

The Role of Religiosity on Political Participation

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Abstract

Since Weber's "Protestant Ethic" the role of religiosity in organizing one's day-to-day activities has been taken into consideration as an explanatory variable for social participation. While churches can be regarded as non-political organizations, church attendance could increase political participation given that church membership involves a strong social component that can influence political participation. Using the 2017 World Values Survey data, I have tested the association between political participation (conventional and unconventional) and religiosity in its spiritual and participatory forms. The results suggest that although some forms of religiosity are associated with more conventional or safe forms of political participation, more involving forms of political engagement are negatively associated with religiousness.

Keywords

Civic engagement; religiosity; political participation; social capital; voting; non-institutional political participation.

Introduction

The link between religiosity and civic participation might not be very obvious at a first glance, but looking at religious service as a kind of social activity can open some new perspectives on their importance to civic involvement. The work of Burns, Schlozman, and Verba (2001) highlighted that membership in non-political organizations can increase civic participation by providing a set of social and organizational skills that can ease engagement in political activities. Since churches could be regarded as non-political organizations (the Romanian-Orthodox Church's official statement is that of non-political involvement), it could be analyzed whether religiosity (in its social and spiritual sides) could positively influence political participation.

Although religiosity can be viewed as a means to develop certain civic skills, it is important to acknowledge that it can have a greater impact on many other aspects of life. For example, a religious person might organize their entire life around religious beliefs (Ysseldyk, Matheson, & Anisman, 2010), religious dogma playing an important role in modeling their behavior.

Taking all these into consideration, the most recent referendum regarding the definition of family within the constitution was a process initiated by a religious non-governmental association (*Coalitia pentru Familie*). For the first time in post-communist Romania's history, a religious organization has undergone specific political action to achieve its goals. Because of this, it is important to further understand if there is an underlying mechanism by which religiosity can encourage political engagement

and if there are certain differences regarding the pattern of involvement according to one's level of religiosity.

The fact that religiosity has been mostly disregarded as an explanatory variable for political participation provides a necessary incentive to further investigate its effects. Using the 2017 World Values Survey data, this paper aims to test whether there is an association between different forms of religiosity (social or spiritual) and political participation. The following section highlights the alternative views on religiosity, dividing this concept into social and spiritual types, then presents the social mechanism by which religiosity can encourage political participation. Lastly, the paper presents the methodology and defines the variables. Next is an empirical examination of the effect of religiosity as it has been previously defined on political participation. The last section concludes the paper and makes suggestions for further research.

Defining religiosity

When talking about religion, some might think of it as the subject of theology, the study of deity and its relation to humankind but in this paper, the aspects of religious dogma are not the main focus, rather, the religious behavior and the normative component of religious dogma. Religion can be viewed as a broader set of norms that can prescribe acceptable and non-acceptable behavior. These social norms can provide a common ground for forming social groups, and can also give the individual a sense of identity (Ysseldyk et al., 2010). Religiosity can also become an element of social cohesion, providing means to develop social connections, a sense of community or can provide means of coping with social exclusion (McAndrew & Voas, 2014). For example, religious involvement is often associated with greater civic participation among the ethnic minorities in Britain, because through church attendance individuals have the opportunity to learn some civic skills and form social connections which enables them to become more involved in other types of social activities (volunteering, community work, joining clubs).

Religious beliefs can also shape patterns of political engagement because they offer a view on humanity, and provide a set of social norms that can influence how individuals prioritize certain matters when it comes to political action (ex: government action on issues as abortion and same-sex marriage have been shown to increase the political involvement of religious individuals) (Omelicheva & Ahmed, 2018; Soriano, Adorable, Llenares, & Bernarte, 2018; Neiheisel, 2019). Although beliefs can play an important part in shaping political action, it is important to underline an important observation: religiosity without social participation within a religious community can have little effect on political action (Driskell, Embry, & Lyon, 2008). Without the necessary social interaction and community bonds, there can be fewer chances for individuals to engage in politically relevant matters.

