



The relation between religion and racism: the role of post-critical beliefs

B. DURIEZ & D. HUTSEBAUT

Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Leuven, Belgium

ABSTRACT *The relation between religion and racism has often been studied, but summarising these studies provides a fragmented picture. Generally, American research concludes there is a positive relation, whereas research in the Low Countries concludes this relation is negative. However, the conclusions of the latter research tradition might be premature, because inaccurate religiosity measures were used. The results of this study suggest that both frequency of church attendance and belief salience are no longer significantly related to racism. Four religious attitudes are described, based on individuals inclusion or exclusion of transcendence, and preference for symbolic or literal interpretation. Orthodoxy (literal, transcendent) and External Critique (literal, non-transcendent) were significantly positively related to racism, whereas Relativism (symbolic, non-transcendent) was significantly negatively related to it. Second Naïveté (symbolic, transcendent) at first sight turned out not to be significantly related to racism. However; a path analysis—in which some important background variables such as age and education were included—suggested the existence of an indirect negative relation. Overall it looks as if the privatisation of religion has reached new heights. Thus nowadays, studies of the relation between religion and racism need to focus on the cognitive (rather than behavioural) aspects of how people deal with the religious realm.*

All world religions proclaim universal brotherly love. Yet, history is littered with moments in which religion has provided a justification for, or has given cause to, all kinds of atrocities directed towards people of different race or culture: the Crusades, slavery, the Holocaust, etc. From this a considerable number of historians and theologians concluded religion should contrarily be considered as a catalyst for anti-Semitism, racism, etc. (e.g. Flannery & Oesterreicher, 1985; Poliakov, 1974; Saleminck, 1995). Research has been carried out to investigate whether this is true. When one tries to make an overview of these numerous attempts, a very fragmented picture is obtained. There are two main reasons for this. One is that there is no consensus on how one should measure religion in order to obtain meaningful results. Another is that there are two main directions in which one can look for an explanation of the observed relation: one can choose to use religious factors

Correspondence to: B. Duriez, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Science, Centre for the Psychology of Religion, Tiensestraat 102, B-3000 Leuven, Belgium.

(and i.e. try to find an explanation in terms of ‘what do people believe’ or, alternatively, ‘how do people believe’) or one can choose to turn to non-religious factors. The direction in which one decides to look for an explanation will effect the conclusions that are drawn.

We will begin by giving a short overview of relevant literature. This will allow us to sharply contrast the conclusions of the American research with those of the research in the Low Countries. The aim of our study will then be to try to gather evidence for the claim that the researchers in the Low Countries, although taking a valuable step in the direction of finding a solution for the problem at hand, might be missing out on something. The reason for this is suggested to be that, out of dissatisfaction with the existing measuring devices for ‘religion’, they turned back to an inaccurate measure. Next, we will introduce a new measure for ‘religion’ and argue why we think this is necessary. Finally, we will present the results of our research and discuss whether or not we could back up our claim.

Previous research in the US

Allport and Kramer (1946) were among the first to examine this problem empirically. They concluded that Christians and Protestants were more prejudiced than those who were not involved in any church. This conclusion led to massive research, and soon it became generally accepted that religion and intolerance, prejudice, etc. were strongly associated (especially regarding white middle-class Christians). Batson *et al.* (1993) summarized 38 studies concerning the relationship between religious involvement and intolerance. From this, they extracted 47 findings of which 37 gave evidence of a positive correlation while only two pointed in the opposite direction.

These findings were painful for religious leaders as well as for a number of researchers. This prompted Adorno *et al.* (1950) and Allport (1950) to argue that it is insufficient to examine religious involvement or to search for an explanation of the findings in the belief system itself. According to them, if one wants to understand the relation between religion and prejudice, one should focus on *how* people believe. In this way, a number of conceptual dichotomies came into existence—of which Allport’s distinction of extrinsic versus intrinsic religiousness is the most widespread (i.e. Allport & Ross, 1967)—which all stated a distinction should be made between giving importance to religion because of its instrumentality or out of conviction (cf. extrinsic versus intrinsic motivation). As a consequence, the notion that religion is associated with intolerance was replaced with the notion that this only applies to extrinsic believers. Intrinsic believers—a small minority—would score low on prejudice and related measures. Batson *et al.* (1993) summarized 32 studies concerning the relationship between intrinsic versus extrinsic belief and intolerance. From this, they extracted 41 relevant findings, of which 39 gave evidence in favour of this hypothesis. The originally proposed linear relation between church involvement and prejudice was readjusted to a quite generally accepted curvilinear

relation when using a more refined measure of church involvement (frequency of church attendance).

Research could, however, not provide real evidence in favour of Allport's statement that intrinsic belief would foster tolerance (Donahue, 1985a, b). Batson *et al.* (i.e. 1978, 1982, 1993) even repudiate the conclusion that intrinsic belief would be related to rather low prejudice scores. According to Batson *et al.*, this only appears to be true because intrinsic believers are more concerned about what is socially desirable. Consequently, this attitude would not provide a true indication of tolerance. Batson's Quest dimension was introduced to resolve this difficulty, but with mixed success.

