
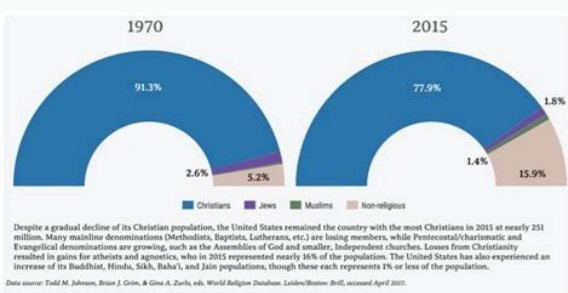


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## Religiosity, Personality, and Attitudes Toward Homosexuality

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### Abstract

The extant research regarding the relationship between religious affiliation and attitudes toward homosexuality is extensive, yet shallow. While some research suggests a significant positive correlation between religiosity and negative attitudes toward homosexuality (Inglehart, 2000), other studies show different results dependent on religious motivations, affiliations, and activity (Besen & Zicklin, 2007; Burris, 1999). To that end, the current study examined the interplay between religiosity, personality dimensions, and attitudes toward homosexuality. A correlational survey methodology was utilized attempting to measure religious activity and motivations, personality dimensions, and attitudes toward various policy areas as relevant to homosexuality (including marriage, adoption, and military service). Initial analyses reveal a significant negative correlation between public and private religious practice and positive attitudes toward homosexuality such that those scoring higher on the religious practice scales report more conservative views of homosexuality. Moreover, findings reveal a strong positive correlation between the Openness to Experience personality dimension and positive attitudes toward homosexuality such that those expressing more openness exhibited more liberal views toward homosexuality. The results of this study will lead to a better understanding of the ways in which religious affiliation and religious activity differ in regard to attitudes toward homosexuality. Further, implications concerning personality traits in relation to such attitudes can be drawn from these results.