Also, regular church attendance and involvement in church coordinated activities have been linked to higher levels of political activity, mainly to higher rates of voter turnout and higher rates of civic involvement (Burns et al., 2001; Tossutti, Wang, & Kaas-Mason, 2008).

To summarize, there are two main focuses when it comes to defining religiosity: social and spiritual (or individual) religiosity. Social religiosity can be defined as taking part in religious activities that involve cooperation and/or interaction with other members, while spiritual religiosity focuses on the frequency of prayer, the importance of God, and religion (Pearce, Hayward, & Pearlman, 2017). Although part of the same broad concept of religiosity, their influence on political action can be quite different: on one hand social religiosity can promote civic and political involvement because it encourages meaningful human interaction and cooperation, while spiritual or individual religiosity may prove to have little to no effect on political participation (Driskell et al., 2008).

From religion to political participation

The concept of political participation has been generally defined as an “*activity that has the intent or effect of influencing government action—either directly, by affecting the making or implementation of public policy, or indirectly, by influencing the selection of people who make those policies.*” (Burns et al., 2001, p. 4) The intent of influencing government action is the key element that can differentiate between political and civic activities. As a result, activities that are not politically relevant (Burns et al., 2001, Chapter 4) can be referred to as forms of civic engagement, while activities that have a direct intent of influencing government action can be considered forms of political engagement.

When defining political participation, it is important to acknowledge both its traditional and non-institutional types. Traditional forms of political participation focus more on institutionalized actions, (for example voting or party membership) (Marien, Hooghe, & Quintelier, 2010), while non-institutional political participation focuses on action like protest/boycott attendance, signing petitions, or other various forms of political activism (Goerres, 2009). Within the present model, both forms of political participation will be taken into consideration.

The mechanism through which religiosity plays a role in political participation focuses on the social relations formed within religious groups. According to the social capital theory, these social connections can become an important resource, just as important as economic capital or cultural capital, when it comes to achieving a goal. For example, Robert Putnam (1995) highlights the aspect of community when referring to social capital, arguing that co-operation and trust are means of achieving greater goals, otherwise unreachable by a single individual, hence the importance of trust in forming social connections.

In his text “Bowling Alone”, Putnam (2000) defines two types of social capital:

- (1) *Bonding capital* (for groups that have a common identity, or share a common resemblance: family, friends, ethnic groups, fundamentalist religious groups);
- (2) *Bridging capital* (between people that are unfamiliar with one another or individuals belonging to different social groups: voluntary associations, hobby groups, etc.).

Bridging capital is the type of social capital that allows coordination and cooperation between individuals that do not share a common identity from the start but can work to develop one. Because of this, social religiosity can be regarded as a form of bridging capital, since it implies the interaction, exchange of information, and cooperation between individuals that do not necessarily belong to the same social group (Kortt & Drew, 2018). Churches can become gathering points where people can become involved in many types of activities other than regular worship (educational activities, voluntary work, community work, etc.). As a result, churchgoers can have many opportunities to train certain civic and communicational skills, which later on might enable people to become politically involved since churches can “*directly support a wide range of social activities well beyond conventional worship.*”, also “*churchgoers are substantially more likely to be involved in secular organizations, to vote and participate politically in other ways, to have deeper social connections.*” (Putnam, 2000, Chapter 4). In other words, something as private as religion or religious activities can become a source of political participation.

Some studies have shown that religious beliefs can have an impact on protest participation, if participants have some religious grievances which could be satisfied through protest participation (McVeigh & Sikkink, 2001; Omelicheva & Ahmed, 2018, p. 4). From this perspective, religious beliefs act as incentives for political participation, while membership in religious organizations acts as a structure of political opportunities.

Religious beliefs can also be used as a catalyst for voting participation. Direct appeals from clergy to vote in elections, or to back certain candidates can affect members' levels of political engagement (Collins, Wink, Guth, & Livingston, 2011). Nonetheless, religious individuals can be more inclined to vote for politicians/political parties who either are perceived as religious or promote policies that adhere to individuals' religious beliefs (Knutsen, 2004).