Previous research in the Low Countries

The Netherlands

Eisinga *et al.* (1988) argued that the measurement of intrinsic belief is so sensitive to socially desirable answering because it is antiquated (cf. Strickland & Cone Weddell, 1972). Because of this, like other researchers (i.e. Bahr *et al.*, 1971), they returned to what they perceive to be the core of Allports extrinsic versus intrinsic belief distinction: belief salience (= the degree to which belief is considered important for daily life). As an indicator of this belief salience, Eisinga *et al.* (1989) decided to use frequency of church attendance. Moreover, they concluded that, in order to be able to give a truly theoretical explanation for the relation between religion and racism (including ethnocentrism and related constructs), it is necessary to focus on non-religious aspects such as anomia, localism, cultural conservatism and authoritarianism instead of on religion itself.

Their extensive research (Eisinga *et al.*, 1989, 1990a, b, 1991a, b, 1993; Scheepers *et al.*, 1989) points out that the influence of religion on racism—which appeared to reveal itself in a curvilinear relation—does indeed disappear when these non-religious aspects are taken into account. In some of the research, however, Christian belief continued to have a direct effect on racism, but only for core churchmembers. In order to find an explanation for this, they refer back to the (strictly religious) standards of core churchmembers compared to those of marginal churchmembers who would primarily be concerned about tradition and the instrumentality of their acts (cf. intrinsic versus extrinsic belief).

Flanders (Belgium)

Billiet *et al.* (1995a, b) put the most important American and Dutch findings on trial in Flanders (Belgium), which is, religiously speaking, more or less monopolised by the Roman Catholic Church (Dobbelaere, 1995). Like Eisinga *et al.*, they measured belief salience through frequency of church attendance. The results and the conclusions they arrive at are more or less in line with the Dutch research,

except for the finding that, although the frequency of church attendance had a countering effect on racism, Christian belief as such did not seem to have any effect at all. Therefore, Billiet seems to be more inclined towards an explanation in terms of humanistic values (cf. ‘pillarisation’ and social-cultural Christianity; Billiet, 1988) than in terms of strictly religious values and conformism.

Summary

In contrast to most researchers in America, the researchers in the Low Countries hold the conviction that one can only give a meaningful interpretation to the relation between religion and racism when one starts focusing on non-religious factors instead of on religion itself. This difference in focus also manifests itself in the conclusions that have been drawn. Whereas the final conclusion of the American research seems to be that religion in general may stimulate racism (for all except a small minority), the final conclusion of the research in the Low Countries seems to be that when this relation is stripped from its non-religious aspects, the only real influence religion exerts is to counter racism.

Out of dissatisfaction with the existing religiosity measures, the researchers in the Low Countries turned back to frequency of church attendance as an index of how people believe. Although we agree with the claim of Eisinga *et al.* (1988) that the instruments designed in America to measure the possible different ways of believing are too outdated (or plain inappropriate) for usage in our cultural setting, we are convinced that frequency of church attendance is a bad religiosity measure (provided that one’s aim is to understand the relation between religion and other variables). It is unlikely to reflect the cognitive aspects of religiosity (beliefs) with any precision.

The doubtfulness of frequency of church attendance

A doubtful measure of intrinsic versus extrinsic belief

In 1966 Allport wrote: ‘*While most extrinsics are casual churchgoers, a few are ideological extremists. With equal fervor they embrace some political nostrum along with the tenets of some religious (usually fundamentalist) sect*’ (Allport, 1966, p. 455). Doing so, he warned us not to use frequency of church attendance to distinguish between intrinsic and extrinsic believers. Despite the fact that the ‘ideological extremists’ are regular churchgoers, they should be regarded as extrinsic believers. Allport’s distinction can thus not be captured by looking at observable behaviour only. Similarly, these ‘ideological extremists’ shall regard their religious belief system as important, and are likely to obtain high scores on no matter what measure of belief salience. It thus also seems inappropriate to reduce Allport’s distinction to belief salience. Nevertheless, Allport himself seems to have reduced his distinction in this way when trying to operationalise the concepts of extrinsic and intrinsic religiosity (Allport & Ross, 1967) [1].

A doubtful measure of belief salience

Eisinga *et al.* (1988) assume irregular church attendance results from conformism, while regular attendance results from regarding religion as truly important. If this assumption is true, church attendance can be used as an index of belief salience. But times are changing fast, secularisation may still be spreading, and religion increasingly becoming an individual matter (cf. Dobbelaere, 1995). Most of the people—whether or not they believe in God—have stopped attaching importance to church attendance. This is manifested in a sharp decline in church attendance, which is not limited to the younger cohorts, and which is not accompanied by a sharp decline in the number of people that indicate they believe in God (see Dobbelaere, 1995). Consequently, we do suggest that regular church attendance results from attaching importance to religion, but we are not convinced that irregular church attendance results from conformism, and that not going to church is an indication of unbelief. Therefore, if one wants to meaningfully study the relation between religion and racism in times when the individualisation of giving meaning is widespread, it becomes increasingly important to look at how people believe. However, the religiosity measures mentioned so far are no longer suited to classify people according to how they believe. The different dimensions that used to appear (e.g. extrinsic versus intrinsic, religiousness versus quest) are highly positively related nowadays (Heps & Wellemans, 1994; Hutsebaut, 1996). Most participants thus present themselves as either indiscriminately pro- or anti-religious. Hence, we wish to present a recently developed measure of different possible religious styles, which not only pays attention to different possible forms of belief, but also to different forms of unbelief.

