-Days*) is a reenactment of a traditional Slovenian name-day celebration, set in the 1950s or 60s. All dialogue is scripted, presenting a useful portrait of how the Folklore Society interprets both the religious and social motivations of name-day celebrations.

The final video selected for analysis includes footage of the mass annual celebration of "Godovanje Miklavža" ("Miklavževanje," Saint Nicholas Day) in Ljubljana, Slovenia. This video, entitled "Godovanje Miklavža v Ljubljani" ("St. Nicholas's Name-Day in Ljubljana"), includes footage of a parade-style procession through the streets of Ljubljana, attended by individuals of all ages. While the style of the celebration is arguably different from traditional, closed, familial

name-day celebrations portrayed in the films produced by the students of Veliki Gaber and the Holmec Folklore Society, this footage exhibits how name-days and religious celebrations are celebrated by a community of people who are not necessarily related in familial terms, how name-days are celebrated in a larger public sphere, and how name-days are celebrated under the supervision of the government. Ljubljana mayor Zoran Janković makes an appearance and participates in the festivities, and both he and the figure of St. Nicholas are accompanied by security guards throughout the event. Both the mayor and the figure of St. Nicholas present scripted speeches to the attendees to acknowledge and honor the festivities, while participants (especially children) call out to the figure of St. Nicholas, sing, and express their own feelings of excitement towards the event.

Analysis

Godovanje (Veliki Gaber Elementary School 2016)

Veliki Gaber, a village in Southeast Slovenia (approximately 42 km from Ljubljana), prides itself as a proponent of the Slovene national revival movement[18]. The 2019 Slovenian census estimates the population of Veliki Gaber to be 342 inhabitants (Statistični urad Republike Slovenije 2019b), indicating it to be a village of medium size. It is a rural village, located among hills and farmlands. In 2016, students (around they age of 11 or 12 years old) from Veliki Gaber Elementary School created a short documentary film about the practices of name-day celebrations in Veliki Gaber. The film was supervised by instructors from Veliki Gaber Elementary School. The students' project is credited to the school's film and folk games clubs, although it is unclear whether or not the film was submitted as part of a graded assignment for a course taught at the

[18] According to the village's community website. For more information, see Veliki Gaber. (2020). *Veliki Gaber: Dogajanje v krajevni skupnosti Veliki Gaber*. Retrieved from <https://www.velikigaber.si/>.

school, rendering possible sources of motivation in the creation of the film ambivalent[19]. The film is neither attributed to the local Catholic Parish Church of St. Ulrich— thus, it can be concluded that in terms of motivation, the Catholic Church (i.e., ordained clergymen acting in an official capacity) was not directly involved in the creation of this film. Given that Veliki Gaber is a small, rural town that identifies itself as a proponent of the Slovene national revival movement, and that Veliki Gaber Elementary School hosts a folk games club, it is unsurprising that students would be inspired to create a film about a topic that has become so closely associated with Slovenian national identity. The overall motive of the film is to inform its audience about the existence and common practices of name-day celebrations, as well as to survey the residents of Veliki Gaber and determine whether or not they themselves are aware of name-day celebration practices.

The film's goal of educating its audience about the existence and common practices of name-day celebrations is achieved through a scripted dialogue exchanged between two students, Ema and Katja. The film begins in the school's library, where Ema and Katja begin conversing about name-days. Ema's character, learning of the existence of name-day celebrations for the first time, asks, "so… do I have a name-day?", to which Katja responds, "well, of course—you have a name!" The initial narrative of the film suggests that not all children are aware of name-day practices and/or celebrations.

The students visit a local civil registration employee, who, in the context of the film, defines a "name" as a title used for "identification and discernment of a person." This definition seems strikingly secular in nature— however, an addendum to this definition is proposed by the students

[19] Slovenia's Organization and Financing of Education Act of 1996 states that public schools (and private schools that have been granted state licenses) are required to be religiously neutral and autonomous of religious communities— therefore, it is likely that the film's topic was decided upon at the discretion of the students, as teachers and instructors are forbidden to engage students in curricula that "are taught with the goal to educate children in a particular religion" (Sturm 2004).

when a scene of a traditional Catholic christening is shown: the students further define a name to be a title that allows the christened individual to become "closer to God."