Religion and politics in Romania

The Romanian Orthodox Church holds a special status among other churches in Romania, mainly because of the large number of people who identify as orthodox (according to the 2011 census 86% of Romania's adult population is orthodox). Because of this, R.O.C has held a significant amount of power both when it comes to Romanian politics and its impact on civic society. Since the early 1800s, the Romanian Orthodox Church had an important contribution to developing charity as a form of civic action, which later on encouraged donations to other institutions (hospitals, public libraries, and kindergartens)(Todora, 2008). This practice has continued until today, when the orthodox church is still involved with providing social care for the needy, either directly through donations or through faith-based organizations (Cojocaru, Cojocaru, & Sandu, 2011; Cace, Cace, & Nicolaescu, 2011). These forms of social care were especially prevalent during the economic crisis when the Romanian Orthodox church had employed almost 3500 people (mostly volunteers, social workers, counselors, and social assistants) who provided some forms of aid for disadvantaged families. It can be argued that there is some faith-based civic

involvement coordinated (or at least encouraged) by the ROC, but the effect of such involvement on political engagement remains to be established.

Although the ROC's official statement is that of non-political affiliation (Turcescu & Stan, 2005), this does not automatically imply that faith-based political organizations revolving around ROC have not been politically active, or that politicians do not use religious symbols to legitimize themselves. Religious discourse has a highly persuasive power "*which can be intertwined with the political message to gain greater resonance in the individual and collective mentalities and therefore can be used as an election campaign tool*" (Rus, Pavelea, Deac, & Farcas, 2011). But relevant to this discussion would be the ability to form politically relevant social capital within religious groups, and how church attendance can aid this process. If politically relevant subjects are appropriate and socially acceptable subjects to discuss within the church environment, then it would have greater chances of producing politically relevant social capital. Some politically relevant subjects have been previously discussed within religious communities and the church environment. Matters related to government actions regarding homosexuality for example have been heavily contested by religious figures, starting from the decriminalization of homosexuality in 1990.

Methodology

The analysis of the impact of religion on political participation will be performed on data from the World Values Survey wave 7 on Romania from 2017, which encompassed 1504 respondents, at a 95% confidence interval with a 2.57% margin of error. For the 2017 wave, the respondents from 2012 were approached. The 2012 sample included 1504 respondents. In this wave, the responsible organization targeted a minimum sample size as follows:

- (1) For the 1504-respondent panel, the data-collecting agency used the 4-visits algorithm. For each PSU, the responsible organization made sure that questionnaires were filled with at least 1050/1504 respondents from the initial panel (response rate 70%). So, for each PSU, interviewers had on average 7 interviews with respondents from the first wave (2012).
- (2) To address the under-representation of those aged 18-22, a sample of 150 young people was randomly selected, one for each PSU.¹

For this model, political participation will be measured using the conceptualization provided by Verba and Nie (1987), where political participation is divided into: 1) Voting, 2) Election campaigning for political parties, 3) Taking part in communal activities, and 4) Contacting decision-makers, such as representatives or officials. Although this differentiation is useful for some forms of political participation, it provides a narrow overview of this concept. More precisely, it fails to take into account unconventional forms of political engagement. To address these issues, Barnes and Kasse (1979) provided a new definition of political participation which takes into account actions that do not necessarily involve interacting with the state in a compliant (or legal) way, and divided this concept into conventional and unconventional forms of political participation. While unconventional political participation refers to actions

¹ <https://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSDocumentationWV7.jsp>

such as joining in boycotts, attending peaceful demonstrations, joining unofficial strikes, and signing petitions, conventional forms of political participation include all actions taken into consideration by Verba and Nie (1987) in their definition.

Within the present model, political participation will be defined as having two main dimensions: conventional (which includes Verba and Nie's definition of political participation) and unconventional (which includes various forms of political protest¹).

When measuring religiosity, this study will focus on three main components: piety, practice, and participation in activities² (Iddagoda & Opatha, 2018). Piety refers to belief and reverence for divinity, practice refers to what the religion of the founder of the religion preached and participation in activities within the religious community. This differentiation can be useful to test the association with political participation since previous literature highlights the importance of community engagement for political engagement.