Introducing a new religiosity measure

Wulff (1991) argued that the various possible approaches to religion can roughly be located in a two-dimensional space (see Figure 1). The vertical axis specifies the degree to which the objects of religious interest are granted participation in a transcendent reality or, to the contrary, are limited to processes immanent within the mundane world (inclusion versus exclusion of transcendence). The horizontal axis indicates whether the expressions of religion are interpreted literally or symbolically (literal versus symbolic). The two dimensions define four basic attitudes toward religion. According to Wulff (1991, p. 631), *'the upper left quadrant represents affirmation of the literal existence of religious objects, a position most clearly embodied by religious fundamentalism'*. The lower left quadrant represents a position in which people *'no longer believe in what they assume to be the literal referents of religious words'* and in which *'they lose sight of the possibility that these words refer to truths for which there is no literal language'* (Campbell, 1975, in Wulff, 1991, p. 632). The lower right quadrant represents a position in which people deny *'reality to the transcendent referent of religious language and practice'* and in which they go *'beyond this merely negative stance to claim a privileged perspective on what is considered to be the true, hidden,*

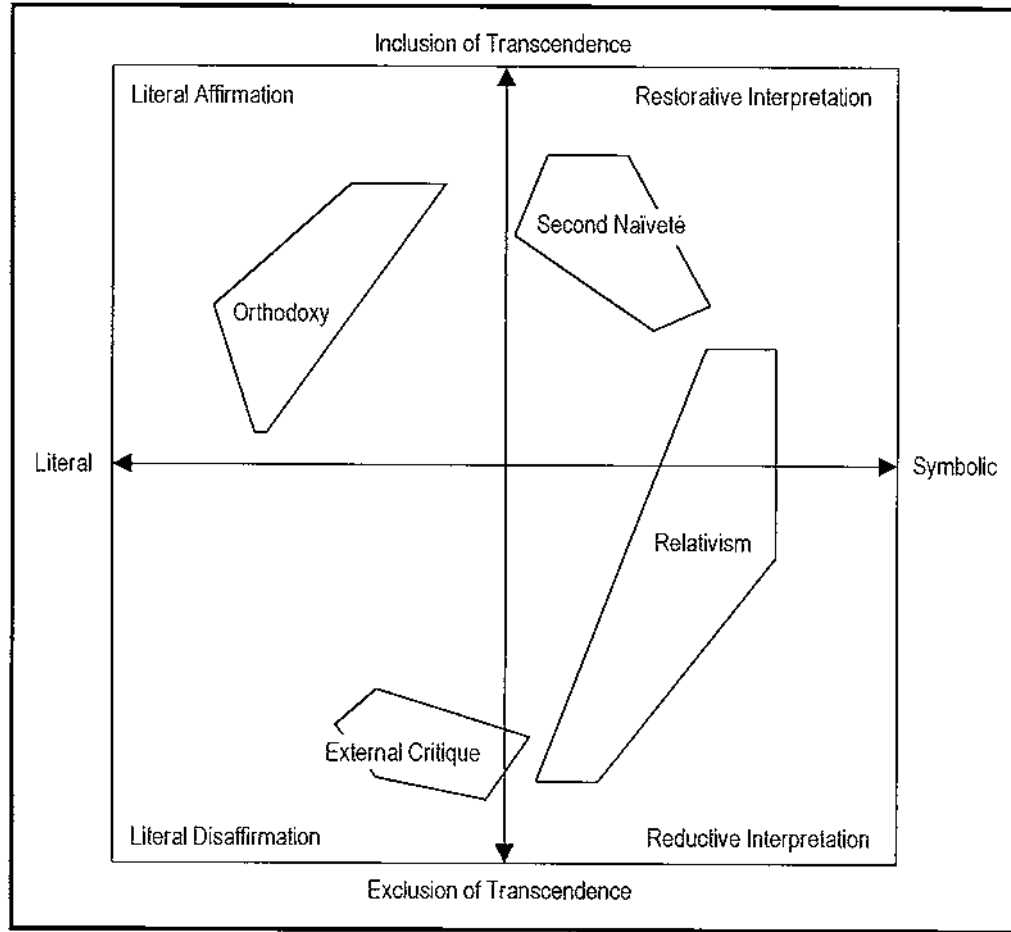


FIGURE 1. Integration of Hutsebaut's scheme in Wulff's theoretical model (after Duriez *et al.*, under review).

and wholly mundane meaning of religion's myths and rituals' (Wulff, 1991, p. 633). The upper right quadrant represents a position which 'posits the transcendent realm as real, as literal affirmation tends to do, but searches instead for the symbolic meaning that resides within and ultimately points beyond these objects'. This *second naïveté* (Wulff, 1991, p. 635), in which one tries to encompass and go beyond all possible reductive interpretations, 'engages the inner life as a whole' (Wulff, 1991, p. 634).