Ema and Katja conduct further research on names, referencing two notable resources: Janez Keber's *Lexicon of Names*[20] and "matične knjige" (birth registries) at the local civil registration office. The *Lexicon of Names* and the birth registries act as two extremely important sources of nominal authority. Keber's *Lexicon of Names* details names that exist traditionally in the Slovenian territories, including their many sources, inspiration, and variations. This reference collection of names is used in light of Katja's comment that, if one has a name, one has a name-day— one simply needs to find the origin of their name.

Tracing the origin of a name for the purposes of connecting it to a saint or religious figure, however, may be more problematic, or at least, less precise, than desired. One must consider the event in which a name is not a variation of a saint's name— take, for example, one of the most popular name for female infants born in Slovenia in the year 2018: "Aurora[21]". The name "Aurora" is not a Slovene name, nor is it associated with any canonized individual, martyr, or popular religious figure. This example proposes a question not addressed in the film: how would the students propose to celebrate a name-day for an individual bearing this name[22]? While the authority of Keber's *Lexicon of Names* does not tread past the territorial boundaries of Slovenia, it becomes a weaker resource as names that are not associated with Christian religious figures gradually become more popular within the territory[23].

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[20] Keber, J. 2001. *Leksikon imen: izbor imen na Slovenskem*. 3rd ed. Celje: Mohorjeva družba. This is specifically a source of Slovenian names.

[21] Statistični urad Republike Slovenije. 2018. 100 najpogostejših imen. <https://www.stat.si/ImenaRojstva/sl/>.

[22] It would be valuable for future exploration of this topic to determine the prevalence of secular names among the most popular names for newborns in Slovenia, controlling for rural vs. urban areas.

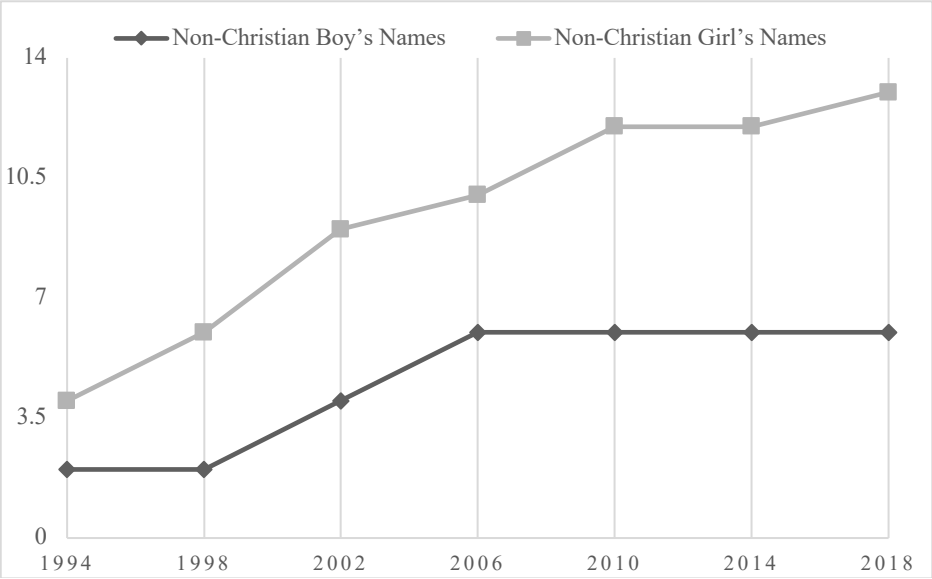
[23] Practices suggest that individuals bearing non-religious names may choose to celebrate their name-day on the feast day of a saint whose name is phonemically similar to their own.

Table 3
Used Logistic Regression to Ascertain the Odds of Non-Christian Names in Slovenia

Outcome	Odds Ratio	St. Err.	z	P>|z|	[95% Conf.	Interval]
Year	1.046437	.0142813	3.33	0.001	1.018817	1.074805
Sex	2.186748	.4882738	3.50	0.000	1.411679	3.387361
_Cons	1.29e-41	3.53e-40	-3.43	0.001	5.98e-65	2.78e-18

Based on data from the Statistični urad Republike Slovenije "100 najpogostejših imen novorojenčkov" 1994-2018.