Hypotheses

Based on the previous research, this analysis will explore the effects of religiosity on political participation by comparing the political engagement of religious versus less religious individuals.

(H1) There is a positive association between participatory religiosity and conventional forms of political participation.

(H2) There is a positive association between social religiosity and unconventional forms of political participation

(H3) There is a positive association between spiritual religiosity and conventional forms of political participation

Factor Analysis

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure verified the sampling adequacy for the analysis, KMO = .809. Bartlett's test of sphericity = 3008.668, $p < .001$, indicating that correlation structure is adequate for factor analyses. The maximum likelihood factor analysis with a cut-off point of .30 and the Kaiser's criterion of eigenvalues greater than 1 yielded a three-factor solution as the best fit for the data, accounting for 49.756% of the variance. The results of this factor analysis are presented in Table 1. Most of these components have the same structure as those presented in previous research (Collins et al., 2011; McVeigh & Sikkink, 2001; Omelicheva & Ahmed, 2018), mainly, the unconventional political participation, religiosity, conventional political participation (voting). Interestingly, the component matrix has attributed variables measuring the importance of religion, the importance of God, religious service attendance, frequency of prayer and voting to component 2, and religious organization membership, political party membership, and religious service attendance to component 3. These findings provide a basis for further investigating the relationship between these variables.

¹ Details regarding the variables used can be found in the Appendix

² Details regarding the variables used can be found in the Appendix

Table 1. Exploratory Factor Analysis

Exploratory Factor Analysis	Factor		
	1	2	3
Important in life: Religion		.709	
Active/Inactive membership: church or religious org			.806
Active/Inactive membership: political party			.580
Importance of God		-.781	
How often do you attend religious services		.628	-.349
How often do you pray		.798	
Political action: Signing a petition	.746		
Political action: Joining in boycotts	.662		
Political action: Attending lawful/peaceful demonstrations	.758		
Political action: Joining unofficial strikes	.723		
Social activism: Donating to a group or campaign	.601		
Social activism: Contacting a government official	.672		
Political actions online: Organizing political activities, events, protests	.608		
Vote in elections: national level		.305	

Correlation and regression analysis

Looking at the correlation matrix (Table 2) that contains all variables used in the model, we can observe that components of spiritual religiosity had the most associations with all forms of political participation, while participatory religiosity when mostly associated with conventional forms of political participation. It also needs to be added that most of these associations are rather weak, although there are some exceptions with the relationship between political party membership and religious organization membership (Spearman cor. = .290), and between petition signing and the importance of God (Spearman cor. = .202).

Table 2. Correlation Matrix

	Political party member	Signing a petition	Joining in boycotts	Attending lawful/peaceful demonstrations	Joining unofficial strikes	Donating to a group or campaign	Contacting a government official	Organizing political activities, events, protests	Vote in elections: national level
Important in life: Religion	-0.033	-.179**	-.143**	-.183**	-.172**	-.098**	-.073**	-.089**	.089**
Active/Inactive membership: church or religious org	.290**	-.058	-.054	-.070*	-.007	-.065*	.036	-.025	-.054
Importance of God	-.034	.202**	.150**	.147**	.133**	.105**	.056	.101**	-.171**
How often do you attend religious services	-.092**	-.013	-.030	-.008	-.048	.036	.043	-.010	.134**

How often do you pray	-.027	-.113**	-.095**	-.099**	-.132**	-.041	-.029	-.088**	.178**
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p<0.01** and *p*<0.05*

Secondly, looking at the regression analysis (Table 3, 4, and 5), we can observe how in the first model which contains all the variables for religiosity, the most relevant overall predictors across all of the models were the importance of God and religious organization membership.

Voting at the national level

Within the first model, the importance of God was the strongest predictor, for every one-unit increase in the importance of God, there is a predicted decrease of .123 in the log odds of being in a higher level of the dependent variable. More precisely, individuals, which attribute a higher level of importance to God in their lives, have a lower chance of voting. Secondly, the frequency of prayer, which was the second statistically relevant factor in the model, accounted for a predicted increase of 0.85 in the log odds of an individual being in a higher category, for every one-unit increase on this variable. As a result, people who pray more often have a higher chance of going voting.