Building further on this, Hutsebaut (1996) designed a questionnaire—the Post-Critical Belief scale—that tried to capture three different ways of dealing with Roman Catholic religion: Orthodoxy, External Critique and Historical Relativism. Orthodoxy was comparable to Wulff's Literal Affirmation. External Critique was comparable to Wulff's Reductive Interpretation. Historical Relativism was comparable to Wulff's Restorative Interpretation. Several factor analyses confirmed the existence of these dimensions (Desimpelaere *et al.*, 1999; Hutsebaut, 1996, 1997a, b). Recently, however, a multidimensional scaling analysis (Kruskal & Wish,

1978) involving the Pearson correlations between the Post-Critical Belief items indicated that this scale does not consist of three but of four dimension which can be situated in Wulff's (1991) two-dimensional space: Orthodoxy, External Critique, Relativism and Second Naïveté (Duriez *et al.*, under review). The Orthodoxy items would measure Literal Affirmation, but the External Critique items would measure Literal Disaffirmation instead of Reductive Interpretation. Reductive Interpretation would be measured by the Relativism items. Finally, the Second Naïveté items would measure Restorative Interpretation (see Figure 1).

Hypotheses

First, based on the literature, we expected the frequency of church attendance to be strongly related to a measure of belief salience (Hypothesis 1). However, as described, we are not convinced this is true. Second, based on both the American research tradition and the research tradition of the low countries, we expected both the frequency of church attendance as well as a measure of belief salience to be curvilinearly related to racism (Hypotheses 2 and 3). However, we also expected the effects of both measures on racism to disappear when the religious styles as measured by the Post-Critical Belief scale were taken into account (Hypothesis 4). Finally, we hypothesised the following relationship between these religious styles and racism. We expected Orthodoxy to be positively related to racism because of the rather fundamentalist closed-mindedness of this position (Hypothesis 5). Since previous research has shown that External Critique has the same underlying thought processes as Orthodoxy (Desimpelaere *et al.*, 1999; Duriez *et al.*, under review), we expected External Critique also to be positively related to racism (Hypothesis 6). We expected Relativism to be negatively related to racism because the concept itself implies tolerance towards other opinions, cultures, etc. (Hypothesis 7). Hypotheses 5, 6 and 7 received support from previous analyses (Duriez *et al.*, under review). Finally, although Second Naïveté turned out to be unrelated to racism in these analyses, theoretically speaking, we did expect it to be negatively related to racism, because in this outlook the commandment of brotherhood should be taken seriously (Hypothesis 8).

Methods

Participants

A total of 525 questionnaires were distributed by undergraduate students of the Faculty of Psychology of the Catholic University Leuven (Belgium) in (Roman Catholic) schools and via organisations, relatives and friends. Refusal rates were very low (< 3%). In total we received 517 completed questionnaires [2]. All participants were Flemish-speaking persons of Belgian nationality. Among the participants were 230 men (44.5%) and 287 women (55.5%). Mean age was 34,79 years

(SD = 18.02, range = 16–92); 17% of the sample were university-educated; 24% attended church weekly, compared to about 10% in the general Flemish population. The sample was thus slightly younger, better educated and more religiously active than the general Flemish population.

Concepts and measurements

Our questionnaire consisted of questions in a the seven-point Likert scale format (1 = completely opposed, 4 = neutral, 7 = completely in agreement). Seven items which we had designed ourselves were included to measure belief salience [3]. The responses to these items were subjected to an iterative exploratory factor analysis using multiple squared correlations as prior communality estimates. The principal components method was used to extract the factors. The 100% Declared Variance Criterion indicated a single factor solution. The items from this scale, the results of the factor analyses, the internal consistency (which was satisfactory) and the average scale score can be found in the Appendix.

To measure racism, a nine-item scale was included (Billiet & De Witte, 1991). Responses to this scale were subjected to an iterative exploratory factor analysis using multiple squared correlations as prior communality estimates. The principal components method was used to extract the factors. The 100% Declared Variance Criterion indicated a single factor solution. The items from this scale, the results of the factor analyses, the internal consistency (which was satisfactory) and the average scale score can be found in the Appendix.

To measure different religious styles, the 24-item Post-Critical Belief scale (Hutsebaut, 1996) was included. On the basis of both comments of our participants and a multidimensional scaling analysis on the Pearson correlations between the 24 items, we omitted three items and extracted four religious attitude scales: one for Orthodoxy (seven items), one for External Critique (seven items), one for Relativism (four items) and one for Second Naïveté (three items). Responses to these scales were subjected to an iterative exploratory factor analysis using multiple squared correlations as prior communality estimates. The principal components method was used to extract the factors. The 100% Declared Variance Criterion indicated a single factor solution for each scale. In the Orthodoxy scale, we left out one item in the further analyses because it had a loading of less than 0.40. The items from these scales, the results of the factor analyses, the internal consistency (which was satisfactory for Orthodoxy, External Critique and Second Naïveté, but rather low for Relativism) and the average scale score can be found in the Appendix.