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storytalking, such as in the African American oral tradition (Bakas-Wallace 2002). Freedom of religion is often invoked to defend human rights violations and to protest against the introduction of provisions providing for gender equality. This is because one of the fundamental challenges faced by developing countries is that of “the opposition between primordial group loyalty and the civic loyalty to the nation” (Das Gupta 1968; as cited in Gill 2014, 19). This development of alternative cultures in the form of places of worship, and the resulting sermons and traditions that can take place there free from state surveillance, demonstrates the lack of genuine freedom of religion or belief when it is state-sanctioned. This is how culture, here, specifically the destruction of cultural heritage, can be used as an indicator of how religious minorities are treated in general and therefore of what FoRB is like on the ground. Yet culture and religion are not distinct categories, and the example of FGM illustrates this. Even those who stress that FGM is a cultural practice and not a religious one, encourage the use of religious spaces to challenge these perceptions (Suleman 2017), illustrating again, the tools religion has, in the form of collective spaces and voices of authority, to challenge cultural practice. The UN experts noted that “it is a loss for us all, but for the local population it also means denial of their identity, their beliefs, their history and their dignity” (Bielefeldt, Izsák-Ndiaye, and Shaheed 2015).Indeed, while these acts of international destruction harm all, by depriving all of humanity of the rich diversity of heritage, they disproportionately affects religious minorities (Chainoglou 2018, 120). As Frances Raday, an academic human rights expert and current Rapporteur-Chair of the UN Human Rights Council Working Group on Discrimination Against Women, explains, religions, as opposed to culture, “have codified custom into binding source books that predate” human rights culture, backed by” legal and institutional structures to enforce their principles” (Raday 2003, 669-670).The higher level of protection that is afforded when religion is seen to be behind a practice makes it clear why advocates for human rights are often keen to stress that human rights violations are a result of culture, rather than religion. Maintaining this distinction may stop unsavory practices from falling under the legal or cultural protection afforded to religious practices, but it would also prevent a more positive and productive relationship between culture and FoRB. (ICOMOS 2004, 15).2 One example is Article 5 of CEDAW, on Sex Roles and Stereotyping calls on states parties to take all appropriate measures, which stipulates: a) To modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women, A/34/46, entered into force Sept. Even for those for whom religion is a separate category, the way in which religion interacts with other dimensions is recognized. For sociologist Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2002), this is key to a multicultural conception of human rights, which is necessary in order to move beyond the universalism and cultural relativism debates. religious freedom, do so because of a genuine belief that their religious conviction prohibits or promotes whatever they are attempting to achieve with this invocation. A joint statement made by the then UN experts Heiner Bielefeldt, Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, Rita Izsák-Ndiaye, Independent Expert on Minority Issues, and Farida Shaheed, Special Rapporteur in the field of Cultural Rights has also made clear the relationship between cultural heritage and FoRB after the destruction of Sufi religious and historic sites from October 2011 through to August 2012 in Libya, where tombs and libraries were targeted, including one of Libya’s most important Sufi Shrines, Sidi Abdul-Salam al Asmar al-Fituri in Zliten. Therefore, by examining the assumption that culture is a negative force, this throws up the necessity of this distinction between culture and religion.The perception that culture is fixed and an obstacle to human rights has tended to dominate the literature. Underneath the distinction that is emphasized between culture and religion lies the assumption that culture is a negative static force which is an obstacle to human rights. If we place human rights violations or discriminations firmly in category of culture, it both explains why such violations have come about (because culture is seen as a negative force) and justifies the need to tackle them (because culture holds less normative and legal weight than religion in the Western human rights movement). Religion is seen as a substantive base that is expressed in culture, because as stated by Elie Adams (1993, 193) “religion cannot be a self-contained area of culture, nor indifferent to other cultural developments.” On the contrary, religious expression and motivation can drive cultural expression, with culture being a means to which humans can express the purpose and meaning religion gives them. At a fundamental level, they are impossible to separate. 47). Furthermore, the manner in which political powers choose to govern and influence also affects culture, since the boundaries and meanings within culture are fluid and produced by institutional arrangements and political economy, which demands a more historicized way of understanding culture.One such political and historical driver, which can shape a culture into one that holds attitudes and ideas that cause intolerance to religious minorities or suspicion of the “other,” is ethno- or religious nationalism. While it still may not be mandated by religion and is indeed a cultural practice, we see how culture and religion intermingle on the level of personal motivations, the trajectory of religious permissibility regarding the issue, and even in finding a solution, with religious spaces being suggested as a means to tackle FGM.With this in mind, this article has returned to a starting point of a definition of culture, in order to explore how it interacts with religion in ways that can provide lessons for FoRB. 81). The Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (UNESCO 2005) specifies that cultural diversity creates a rich and varied world, which increases the range of choices and nurtures human capacities and values, and is essential for sustainable development and the full realization of human rights.The relationship between culture and religion is revealed in the motivation and manifestation of cultural expression. English anthropologist Edward Tylor (1871, 1.1) defined “culture or civilization” as that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, law, morals, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by a person as a member of society. For example, NGOs state that “the human rights movement is not inherently at odds with customary law, religious law, and tradition, but with the aspects that violate rights. This is because cultural heritage and cultural property are cultural expressions that warrant protection, which we can see in the legal instruments that cover this. In the process, a distinction is made between culture and religion. Cultural heritage has a broader definition, which includes tangible heritage composed of sites, structures and remains of archaeological, historical, religious, cultural or esthetic value, as well as intangible heritage comprising traditions, customs and practices, vernacular or other languages, forms of artistic expression and folklore (Benoume 2016, para. These factors include population size, differences in mode of livelihood and environmental conditions. Even within one discipline, there is a diversity of culture, such as the levels of family, workplace, church and state (Raday 2003, 666).An extensive amount of definitions are offered. By contextualizing culture, we can understand what is driving any religious intolerance within a culture and better tackle the root causes. We can see this in the fact that it has protection as a separate category as opposed to it simply being protected within “freedom of thought and conscience” and that it carries more legal weight than cultural rights.A large part of why “freedom of religion” is specified as a legal right is the sacredness with which religion or belief is considered to be held. While this list is not exhaustive, these forms include sensory experiences, such as dance, music, literature, visual media, and theater, and the visual performing arts, which use body and voice to create or interpret. note how the distinction between “cultural” and “religious” motivations is common in the literature, where it is “is implied that ‘religious’ circumcision deserves