Within the second regression model, where only forms of spiritual religiosity were introduced within the model, the same variables are significant predictors, the frequency of prayer having a slightly stronger impact on the dependent variable. Moreover, within the last regression model, which included only forms of participatory religiosity, religious service attendance was a significant factor, where a unit increase on these variables accounted for a predicted increase of .165 in the log odds of individual voting.

Political actions: Signing a petition

Regarding petition signing, the most important predictors associated with this variable were the importance of God and the second category on the importance of religion. More precisely, people who attribute higher importance to God in their lives have a higher chance of having signed a petition, and individuals who are not a member of a religious organization have a higher chance of having signed a petition than individuals who are active members of a religious organization. Lastly, higher scores on the importance of religion were associated with a lower chance of having signed a petition. For the last two regression models, petition signing was overall associated only with forms of spiritual religiosity (the importance of God and the importance of religion), and not at all with forms of participatory religiosity, although it needs to be remarked that within the second model the importance of religion had an overall negative association with petition signing.

Joining in boycotts

Within this model, the main predictor variables were the importance of God and religious organization membership. More precisely, individuals that attributed higher importance to God in their lives had an increased chance of having joined a boycott,

and individuals who are not a member of a religious organization had a predicted increase of .449 odds of having joined a boycott than individuals who are members of a religious organization.

Attending lawful/peaceful demonstrations

For this variable, the importance of religion (within the first model), as well as religious organization membership in the third model, were significant predictors. Although these results should be interpreted with caution, overall individuals that attributed higher importance to religion in their lives had a higher chance of having attended a peaceful demonstration than individuals who believe that religion is not at all important in their lives (as seen in the first regression model). In addition, inactive members of religious organizations had a lower chance of attending a peaceful demonstration than active members (as seen in the last regression model).

Donating to a group or campaign

Within the first regression model, higher chances of donating to a group or a campaign were strongly associated with a religious membership organization. Individuals who were either not a member or an inactive member of a religious organization have higher odds of having donated to a group or a campaign than individuals who are members of a religious organization.

Contacting a government official

Although both the first model and the second model of regression did not have any statistically significant predictors, the last model had religious organization membership as a significant predictor. As a result, individuals who are not members of a religious organization had lower odds of contacting a government official than individuals who are active members. However, this result is not of great importance since the model itself is not a robust one.

Active/Inactive membership: political party

Within all three models, political party membership was only associated with religious organization membership. More precisely, individuals who are not members of a religious organization had significantly lower odds of being a political party member than individuals who are active members of a religious organization. However, inactive members of religious organizations had higher odds of being members of a political party than active members. These results were similar for Model 1 and 3 (as seen in Table 3 and Table 5).