Figure 1
Prevalence of non-Christian Names in Slovenia



Based on data from the Statistični urad Republike Slovenije "100 najpogostejših imen novorojenčkov" 1994-2018[24].

Data from the Statistični urad Republike Slovenije (SURS) can be used to portray a significant increase in the presence of non-Christian names in Slovenia over time. Every year, SURS releases a list of the top 100 names given to newborns. Names were considered "non-Christian" if, referencing Keber's *Lexicon Imen* and various Slovenian name-day calendars, they could not be etymologically traced back to the name of a saint/religious figure or were not

[24] The record-keeping of the top 100 names for newborns in Slovenia by SURS began in 1992.

explicitly marked as known variations of saints' names. Neither the rank in popularity nor the number of newborns given a certain name were taken into account for these statistics.

When controlling for sex, the odds of non-Christian names appearing on the list of the top 100 names given to newborns increases by 4% ($p=0.001$) every 4 years[25]. When stratifying by sex, the odds of non-Christian names appearing on the list of the top 100 names given to newborns increases by 5% ($p=0.049$) among boys, and 5% ($p=0.007$) among girls. Overall, the rate of increase of non-Christian names appearing on the list over time is not significantly different between males and females.

Returning to the students' film, the other resources referenced are birth registries, which, though originally recorded in tomes and directly managed by the Catholic Church, are now recorded online and managed by the state. The registries themselves are directly associated with the national territory and government of Slovenia. To be recorded in a Slovenian birth registry indicates that the Slovenian government recognizes you as a distinct individual inhabiting the Slovenian territory— and, as the civil registration employee pointed out, one way to discern this recognition of an individual is by name. When juxtaposing the necessity of citizens to be recorded in the birth registry with the ritual of christening in the Catholic Church, it is clear that, in the modern age, documentation in the birth registry— i.e., government documentation— takes pragmatic precedence over religious rites in the lives of individuals as citizens (especially when considering that the birth registries are no longer managed by the Catholic Church). In both cases, the name (and by extension, individual) must be recognized by an appointed authority— a designated government official or an ordained clergyman.

[25] Interestingly, girls are 2.2 times more likely to be given non-Christian names than boys ($p>0.0001$). The most common non-Christian names among girls are directly related to nature (e.g., Stella/Stela, Aurora, Luna, etc.)

The students conduct a brief survey in the film, focusing on two polar questions: (1) "do you know when your name-day is?" and (2) "do you celebrate your name-day?" The students surveyed 135 residents of Veliki Gaber (23 children, 105 adults, and 7 elders; approximately 43% of Veliki Gaber's population[26]) and reported that 124 of those surveyed knew when their name-day was (and, if they had children, they knew when their child's name-day was); only 11 of the individuals that participated in the survey were unaware when their name-day was. It is important to note that the majority of those surveyed were adults, however. The fact that the overwhelming majority (nearly 92%) of those surveyed knew when their name day was does not clarify what percentage of the majority were adults and what percentage were children.

Unscripted footage in the film portrays a distinct separation between generations during name-day celebrations. The film includes unscripted documentation of two specific celebrations—the first, a local annual celebration hosted by the Senior Citizens' Society of Veliki Gaber, and the second, the celebration of a local resident's name-day. During both celebrations, the children are separated from the adults. At the local annual celebration, the children are seen playing folk games together. The adults are seen socializing, praying, eating, drinking, and playing music. Footage of the local resident's name-day celebration hardly features any children at all, though there is a small number in attendance. Instead, the footage focuses on the merrymaking of the adults as they socialize, eat, and drink.

The only overtly religious activity observed in the footage of these celebrations is prayer. No ordained Church officials appear to be present (or at the very least, present in their official capacity as a representatives of the Church). The form of prayer in which the attendants participate is highly individualistic: they are removed from the general social gathering, knelt over a table in

[26] Based on the Statistični urad Republike Slovenije Popis 2011: the 2011 population of Veliki Gaber was approximately 314 inhabitants.

silence. Name-day celebrations are traditionally social gatherings; yet in these two particular celebrations, the only overtly religious activity observed (prayer) is done in a significantly removed and isolated situation.

