

Religious incongruence:

**The case of religiosity impact on tolerance
of behavior that is disapproved by
religions**

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Research question

The central research question is how religion influences values and attitudes.

Religiosity is a multilevel and a multidimensional phenomenon, which includes at least two levels (general and specific religiosity) and at least three dimensions (belonging, beliefs and practices).

I study one of the normative spheres where we can expect that social norms will be especially strictly prescribed by religion, and deviance strongly disapproved, namely – the attitudes towards sexuality, family and existential issues: homosexuality, having casual sex, prostitution, abortion, divorce, euthanasia, suicide.

Project findings

Religious incongruence is an important characteristic, modifying the shape of relationship between individual religiosity and tolerance of behavior that is disapproved by religions.

Higher religiosity levels are expected to associate with higher intolerance towards deviation from social norms, prescribed by religions. This is true, but only when religiosity is a coherent phenomenon.

The forms of religious incongruence in question are two types of imbalance between believing and belonging.

Theoretical framework: religiosity measurement issues

Two major traits of religiosity operationalizations are the ideas of multidimensionality and hierarchical organization of this phenomenon.

G. Allport (1954) proposed two expressions of religiosity: intrinsic and extrinsic.

Ch. Glock (1962) proposed 5 religiosity dimensions: experiential, ritualistic, ideological, intellectual, and consequential.

J. Faulkner and G. de Jong (1966), Ch. Glock and R. Stark (1968) developed methods for empirical evaluation of theoretically derived dimensions.

P.C. Hill (2005) defines religiosity on two levels: dispositional – that is general religiosity, showing how religious a person is, and functional which refers to specific ways religiosity is expressed.

Theoretical framework: religious congruence fallacy

R. Inglehart and P. Norris (“Sacred and Secular”, 2004): *importance of religion* is one of the most preferable variables to use in analysis as it is the most unifying for different religions and religious cultures on one hand, and highly correlated with other religiosity measures, on the other hand.

M. Chaves: Religious congruence fallacy occurs when researches unjustifiably take for granted the consistency of religious phenomenon, which has three meanings: that “(1) individuals’ religious ideas constitute a tight, logically connected, integrated network of internally consistent beliefs and values; (2) religious and other practices and actions follow directly from those beliefs and values; and (3) the religious beliefs and values that individuals express in certain, mainly religious, contexts are consistently held and chronically accessible across contexts, situations, and life domains” (“Rain Dances in the Dry Season: Overcoming the Religious Congruence Fallacy”, 2010, p.2)

One of the ways incongruence is captured is the “believing without belonging” category, introduced by G. Davie to describe the changes in religiosity in Britain at the end of the 20-th century (“Believing without Belonging: Is This the Future of Religion in Britain?”, 1990)

Main variables

Dependent variables: tolerance of behavior that is disapproved by religions (index, constructed via factor analysis)

Independent variables:

- a) religiosity typology groups (dummy, 1/0)
- b) religious denomination (dummy, 1/0)
- c) country group (dummy, 1/0)
- d) socio-demographic control variables

Variables construction

Factor analysis component matrix

Questions: “Please tell me for each of the following whether you think it can always be justified, never be justified, or something in between...” (1-never justified, 10-always justified)

homosexuality	0.76
abortion	0.78
divorce	0.78
euthanasia	0.72
suicide	0.68
having casual sex	0.68
prostitution	0.70

53% of variance explained by a single factor

Variables construction

Religiosity cluster analysis

Identification of respondents with a specific denomination:

Question: “Do you belong to a religious denomination? (1-“yes”, 0-“no”) Which one?”