Results

Initial correlation analysis

To test our hypotheses we first of all carried out a correlation analysis (see Table 1). Concerning Hypothesis 1, this analysis shows that frequency of church

TABLE 1. Correlations between the scales

| | <i>Orthodoxy</i> | <i>External Crit.</i> | <i>Relativism</i> | <i>Second N.</i> | <i>Belief Sal.</i> | <i>Church Att.</i> |
|----------------|------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| External Crit. | -0.25*** | | | | | |
| Relativism | -0.20*** | 0.27*** | | | | |
| Second N. | 0.44*** | -0.56*** | 0.14* | | | |
| Belief Sal. | 0.49*** | -0.64*** | -0.15** | 0.64*** | | |
| Church Att. | 0.41*** | -0.49*** | -0.03 | 0.57*** | 0.63*** | |
| Racism | 0.34*** | 0.13* | -0.15** | -0.03 | 0.01 | 0.01 |

* significant at level 0.005; ** significant at level 0.001; *** significant at level 0.0001.
N = 517.

attendance and belief salience were strongly related. Concerning Hypotheses 2 and 3, the results of the correlation analysis are not very informative. This analysis shows us that both frequency of church attendance and belief salience are virtually unrelated to racism. However, a (strong) curvilinear relation might still exist. Therefore, we carried out two one-way ANOVA analyses (between-groups design) using frequency of church attendance and belief salience as grouping variables. These analyses demonstrated that neither frequency of church attendance nor belief salience had predictive value concerning racism (resp. $F(3, 507) = 0.09$, n.s. and $F(2, 514) = 1.04$, n.s.), indicating that our results did not provide any evidence for the existence of a curvilinear relationship. As a result of this, Hypothesis 4 turned out to be a pointless one: the effects of both measures on racism simply could not disappear when the religious styles were taken into account, because there was no effect of either of both measures. Concerning the remainder of our hypotheses, racism turned out to be positively related to Orthodoxy, slightly positively related to External Critique, slightly negatively related to Relativism (all significantly so), but virtually unrelated to Second Naïveté (see also Duriez *et al.*, under review). These findings support Hypotheses 5, 6 and 7, but seem to lead us to reject Hypothesis 8. However, a pathway analysis suggested some support for Hypothesis 8.

Towards a theoretical model

Next with the aid of path analysis—for which we used the Lisrel 8 procedure (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993)—we set out to generate a model that fits our data, and is interpretable. In this model, a number of identification variables, traditionally appearing to be related to racism (age and level of education), were also adopted [4]. The explanatory variables are divided in endogenous variables (the religious styles), and exogenous variables (the ‘objective’ characteristics), on theoretical grounds. As already mentioned, we expected the religious styles to mediate the influence of frequency of church attendance and belief salience on racism, and we expected this also to a certain extent regarding the influence of age and level of education. We therefore started off with a model in which paths were specified from all exogenous

variables to all endogenous variables, from all exogenous variables to racism and from all endogenous variables to racism. This way we could test whether or not the paths from the exogenous variables to racism would turn out non-significant, as we were expecting. The standardised Root Mean Square Residual, which represents the average value across all standardised residuals, and which should be 0.05 or less, suggested this model fitted the data reasonably well (standardized RMR = 0.05). The Goodness-of-Fit Index, which basically compares the hypothesised model with no model at all, and which should be close to 1.00, suggested a good fit (GFI = 0.95). The adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index, which also takes the degrees of freedom into account, however, suggested a poor fit (AGFI = 0.59). The Normed Fit Index, which compares the hypothesised model with the independence model, and which should exceed 0.90, also indicated a rather poor model fit (NFI = 0.89). The same can be said regarding the Comparative Fit Index, which takes the sample size into account (CFI = 0.89), and regarding the Incremental Fit Index, which takes the degrees of freedom into account (IFI = 0.89). The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation, which takes into account the error of approximation in the population, was high (RMSEA = 0.24), indicating that the model fitted the data poorly (values less than 0.05 indicate good fit, and values as high as 0.08 to 0.10 represent reasonable errors of approximation). Finally, chi-square, the traditional closeness of fit measure, was excessively high ($\chi^2(6) = 193.95, p = 0.00$), indicating this model was unlikely and should be rejected. Most goodness of fit statistics thus showed this model did not fit the data well (see Byrne, 1998, for an overview of these statistics).

As a next step, we decided to let ourselves be guided by the modification indices that accompanied the LISREL output, and decided to allow error covariances between four pairs of religious styles (between Relativism and External Critique and between Second Naïveté and all other religious styles). This implies that these pairs were influenced by a common aspect which was not adopted in the model. Obviously, we cannot be certain to identify these common aspects precisely, but theoretically speaking, we have a fair notion of what they could be. Relativism and External Critique are both mainly expressions of disbelief. Second Naïveté and Orthodoxy are both belief affirming stances. Second Naïveté and External Critique are both epitomised by the 'Masters of Suspicion' (Freud, Marx and Nietzsche), but while External Critical persons stick to a reductive interpretation of religion, the Second Naïveté believers try both to encompass and to go beyond it (Wulff, 1991, p. 634). Finally, Second Naïveté and Relativism are both characterised by a consciousness of the strictly personal character of the own ideological outlook. The standardised RMR (= 0.01), the GFI (= 1.00), the AGFI (= 0.92), the NFI (= 1.00), the CFI (= 1.00) and the IFI (= 1.00) all suggested our adapted model fitted the data extremely well. However, the RMSEA (= 0.08) indicated a mediocre model fit, and chi-square was still too high ($\chi^2(2) = 8.49, p = 0.01$).