There are two relevant conclusions that can be drawn from this brief film regarding contemporary name-day celebrations in Slovenia. First and foremost, students claim that the very possession of a name entitles one to a name-day. The question of whether or not an individual bearing a name that cannot be etymologically traced back to that of a saint or religious figure using Keber's *Lexicon of Names*, Slovenian birth registries, or local parishes' name-day calendars still remains. It is likely that when a name cannot be traced back to a saint or other holy figure using recognized resources such as Keber's *Lexicon of Names* or Slovenian birth registries, determining the date of an individual's name-day becomes difficult. The growing popularity of secular names results in a shift of symbolic power: where once the authority in recognizing the date of name-day celebrations fell to the name itself, the authority now resides with the individual (and/or the individual's relatives). In practice, individuals with secular names can choose to celebrate their name-day on the feast day of a saint that has a name similar to their own (all individuals bearing the name Aurora who choose to celebrate their name-day might do so on the feast day of St. Anne, for example). Likewise, individuals with secular names may choose not to celebrate their name-day at all. It seems that the role of the name in name-day celebrations becomes more unstable as secular names become more prevalent in societies.

Secondly, religious motivation behind the celebration appears to be mostly associated with adults and older adults in this film, rather than with children. Adults and children are notably separated from one another during both the annual Veliki Gaber celebration and during the local resident's name-day celebration. It seems that this separation is not purposeful but results naturally

from a distinction between the different motivations of the adults and children in celebrating name-days. For both age groups, socializing (within their respective generations) appears to be the most important motivation behind the celebration. Yet the children are not seen participating in any overtly religious activities. Prayer appears to be the only overtly religious activity observed in this footage, and it is done by adults who have temporarily removed themselves from the social gathering.

***Kako smo včasih praznovali gód* (Folklore Society of Holmec 2017)**

The second video analyzed is a film of a brief play entitled, "Kako smo včasih praznovali gód" ("How We Used to Celebrate Name-Days)" created by the Holmec Folklore Society, a musical group based in a small settlement near the village of Poljana, Slovenia, at the Austro-Slovenian border. The 2019 Slovenian census estimates the population of Poljana to be 104 inhabitants—significantly smaller than that of Veliki Gaber (Statistični urad Republike Slovenije 2019b). Like Veliki Gaber, the village of Poljana and its surrounding settlements are located in a rural area of hills and farmland, though Poljana is significantly more geographically isolated from urban areas than Veliki Gaber is.

According to the Holmec Folklore Society, the play is intended to portray an "almost forgotten custom," to "preserve fragments of the past for those who are interested, and thus save [the custom] from oblivion". The play is set "sometime in the 1950s or 60s." All actors are older adults and are dressed in casual clothing appropriate for the time period. There are no children or ordained clergymen/Church officials represented in the play. The play begins with two women setting the table and preparing food dishes for the name-day celebration of a gentleman named Jurij (after St. George), when their preparations are interrupted by *tablanje*. A crowd appears,

blowing whistles, shaking rattles, and hollering, accompanied by an accordion. They greet Jurij with the following song:

Mi smo se skupaj zbrali	*We've gathered together,*
Tvoji vsi prijatelji	*All of your friends,*
Da bi še enkrat zapeli	*Once again to sing well wishes*
Za tvoj god privoščili	*To you for your name-day.*
Mi iz srca ki želimo	*It is our hearts' desire*
Naj te obvaruje Bog	*For God to protect you*
Da bi še na mnoga leta	*So that you can happily celebrate*
praznoval vesel svoj god	*Your name-day for many years to come.*
Ta prva je svetica	*First is the Virgin Mary,*
Sveti Jurij je pa tvoj patron	*While St. George is your patron,*
Naj ti bo za vse v življenju	*May he be that for you in all things in life,*
Le posnemaj ga zvesto	*Just follow his example faithfully.*[27]

Adapted from the Slovenian folk song, "Mi smo se skupaj zbrali[28]" ("We've gathered together"), this introductory song implies a religious motivation for the name-day celebration portrayed in the play. The singers and the audience are reminded of an important religious hierarchy within the song: God is above all else, followed by the Virgin Mary, then by the patron saint, and finally, the individual bearing the saint's name. God, the Virgin Mary, and the patron saint are all figures that are respectively worshiped or venerated, while the individual bearing the name of a patron saint is not—instead, the individual acts as a kind of icon through which the saint is venerated. It is important to remember that customarily, it is the name itself that is being venerated, rather than the individual bearing it. Referring back to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, it is the religious duty of an individual bearing the name of a saint to reflect the actions of the saint in order to become closer to God ("Just follow his example faithfully").