Religious Beliefs:

Question: “Which, if any, of the following do you believe in? ... God / Life after death / Heaven / Hell (1-“yes”, 0-“no”)

Religious Practices:

Question: “Apart from weddings, funerals and christenings, about how often do you attend religious services these days?” (7-point scale, from 0- “never, practically never” to 1 - “once a week”)

Question: “How often do you pray to God outside of religious services? Would you say” (6-point scale, from 0-“never”, to 1 – “once week”)

Variables construction

Religiosity cluster analysis

	non-religious	belonging not believing	believing not belonging	less religious	rather religious	religious
belong to a religious denomination	0	<u>1</u>	0.2	<u>1</u>	<u>0.9</u>	<u>1</u>
believe in God	0.2	0	0.5	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
believe in life after death	0	0	<u>1</u>	0.3	0	<u>1</u>
believe in hell	0	0	0	0	0.6	<u>0.9</u>
believe in heaven	0	0	0.2	0	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
pray to God outside religious services	0.08	0.09	0.23	<u>0.49</u>	<u>0.62</u>	<u>0.78</u>
attend religious services	0.09	0.19	0.15	<u>0.41</u>	<u>0.46</u>	<u>0.58</u>
<i>base</i>	<i>10369</i>	<i>3847</i>	<i>2894</i>	<i>12679</i>	<i>5257</i>	<i>26117</i>

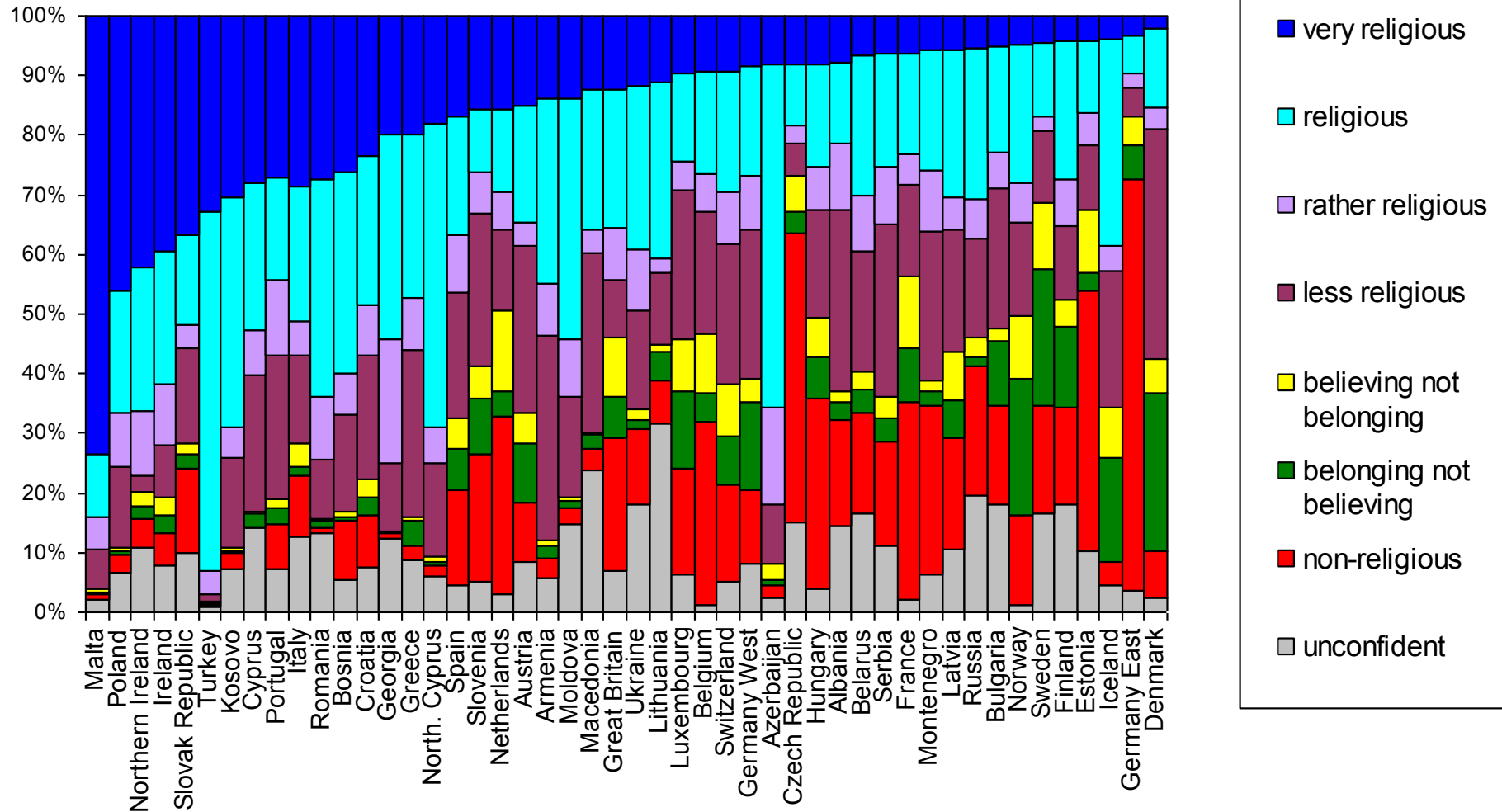
Method: k-means cluster analysis, variables recoded “0/1”, missing - pairwise