Table 3. Model 1 Ordinal Regression Analysis

	Voting: National level	Organizin g political activities, events, protests	Signing a petition	Joining in boycotts	Attending lawful/ peaceful demonstr ations	Joining unofficial strikes	Donating to a group or campaign	Contactin g a governme nt official	Political party member- ship
Importance of God	-.132**	.038	.113**	.094*	.013	.029	.059	.038	-.033
Religious service attendance	0.60	.007	.066	.004	.043	.024	.073	.007	-.050
Frequency of prayer	0.85*	-.036	-.042	-.003	-.030	-.056	-.015	-.036	.029
The importance of religion = 1. very important	.249	.087	-.082	.149	.752*	.616	-.064	.087	.614
The importance of religion = 2. rather important	.149	-.460	-.667*	-.558	.213	.044	-.461	-.460	.512
The importance of religion = 3. Not very important	.104	-.195	-.875*	-.764	-.185	-.144	-.588	-.195	.439
The importance of religion = 3. Not important at all	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Religious organization membership = 0. Not a member	.280	.025	.449*	.737*	.326	.365	.638*	.025	-1.068**
Religious organization membership = 1. Inactive member	.320	-.325	.148	.471	-.286	.362	.613*	-.325	1.281**
Religious organization membership = 2. Active member	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Model fitting information	Significant at p<.001	Significant at p<.005	Significant at p<.001	Significant at p<.001	Significant at p<.001	Significant at p<.001	Significant at p<.001	Significant at p<.005	Significant at p<.001
Goodness of fit	Pearson – p - .004 Deviance – p - .324	Pearson – p - .502 Deviance – p - .1000	Pearson – p - .216 Deviance – p - .031	Pearson – p - .828 Deviance – p - .1000	Pearson – p - .133 Deviance – p - .356	Pearson – p - .039 Deviance – p - .537	Pearson – p - .223 Deviance – p - .000	Pearson – p - .502 Deviance – p - .1000	Pearson – p - .392 Deviance – p - .1000
Test of Parallel lines	Sig. .002	Sig. .010	Sig. .022	Sig. .827	Sig. .029	Sig. .000	Sig. .097	Sig. .010	Sig. .003
Nagelkerke R/ R²	.053	.024	.071	.056	.055	.043	.032	.024	.166

p<0.01** and *p*<0.05*

Table 4. Model 2 Ordinal Regression Analysis

	Voting: National level	Organizing political activities, events, protests	Signing a petition	Joining in boycotts	Attending lawful/peaceful demonstrations	Joining unofficial strikes	Donating to a group or campaign	Contacting a government official	Political party membership	
Importance of God	-133**	.041	.112**	.096*	.021	.025	.056	.028	-.090	
Frequency of prayer	.111**	-.017	-.005	.005	.000	-.043	.028	.043	-.092	
The importance of religion = 1. very important	.222	.084	-.177	.048	.632	.580	-.132	.331	1.134	
The importance of religion = 2. rather important	.137	-.495	-.720*	-.563	.080	.033	-.456	-.162	1.195	
The importance of religion = 3. Not very important	.099	-.225	-.873	-.734	-.223	-.103	-.559	-.010	.878	
The importance of religion = 3. Not important at all	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Model fitting information	Significant at p<.0.01	Significant at p<.0.05	Significant at p<.0.01	Significant at p<.0.01	Significant at p<.0.01	Significant at p<.0.01	Significant at p<.0.01	Significant at p<.0.05	Significant at p<.0.05	Not significant
Goodness of fit	Pearson – p - .110	Pearson – p - .281	Pearson – p - .166	Pearson – p - .453	Pearson – p - .137	Pearson – p - .302	Pearson – p - .027	Pearson – p - .962	Pearson – p - .287	
	Deviance – p - .081	Deviance – p - .955	Deviance – p - .009	Deviance – p - 1.000	Deviance – p - .083	Deviance – p - .233	Deviance – p - .000	Deviance – p - .937	Deviance – p - 1.000	
Test of Parallel lines	Sig. 003	Sig. 006	Sig. 036	Sig. .813	Sig. .010	Sig. .000	Sig. .026	Sig. .008	Sig. .032	
Nagelkerke R/ R²	.049	.020	.058	.044	.040	.038	.016	.014	0.12	

p<0.01** and p<0.05*

Table 5. Model 3 Ordinal Regression Analysis

	Voting: National level	Organizing political activities, events, meetings	Signing a petition	Joining in boycotts	Attending lawful/peaceful demonstrations	Joining unofficial strikes	Donating to a group or campaign	Contacting a government official	Political party membership
Religious service attendance	.165**	-.040	-.029	-.068	-.034	-.069	.027	.073	-.041
Religious organization membership = 0. Not a member	.309	-.128	.205	.448	-.116	.155	.452*	-.580*	-1.081**
Religious organization membership = 1. Inactive member	.304	-.545	-.199	.076	-.523*	.100	.363	-.583	1.306**
Religious organization membership = 2. Active member	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Model fitting information	Significant at p<.0.01	Not significant	Not significant	Not significant	Significant at p<.0.05	Not significant	Not significant	Not significant	Significant at p<.0.01
Goodness of fit	Pearson – p - .044	Pearson – p - .193	Pearson – p - .034	Pearson – p - .316	Pearson – p - .391	Pearson – p - .094	Pearson – p - .148	Pearson – p - .226	Pearson – p - .000
	Deviance – p - .061	Deviance – p - .196	Deviance – p - .041	Deviance – p - .190	Deviance – p - .467	Deviance – p - .073	Deviance – p - .048	Deviance – p - .212	Deviance – p - .000
Test of Parallel lines	Sig. .093	Sig. .143	Sig. .180	Sig. .844	Sig. .292	Sig. .007	Sig. .449	Sig. .395	Sig. .395
Nagelkerke R/ R²	.025	.003	.005	.007	.012	.003	.007	.008	.166