[27] I am very grateful to Professor Michael E. Biggins for his assistance in the transcription and translation of this song.

[28] See Štrekelj, K. (1907). "5378." Slovenske narodne pesmi: 1904-1907: del 3. Pesmi za posebne prilik ; del 4. Pesmi pobožme. Zadružna tiskarnica. pp. 290.

While the song implies that there is underlying religious ideology attached to this particular celebration of Jurij's name-day, it is unclear if this ideology truly manifests as clear motivation for the religious celebration of Jurij's name-day. The lack of religious elements (prayer, worship, blessings, ordained clergymen, etc.) juxtaposed with the presence of folk customs (the playing of folk songs with traditional folk instruments, folk dancing, traditional toasts of "na zdravje!" ["to health!"], and the playing of a folk game) suggests that the motivation behind the celebration could be more social than religious, indicating that the focus of the name-day celebration is on socializing and invoking folk customs rather than worshipping and venerating religious figures.

In concluding the analysis of this video, I now return to the concept of "cultural Catholicism" mentioned earlier in this thesis. In *Kako smo včasih praznovali gód*, there is a covert though distinct linkage between Catholicism and Slovenian national heritage, as indicated by the Holmec Folklore Society's description of the play (to preserve the practices of a custom for "those who are interested"). There is no suggestion, other than the singing of "Mi smo si skupaj zbrali" and the fact that the custom of celebrating name-days is originally rooted in religious ideology, that the characters in the play are engaging in any specifically religious rituals. In fact, the language in the play only hints at religious themes when the actors are singing—all other language is focused on socialization and general, secular merrymaking. We must also remember that, according to the Holmec Folklore Society, that name-days are an "almost forgotten" custom—given the current status of modernity and globalization, it may be that the social gatherings themselves have become rarer and are only observed in specifically rural areas. While statistics regarding the demographics, locations, and frequencies of name-day celebrations have yet to be conducted and would prove extremely valuable to the analysis of secularism in regards to religious celebrations, the general understanding of name-day celebrations is that despite their prevalence in Slovenia, they are

becoming rarer and rarer, and the focus seems less to be on religious practices and ideologies and more so on socialization. In the final case to be examined, we will examine footage of religious celebration in a heavily populated, urban area.

***Godovanje Miklavža v Ljubljani* (TopTV Slovenija 2015)**

To begin the examination of this case, I will explain why I have chosen to include it in my case selection. *Godovanje Miklavža* (St. Nicholas Day), more commonly known as *Miklavževanje*, is an annual feast day celebrated by Christian traditions all over the world on December 6th (or December 19th for Christian traditions adhering to the Julian calendar). St. Nicholas Day is, technically, a name-day, and any individual bearing the name of the saint would be expected to celebrate his name day on St. Nicholas Day. However, the customs associated with the celebration of St. Nicholas Day are significantly (though not entirely) different from traditions associated with the celebration of name-days. The traditions of gift-giving fruit (especially to children), noisemaking, and singing religious songs are all present in the celebration, though the cynosure of the feast, St. Nicholas himself, is not venerated or acknowledged through a proxy (i.e., an individual bearing his name). Instead, his image is celebrated directly through veneration and prayer.

The analyzed video footage is documentation from the 2015 annual St. Nicholas Day Parade in Ljubljana. The parade takes place the night before St. Nicholas's feast day (consider the similarity between the custom of *tablanje* on the night before an individual's name-day) and is attended by thousands of people. What makes this video distinct, however, is the active presence and engagement of the local government. The mayor of Ljubljana, Zoran Janković, makes a public appearance and officially begins the festivities of St. Nicholas Day. The presence of Ljubljana's mayor, and, by extension, the Slovenian government, significantly impacts the language,

symbolism, and narrative of the celebration. Where name-day celebrations, while community events, are often private and available only to selected community members, the celebration of St. Nicholas Day in Ljubljana is a public event under the direct supervision of the government—therefore, it is an extremely valuable environment in which to analyze the variables of ideology, narrative, symbolism, and language.