Base: all respondents with no more than 2 “hard to say” answers

Additional groups: (1) unconfident (3 or more “hard to say” answers, 6623 resp.)

(2) very religious (attend services once a week, believe, and belong to a denomination, 11858 resp.)

Religiosity: countries profiles



Religiosity influence – mean scores

	Mean scores
non-religious	0.54
believing not belonging	0.76
belonging not believing	0.71
less religious	0.07
unconfident	-0.05
rather religious	-0.21
religious	-0.26
very religious	-0.59

Note: $p < 0.001$

Higher religiosity levels are associated with lower tolerance of behavior that is disapproved by religions.

But there are 2 outlier groups: belonging to a religious denomination but not believing & practicing, and believing without belonging. Tolerance is increasing in these groups even with reference to non-religious Europeans.

Religiosity influence with control

	R ² =0.17	R ² =0.30	R ² =0.34	R ² =0.26	R ² =0.30
Intercept	0.43**	0.88**	0.83**	0.47**	0.52**
believing not belonging	0.33**	0.15**	0.12**	0.28**	0.24**
belonging not believing	0.28**	0.00 (n.s.)	0.01 (n.s.)	0.25**	0.23**
less religious	-0.27**	-0.27**	-0.26**	-0.09**	-0.08**
unconfident	-0.41**	-0.30**	-0.29**	-0.24**	-0.25**
rather religious	-0.48**	-0.42**	-0.39**	-0.30**	-0.28**
religious	-0.69**	-0.60**	-0.59**	-0.37**	-0.37**
very religious	-0.94**	-0.86**	-0.79**	-0.73**	-0.66**
Scandinavian		0.32**	0.26**		
South Europe		-0.59**	-0.53**		
Post-soviet		-0.84**	-0.92**		
Other ex-communist		-0.67**	-0.69**		
Age			-0.006**		-0.007**
Education level			0.61**		0.48**
Roman catholic				-0.09**	-0.05**
Protestant				0.29**	0.32**
Muslim				-0.80**	-0.81**
Orthodox				-0.55**	-0.55**
Other denominations				-0.17**	-0.16**

Reference categories:
for religiosity: non-religious
for country group: Western Europe
For denomination: no denomination

**p<0.001

Conclusions

Religiosity is not a continuum, it is rather a complex phenomenon, which includes several dimensions. There are 2 forms of religious incongruence in our analysis – believing without belonging and belonging without believing.

Generally, higher levels of religiosity are associated with decrease in tolerance of behavior that is disapproved by religions, but only if religion is an internally consistent phenomenon.

In two groups, characterized by religious incongruence in different dimensions of religiosity (belonging, beliefs and practice), tolerance of deviation from social norms, prescribed by religions is even higher than among non-religious Europeans. This effect, at least in one of the groups, remains (although diminishes) even when controlled for socio-demographic characteristics, denomination and country group.

Religiosity does influence norms, values, and attitudes in predicted direction, but only when religious congruence is the case.