Since the LISREL-output was still accompanied by a theoretically meaningful suggestion, we decided to make another adaptation to the model and specify a path from Second Naïveté to Orthodoxy. The standardised RMR (= 0.00), the GFI (= 1.00), the AGFI (= 1.00), the NFI (= 1.00), the CFI (= 1.00), the IFI

(= 1.00), the RMSEA (= 0.00) and chi-square ($\chi^2(1) = 0.12, p = 0.73$) all suggested our readapted model fitted the data extremely well.

However, as Jöreskog (1993) and McCallum (1995) have noted, models might be overfitted. In that case, one can eliminate some parameters from the model without significantly altering its fit to the data, thus simplifying the model and augmenting the chance of cross-validation. Therefore, in a last step, we decided to remove all paths that were non-significant at the 0.05 level from the model (thus freeing certain formerly fixed parameters). Of course, the goodness of fit detonated, but only slightly. Chi-square ($\chi^2(7) = 7.46, p = 0.39$), the RMSEA (= 0.01), the standardised RMR (= 0.01), the GFI (= 0.99), the AGFI (= 0.98) the NFI (= 1.00), the CFI (= 1.00) and the IFI (= 1.00) all suggested our final model still fitted the data extremely well. Moreover, the chance that the model cross-validates across similar-sized samples from the same population is increased. This chance is measured by the Expected Cross-Validation Index (ECVI). ECVI coefficients can take on any value, so there is no appropriate range of values. Its application assumes a comparison of models whereby an ECVI is computed for each model, after which all ECVI values are placed in rank order. The model with the smallest ECVI value exhibits the greatest potential for replication. The ECVI value of this simplified model was 0.16, in comparison to 0.17 for the non-simplified model. Quite similar indices, the Akaike Information Criterion and the Consistent Akaike Information Criterion pointed in the same direction: the simplified model had a AIC of 83.42 and a CAIC of 282.84, whereas the non-simplified model had a AIC of 88.12 and a CAIC of 319.03 (see Byrne, 1998, for an overview of these statistics). The final model (which can be found in Figure 2) provides an extensive overview of the strength of direct as well as indirect relations between the explanatory variables

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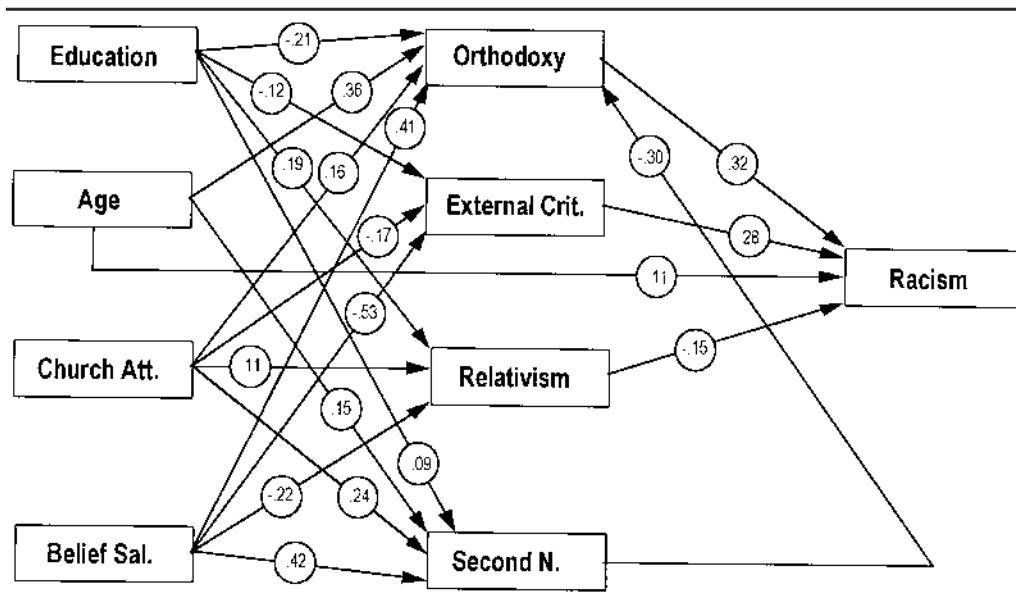


FIGURE 2. Causal model explaining the influence of religion on racism in Flanders.

TABLE 2. Lisrel estimates of the Standardised Effect Parameters (lambda)

| | Direct effects ^a on: | | | | Effects on racism | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|-------|-------|------|-------------------|----------|-------|
| | O | E | R | 2 | Direct | Indirect | Total |
| Education | -0.21 (-0.24) | -0.12 | 0.19 | 0.09 | | -0.13 | -0.13 |
| Age | 0.36 (0.31) | | | 0.15 | 0.11 | 0.10 | 0.21 |
| Church Attendance | 0.16 (0.09) | -0.17 | 0.11 | 0.24 | | -0.04 | -0.04 |
| Belief Saliency | 0.41 (0.28) | -0.53 | -0.22 | 0.42 | | -0.02 | -0.02 |
| Orthodoxy | | | | | 0.32 | | 0.32 |
| External Critique | | | | | 0.28 | | 0.28 |
| Relativism | | | | | -0.15 | | -0.15 |
| Second Naïveté | -0.30 | | | | | -0.10 | -0.10 |
| <i>R</i> ² | 0.32 | 0.43 | 0.07 | 0.47 | | | 0.19 |

^a Total effects are between brackets if they are different from the direct effects. All effects are significant at the 0.05 level.