Of the three videos selected, the footage of St. Nicholas Day contains the most overtly religious symbols. The figure of St. Nicholas rides atop a white float, wearing the traditional choir cassock and miter and bearing an ornamental shepherd's crook. Traditional illustrations of St. Nicholas depict the saint wearing a miter with the motif of a cross; however, the figure of St. Nicholas in the Ljubljana St. Nicholas Day parade was noticeably lacking any symbols of the cross.

Two figures of angels accompanied the figure of St. Nicholas on the float—one dressed in gold, carrying a black book with red pages (symbolically containing the names of children who have been naughty), and one dressed in red, carrying a golden book (symbolically containing the names of the children who have been nice). When reading his scripted speech, the figure of St. Nicholas does not read from the black book, likely to symbolize that all children in attendance have been good throughout the year.

Leading the procession of the float is the demon figure of Parkelj (whose western equivalent is Krampus), carrying a torch and oil and breathing fire before the crowd. He is accompanied by a number of individuals dressed as devils, who bear chains, shaking them before the parade-goers and snarling and growling at children. The chains, of course, symbolize punishment bad children will receive (and perhaps even eternal imprisonment in hell for sinners), yet the procession—not taking into account the themes of heaven and hell, good and evil, or reward

and punishment—is visually and customarily similar to the tradition of *tablanje*: it is a noise-making procession, marking the celebration of a feast day. The procession, weaving through the city's streets and among holiday lights depicting stars, crosses, moons, and planets, halts at the Franciscan Church of the Annunciation[29], where the crowd is addressed by the figure of St. Nicholas.

Mayor Zoran Janković's speech is quick, pleasant, impersonal, and, as appropriate for an appointed government official of Slovenia, secular. He is introduced to the crowd by the figure of St. Nicholas, thanks the parade-goers for their attendance, and prepares the crowd for further festivities, while municipal security guards monitor the crowd. St. Nicholas's scripted dialogue, presented in front of the crowd at the Franciscan Church of the Annunciation in Ljubljana, is also overtly secular; however, it may be said to contain underlying religious themes. He tells the children to be good and allow the light within them to shine brightly and guide them, though does not directly attribute this light to anything religious. A choir of children dressed as angels then begins to sing a series of traditional religious hymns in Slovene, while angels and devils distribute gifts of oranges and chocolate to children in the crowd (gifts which, traditionally associated with the celebration of St. Nicholas's Day, also adhere to the description of gifts traditionally given for name-day celebrations).

Noticeably, ordained clergymen and/or Church officials are absent from this public event. It is striking that the Church, as an institution, is not represented during such an important, public, religious celebration, especially considering the fact that the celebration is set on the steps of the Franciscan Parish Church of the Annunciation. It is likely that the secularization of this religious

[29] Located in Prešeren Square in the heart of Ljubljana, the Franciscan Church of the Annunciation, the Parish church of Ljubljana, is more than a religious space of worship. In 2008, it was named a Cultural Monument of National Significance by the Republic of Slovenia and acts as an important symbol of the linkage between Slovenian national heritage and the Catholic Church (Uradni list Republike Slovenije 2008).

holiday was due to the presence of the local government—namely, the local government's acting in accord with the constitutional separation of church and state.

Despite religious symbols (the figure of St. Nicholas, the angels, the holiday lights in the shapes of stars and crosses, the figure of Parkelj, the devils, and the setting at the Franciscan Church of the Annunciation) and the religious nature of St. Nicholas's Day, the overall mood of the celebration was notably secular. The crowd was not seen engaging in religious activities, such as prayer or singing religious songs. Concluding my analysis of this footage, the motivation behind the public celebration of St. Nicholas's Day in Ljubljana appears to have been based heavily on socialization and the children's excitement at the prospect of receiving gifts. Though the religious songs of the celebration were sung by a children's choir, the children's choir was socially separate from the children in the crowd. Though there was no evidence among the crowd of any religious rituals or customs such as prayer (which would, then, hint at any generational differences among participants of such customs), we can conclude that the behavior of the spectator children during this particular celebration of St. Nicholas's Day can be likened to the behavior of the children observed in the name-day celebrations of Veliki Gaber: significantly secular and highly motivated by socialization.