p<.01** and *p*<.05*

Conclusions

The results paint an interesting picture of the relation between religiosity and political participation. Looking back at the working hypotheses, I can conclude that all of them are partially confirmed. Factors as the importance of religion and the importance of God have been associated with both forms of political participation, and some forms of participatory religiosity have been negatively associated with conventional means of political engagement.

Overall, the data suggest that religious individuals have higher odds of engaging in more conventional and peaceful forms of political engagement (voting, petition signing), but have a slight disdain when engaging in more direct and socially involving means of political engagement (donating to campaigns/groups or being an active political party member). Although not explored in this study, one of the main distinctions between the types of political engagement with a higher association to religiosity could be attributed to the easiness of engagement. Actions as voting or petition-signing are less costly when it comes to both time and resources needed for the engagement than campaign donation or active membership within a political party. These results are not surprising since political parties enjoy the least amount of trust among all institutions presented in the 2017 World Values Survey (52.9% of respondents have said that they have no trust at all in political parties).

Secondly, individuals who were members of a religious organization (more precisely inactive members) had higher odds of being a member of a political party. This result partially confirms the hypothesis by which participatory religiosity and conventional forms of political participation are positively associated. More precisely, there is an undelaying mechanism that can facilitate political engagement from religious social participation. Further research is needed to understand whether some personality traits play a role in this mechanism, or religious participation can indeed provide an incentive for engaging in political activities for the otherwise politically inactive people.

While this study aims to fill in this knowledge gap, in the interest of cultivating a broader and more comprehensive knowledge of the role of religion in political participation, qualitative research would provide the necessary tool for investigating the underlying mechanisms and eliminate biases that cannot be tackled through quantitative research.

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Appendix

Questions used

Religiosity

Piety

1. For each of the following aspects, indicate how important it is in your life. Would you say it is very important, rather important, not very important or not important at all: Religion (1. *Very important*; 2. *Rather important*; 3. *Not very important*; 4. *Not at all important*; *Don't know*; *No answer*)
2. How important is God in your life? Please use this scale to indicate. 10 means “very important” and 1 means “not at all important.”: (*Not at all important* 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 *Very important*; *Don't know*; *No answer*)

Practice

3. Apart from weddings and funerals, about how often do you pray? (*Several times a day*; *Once a day*; *Several times each week*; *Only when attending religious services*; *Only on special holy days*; *Once a year*; *Less often*; *Never, practically never*; *Don't know*; *No answer*)

Participation

1. Apart from weddings, funerals and christenings, about how often do you attend religious services these days? (*More than once a week*; *Once a week*; *Once a month*; *Only on special holy days*; *Once a year*; *Less often*; *Never, practically never*; *Don't know*; *No answer*)
2. Now I am going to read out a list of voluntary organizations; for each one, could you tell me whether you are a member, an active member, an inactive member or not a member of that type of organization? Church or religious organization (*Not a member*; *Inactive member*; *Active member*; *Don't know*; *No answer*)

Political participation

Conventional

1. When elections take place, do you always, usually or never, vote? Please tell me this for each of the following types of choices. Vote in elections: National level
2. What about these forms of political action and social activism that people can take?. Please, tell me for each of them if you have done any of these things, whether you might do it or would never under any circumstances do it: Contacting a government official (*Have done*; *Might do*; *Would never do*; *Don't know*; *No answer*)