O = Orthodoxy, E = External Critique, R = Relativism, 2 = Second Naïveté. *N* = 517.

and the dependent variable: racism (see Table 2). The model accounted for 19% of the variance in the dependent variable. Although this is possibly an underestimate because of likely systematic filling out errors which suppress the correlations, 19% is not a lot. In some ways this could be expected, since it was not our aim to explain racism. Our aim was rather to locate the specific contribution of religion.

As far as the endogenous variables are concerned, Orthodoxy and External Critique had more or less the same stimulating effect on racism. The (direct) effect of Relativism and the (indirect) effect of Second Naïveté was a lot smaller. As far as the exogenous variables are concerned, age had, as expected, the most significant stimulating effect on racism, both directly and indirectly. Although the strength of this total effect was smaller than that of Orthodoxy and External Critique, it was still stronger than that of Relativism and Second Naïveté. Education had, as expected, a restraining effect on racism. This, however, appeared to work entirely indirectly through the influence on the religious styles. Frequency of church attendance as well as belief saliency had no significant direct effect on racism. However, they had a slightly indirect restraining effect through their influence on the religious styles.

Discussion

The hypothesis that belief saliency and frequency of church attendance would be strongly positively correlated (Hypothesis 1) was confirmed. However, the correlation was not so strong as to conclude that actually the same thing is being measured. This implies one has to be reluctant to use frequency of church attendance as a measure of belief saliency, for it only provides a rough indication. This does not necessarily imply that the other researchers in the Low Countries working on this topic did not measure what they thought they were measuring.

As we noted in our description of the sample, our sample was in some ways not representative of the Flemish population. The results we obtained could be an artifact of that [5]. Alternatively, even if the correlation we found does mean that these two measures do not measure the same thing, this can be a recent evolution due to an acceleration in the privatisation of religion. And even if these measures were not measuring exactly the same thing, at least they measure something quite closely associated. However, it is advisable to stop using a measure of church attendance as an indication of belief salience without further investigation.

The hypotheses that both belief salience and frequency of church attendance would be curvilinearly related to racism (Hypotheses 2 and 3) were not confirmed. Again, we cannot exclude the possibility that the absence of these relations was due to sample characteristics, but in line with what we have advocated before, we believe it is more reasonable to search for an explanation of these findings in terms of the privatisation of religion. It is not unlikely that the irregular church attenders have changed and that maybe the meaning of attaching only moderate importance to religion has also changed. A consequence of these findings was that we could not check Hypothesis 4, which stated that the effects of church attendance and belief salience on racism would disappear when religious styles are taken into account. But then again, maybe this hypothesis has stopped making any sense. This would be the case if it is truly so that frequency of church attendance and belief salience are nowadays unrelated to racism, and possibly also to other not strictly religious attitudes. Further research is required to examine this. If this research supports our findings, the conclusion would be that knowing how often people attend church and/or knowing how important people consider their religion to be is really no longer informative.

An initial correlation analysis on the one hand yielded evidence in favour of Hypotheses 5, 6 and 7. Orthodoxy and External Critique were indeed positively related to racism, whereas Relativism was negatively related to racism. It should nevertheless be noted that, although these relationships were substantial, they were not very strong. On the other hand, this initial correlation analysis seemed to suggest we would have to reject Hypothesis 8. Second Naïveté turned out to be unrelated instead of negatively related to racism. However, the results of our path analysis shows that this interpretation would partly have been a faulty one. Although it is true that Second Naïveté did not exercise any *direct* influence on racism, it appeared to hold an *indirect* influence in the expected direction. We can conclude that, although it is true that Second Naïveté does not seem to lead to greater tolerance (as we in fact had expected), it does inhibit racism. Our research thus does provide evidence that there exists a way of dealing with Roman Catholic religion that, generally speaking, counters racism, but our research does not provide any evidence that there exists a way of dealing with religion that, generally speaking, fosters tolerance. On the other hand, our research does provide evidence that there exists a way of rejecting Roman Catholic religion that, generally speaking, fosters—or is associated with—tolerance. These conclusions are still somewhat tentative though, since we must not forget to take into account that the Relativism scale had a rather low Cronbach's alpha. This scale obviously needs further elaboration, before future

research can give a more solid statistical base to these claim. Recently, we attempted to do so. Moreover, we tried to strip the External Critique scale from its latent belief affirming content, and we tried to widen the scope of the Second Naïveté scale. The similarity between the initial results with the renewed Post-Critical Belief scale and the version that we have used in this study was, however, striking (Duriez *et al.*, under review)

The path analysis reported here also largely confirmed the effect of the explanatory factors age and education, as revealed in past studies in the Low Countries. Yet, there were some differences from other work. Contrary to Billiet's research (1995b), in our research, education maintained only an indirect effect, whereas age continued to influence racism directly. Consequently, a combination of both theoretical frameworks seems most suitable to us in order to obtain a view on why these effects take place. Possibly, the effect of age should be considered in terms of diminished authoritarianism, to which we did not pay attention. The effect of age is not so much in terms of belief-related value orientations, since this effect seemed to limit itself to a non-differentiated positive influence on the typically belief affirming religious styles. The effect of education should mainly be considered in terms of the facilitation of non-dogmatic (religio-)cognitive styles, to which Billiet did not pay attention.