Conclusion

In this thesis, I have provided a brief overview of the history of the Slovenian Catholic Church during the communist and post-communist eras and have outlined current church-state relations in Slovenia. These summaries suggest that while cultural Catholicism is still heavily present in Slovenia (as observed through the example of name-day celebrations, to the extent that name-days originated as religious celebrations), motivations behind religious celebrations have likely shifted as a result of the ongoing process of secularization, which, while having begun before

the era of communism in the SFRY, culminated and accelerated as a result of the history of the Catholic Church's relationship with the LCY.

In order to supplement the examination of why Slovenes are self-reporting secular tendencies in social surveys, I analyzed footage of scripted and unscripted name-day celebrations to determine if modern name-day celebrations portray any secular characteristics that deviate from the Catholic Church's prescribed ways of celebrating name-days. Through the examination of ideologies, symbolism, narrative, and language within each of the films, I have concluded that there are three phenomena that might suggest why these secularisms have appeared in these celebrations, and by extension, may supplement studies regarding the increasing amount of Slovenian self-reported secularism in social surveys.

Firstly, there appears to have been a shift in the power dynamic between the name of a patron saint and the individual bearing the name. Catholic tradition encourages those who celebrate name-days to honor the name—using the individual as a kind of icon—associated with the feast-day celebration in order to directly venerate the patron saint. However, with the slowly increasing popularity of names that cannot be found and/or traced in resources such as Keber's *Lexicon of Names* or traditional Slovene birth registries (and are therefore not directly associated with a patron saint), the power in deciding whether or not to celebrate a name-day belongs more so (though not exclusively) to the individual bearing the name. Individuals with secular names, therefore, can choose not to celebrate a name-day, or instead, choose to celebrate a name-day of a patron saint whose name is similar to their own. This choice exists exclusively among individuals with secular names.

Secondly, there exists a significant difference in ways of celebration of name-days between adults and children. Festivities of overtly religious ideology associated with the celebration of

name-days appear to be generally of more interest to adults. In the three films, only adults and older adults are observed to participate in overtly religious activities, such as praying, while being physically removed from children. The children, on the other hand, are observed to be socializing and playing games. Though there is not yet enough data and significant room for discussion, one wonders if the younger generation's lack of participation in religious customs during name-day celebrations will be inherited by future generations, thus further shifting focus from the traditional religiosity of the celebration to socialization and the honoring of folk heritage—or, on the contrary, if children will learn and acquire religious practices as they mature, having been socialized into viewing such customs as part of adulthood. Considering the latter possibility, it would be important to examine the ideologies and motivations of individuals behind the celebration of religious customs over time to observe any possible shifts in light of secularization.

The third conclusion that may be drawn from these three films is that traditional Slovenian name-day celebrations seem to be mostly prevalent in rural areas (e.g., villages such as Veliki Gaber and Poljana) and less so in urban areas, especially considering that the only available footage of traditional name-day celebrations was set in rural areas, while no footage of traditional name-day celebrations occurring in urban areas could be found. The religious celebration of St. Nicholas's Day in Ljubljana was directly managed by the local government, and while name-day celebrations themselves are traditionally private customs celebrated only by the family and the small, immediate community, the secular attitudes of the local government likely affect the moods and motivations of individuals living in urban areas regarding the celebration of name-days. Urban areas tend to be associated with modernization (and, by extension, secularization) much more than rural areas.

Name-days are only one kind of religious custom, yet they can facilitate important research and discussions regarding secularization. Secularisms observed in small-scale, private, religious customs are more likely to point towards private ontological beliefs. Shifts in symbolic power—between name and individual, between religion and nation—suggest that while church-state relations are largely responsible for the secularization of a state, the attitudes of private citizens towards religious traditions must also be responsible for self-reported secularization portrayed in social surveys.

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