protection and even assistance on the grounds of respect for people’s faiths and own perception of divine commandments, whereas ‘cultural’ circumcision is more like a habit that deserves less tolerance.” This is reflected in legal cases, for example a UK case regarding a young girl subjected to FGM, in which Judge Sir James Munby noted the distinction in UK family law between FGM and male circumcision, one reason being that “FGM has no basis in any religion [whereas] male circumcision is often performed for religious reasons.”To demonstrate that such practices are rooted in culture rather than religion, human rights practitioners often point out that FGM is practiced across different religious groups in a number of countries. In conjunction with nationalism that has seeped into culture, there is often discrimination, violence and intolerance of minorities. While in some contexts, religious life is infused with patriarchy, sexism, corruption, compromise, and divisiveness; in other contexts, community, generosity, justice, respect, openness and integrity, honor and dignity are defining ethical values that underlie the spiritual practices in many contexts (Ackah 2017).What is important for our purposes is recognizing that, alongside aspects which are causes for concern that need to be addressed, there are aspects and values within culture that seek to actualize human dignity in ways similar to human rights discourse. Art is therefore integral to this definition, because culture is communicated through various art forms, which provide a way for people to construct creations showing how they think and view the world, to express ideas and emotions, to answer questions, and to give comfort. The culture that arises from religion has been broadly categorized in four ways: (1) “immovable,” for example ancient places of worship or sites of spiritual significance, (2) “moveable,” such as artifacts used in religious ceremonies with artistic heritage values and are of high quality craftsmanship, (3) “tangible,” such as books and manuscripts of holy texts or music, and (4) “intangible,” which takes the form of various traditions, orally transferred knowledge or specific practices and beliefs that are transferred across generations and between practitioners of a faith (Gala and Gershevitch 2011).More than cultural expression being simply a by-product of religious conviction, there is also an intentional use of culture by religion. As well as the loss of education future generations and the development of their already vulnerable religious beliefs, the destruction of cultural heritage can give us an understanding of what else is happening to people who are being attacked because of they do not conform to the majority or state religion. How far this distinction actually exists will then be considered. The context of male and female circumcision provides a useful example of how differently practices are judged according to whether religious or cultural motivations are behind them Brusa and Barilan (2009). It therefore makes most sense to begin with the same starting point, and to begin with religion and culture as they are defined outside of their relationship to each other, before exploring a relationship between the two that is relevant to FoRB and human rights.With this in mind, let us begin with a noted definition of religion by historian of religion Martin Riesebrodt, who tries to find one definition that includes both Abrahamic and Asian religions: Religion is a complex of practices that are based on the premise of the existence of superhuman powers, whether personal or impersonal, that are generally invisible. ... The “superhumanness” of these powers consists in the fact that influence or control over dimensions of individual or social human life and the natural environment is attributed to them—dimensions that are usually beyond direct human control. The key word here is “also” because it is important to understand that the values of human rights can exist within the cultures themselves. Both assertions mean that the relationship between FoRB and culture carries negative connotations.It may well be that those who invoke FoRB. As philosopher Martha Nussbaum describes it: “To be able to search for an understanding of the ultimate meaning of life in one’s own way is among the most important aspects of a life that is truly human. In this way, the turn that the development of culture has taken to alternative avenues deepens our understanding of the true nature of FoRB in a given country.Cultural expression can also enhance our knowledge of FoRB in a given place when we look at cultural heritage. Denis Byrne (Byrne 2014) details how foreign scholars have failed to integrate indigenous religion in their own field practice, which grounded consequences, since local people and popular religion have been decoupled from heritage management. This is why the distinction is important. Further reflection upon culture in two ways can help us understand and promote FoRB. Because culture is often a physical manifestation or shared experience within a religious group, the state of cultural affairs can often serve as an indicator of the true state of FoRB, and most often a better one than the rhetoric of the state. In an attempt to mitigate this clash between the universal standards of human rights and the claim to freedom of religion, a distinction is therefore drawn between culture and religion. Dr Kwame-Opuku also points out that the refusal to return cultural African objects by Europeans and Americans “violates the freedom of religion in so far as many of the stolen African objects, for instance ... the Benin altars ... are necessary for the traditional practice of beliefs” (cited in Silverman 2010, 14). In the first instance, cultural expression is the human way of responding to the impact the world has on our lives, on the tensions we may feel between ourselves and our surroundings, and on altering material forms in a way that reflects meaning back at us, through music, the arts and books. The first is a general restriction and shutting down of cultural and artistic expression is; the second is when only state-sanctioned religious culture is permitted.This will inevitably affect freedom of religion, because religious motivation often drives artistic expression. One of the ways in which this has most frequently been done historically is through religious belief and practice; to burden these practices is thus to inhibit many people’s search for the ultimate good” (Nussbaum 2001, 179). Culture is a manifestation of humans seeking to express and understand what is within them and what this life means, and religion is one crucial way in which humans find this meaning.The freedom of religion or belief itself incorporates the importance of being able to manifest these beliefs, teaching, practice, and worship. These are non-rigid categories which interact and affect each other in organic ways, but in recognizing this interaction, we also learn ways in which to understand and promote FoRB. This destruction took place almost entirely at the same time of campaigns of ethnic cleansing of civilians, with multiple atrocities against the targeted groups, in an attempt to create ethnically homogenous territories (Walasek 2016).Parallel to the destruction of cultural heritage is the protection of cultural heritage, the politics of which can also give an indication of FoRB, and how to better promote it. And demonstrative of how they continue to interact, cultural expression, in the form of art and artifacts, often continues to enhance the religious expression for worshippers and serves as a means of religious education. The fact that it can only be changed through interaction and guidance from the outside still portrays culture in a negative light. 34/180, 34 U.N. GAOR Supp. In a “general tendency to culturalize problems” (2003, 63), anthropologist Sarah Engle Merry explains how the idea that culture is a problem for human rights, extends beyond FGM and women’s equality, with culture being blamed for the disadvantages also faced by minorities and other vulnerable groups, but in a way that sometimes dismisses the economic and political causes behind these problems (Merry 2003, 63-64). For example, there are ancient languages and religious practices tied to sacred spaces and structures and cultural landscapes of northern Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic which are being lost as populations are displaced and objects, texts, and historic structures are destroyed, naturally impeding transmission of religion and culture to future generations (2016, 77). Marvin Harris (1975, 144) says that “a culture is the total socially acquired life-way or life-style of a group of people.

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