3. Now I am going to read out a list of voluntary organizations; for each one, could you tell me whether you are a member, an active member, an inactive member or not a member of that type of organization? Political party (*Not a member; Inactive member; Active member; Don't know; No answer*)
4. What about these forms of political action and social activism that people can take?. Please, tell me for each of them if you have done any of these things, whether you might do it or would never under any circumstances do it: Donating to a group or campaign (*Have done; Might do; Would never do; Don't know; No answer*)
5. Now I'd like you to look at this card. I'm going to read out some other forms of political action that people can take using Internet and social media tools like Facebook, Twitter etc., and I'd like you to tell me, for each one, whether you have done any of these things, whether you might do it or would never under any circumstances do it: Organizing political activities, events, protests. (*Have done; Might do; Would never do; Don't know; No answer*)

Unconventional

1. Now I'd like you to look at this card. I'm going to read out some different forms of political action that people can take, and I'd like you to tell me, for each one, whether you have actually done any of these things, whether you might do it or would never, under any circumstances, do it. Joining in boycotts (*Have done; Might do; Would never do; Don't know; No answer*)
2. Now I'd like you to look at this card. I'm going to read out some different forms of political action that people can take, and I'd like you to tell me, for each one, whether you have actually done any of these things, whether you might do it or would never, under any circumstances, do it. Attending peaceful demonstrations (*Have done; Might do; Would never do; Don't know; No answer*)
3. Now I'd like you to look at this card. I'm going to read out some different forms of political action that people can take, and I'd like you to tell me, for each one, whether you have actually done any of these things, whether you might do it or would never, under any circumstances, do it. Joining strikes (*Have done; Might do; Would never do; Don't know; No answer*)

Now I'd like you to look at this card. I'm going to read out some different forms of political action that people can take, and I'd like you to tell me, for each one, whether you have actually done any of these things, whether you might do it or would never, under any circumstances, do it. Signing a petition (*Have done; Might do; Would never do; Don't know; No answer*)

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Table 6. Frequencies for religiosity. Variables for religiosity

Piety													
<i>Importance of religion</i>							<i>The Importance of God</i>						
Very important	Rather important	Not very important	Not at all important	Not important	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Very important
47.4%	30.9%	16.7%	5.0%	2.5%	0.5%	1.2%	1.7%	5.3%	4.7%	6.3%	11.8%	8.6%	57.4%
Practice													
How often do you pray													
Several times a day		Once a day		Several times each week		Only when attending religious services		Only on special holy days		Once a year		Never, practically never	
17.7%		31.8%		17.1%		7.3%		8.3%		1.6%		12.7%	
Participation													
How often do you attend religious service							Active membership in a religious organization						
More than once a week	Once a week	Once a month	Only on special holy days	Once a year	Less often	Never, practically never	Don't belong	Inactive member	Active member				
5.5%	23.1%	15.4%	30.4%	4.8%	16.2%	4.6%	80.0%	10.5%	9.5%				

Table 7. Frequencies for political participation. Variables for political participation

Conventional																	
Voting: National level						Contacting decision-makers: a government official											
Always		Usually		Never		Have done		Might do		Would never do							
59.6%		31%		9.4%		3.9%		24.7%		71.4%							
Donate to a group or campaign				Membership in a political party				Organize political activities									
Have done		Might do		Would never do		Not a member		Inactive member		Active member		Have done		Might do		Would never do	
24.3%		31.3%		44.4%		89.6%		7.6%		2.8%		3.1%		17.4%		79.5%	
Unconventional																	
Political action: Joining in boycotts			Political action: Attending lawful/peaceful demonstrations			Political action: Joining strikes			Political action: Signing a petition								
Have done	Might do	Would never do	Have done	Might do	Would never do	Have done	Might do	Would never do	Have done	Might do	Would never do						
1.7%	18.4%	79.9%	8.9%	40.5%	50.7%	7.4%	28.8%	63.8%	51.9%	33.3%	14.8%						