We should, however, be careful when drawing conclusions from our path analyses. We are well aware of the fact that the construction of our model was data-driven, and that it might have been obtained to some extent by 'capitalising on chance' (Jöreskog, 1993). Moreover, the LISREL output indicated a Critical *N* goodness of fit statistic of 1279, suggesting our sample ($N = 517$) was not sufficiently large to allow for an adequate fit of the model. Therefore, before basing strong claims on it, it should be tested again (strictly confirmatory) using data from a new and larger sample.

A last point we need to address is that, in our study, no measurement of social desirability was included. This was for practical reasons [6]. However, the absence of this kind of measurement may not be problematic. First of all, if religion truly has become privatised, as our results seem to suggest, there is no longer a need to give socially desirable answers to belief-related items. In the light of the current era, we cannot image what could be gained from pretending to be more religious than one actually is. Nor can we imagine what could be gained from pretending to be less religious than one actually is. In future research, however, we will explicitly pay attention to this.

Notes

- [1] Probably, 'ideological extremists' obtained high scores on both extrinsic and intrinsic belief. It looks as if the failure to clearly operationalise the concepts has forced Allport and Ross (1967) to introduce a third type: the indiscriminately pro-religious (who obtained the highest prejudice scores).
- [2] We checked all 517 questionnaires for three kinds of response biases: acquiescence (yeah-saying), denial (no-saying) and avoidance (sticking to the neutral point of the scales). No participants needed to be excluded on any of these grounds.

- [3] The items were based on Jackson's 'religion/spiritual life' subscale (1981).
- [4] The correlation analyses had already shown that, in this study, age correlated positively ($r(517) = 0.23, p < 0.0001$) and education correlated negatively ($r(517) = -0.26, p < 0.0001$) with racism.
- [5] However, since education was found to be significantly related to racism (as could be predicted), and since our sample was even more distorted according to education than according to church attendance, this would be rather unlikely.
- [6] Our research was part of a larger project. Therefore, the amount of space available in the questionnaire was limited, and we had to limit ourselves to what we thought should strictly be included.

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Appendix

| 1. <i>Belief Salience</i> | Loading |
|--|---------|
| 1. Being religious is not important to me. (<i>after inversion</i>) | 0.83 |
| 2. I would feel a great sense of loss if suddenly I were unable to have a religious life | 0.79 |
| 3. Being religious has virtually no effect on my life. (<i>after inversion</i>) | 0.74 |
| 4. When I can, I seek out situations in which I can express myself religiously. | 0.71 |
| 5. I rarely devote much time to my religious life. (<i>after inversion</i>) | 0.66 |
| 6. When I'm involved in religious activities, I usually feel indifferent. (<i>after inversion</i>) | 0.65 |
| 7. When I meet new people, it is important to me that they know I am religious. | 0.60 |

Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.88$ ($N = 494$);
 Mean score = 3.51 ($N = 518$, $SD = 1.52$).

| 2. <i>Racism</i> | Loading |
|---|---------|
| 1. Guest workers come here to exploit our social security. | 0.81 |
| 2. In general, immigrants are not to be trusted. | 0.80 |
| 3. Guest workers endanger the employment of Belgians. | 0.78 |
| 4. We have to keep our race pure and fight mixture with other races. | 0.74 |
| 5. Belgium shouldn't have brought in guest workers. | 0.70 |
| 6. It's better that people from different races have as little contact as possible. | 0.63 |
| 7. In some neighbourhoods, the government is doing more for immigrants than for the Belgians who live there | 0.63 |
| 8. The religion of the Muslims is a threat to the culture of the West | 0.62 |
| 9. Everything taken together, the white race is superior to other races. | 0.60 |

Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.89$ ($N = 501$);
 Mean score = 2.54 ($N = 518$, $SD = 1.37$).

| 3. <i>Orthodoxy</i> | Loading |
|---|---------|
| 1. Religion is the one matter that gives meaning to life in all its aspects. | 0.68 |
| 2. Mary truly was and remained a virgin before, during and after she gave birth to Jesus, even though that goes against modern rationality. | 0.66 |
| 3. God has been defined for once and for all and therefore is immutable. | 0.61 |

| 3. <i>Orthodoxy continued . . .</i> | Loading |
|---|---------|
| 4. Ultimately, there is only one correct answer to each religious question. | 0.59 |
| 5. Only the major religious traditions guarantee admittance to God. | 0.59 |
| 6. I think that Bible stories should be taken literally, as they are written. | 0.53 |
| 7. Only a priest can give an answer to important religious questions. | 0.38 |

Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.78$ ($N = 477$);
 Mean score = 2.55 ($N = 518$, $SD = 1.33$).

| 4. <i>External Critique</i> | Loading |
|---|---------|
| 1. Belief is more of a dream which turns out to be an illusion when one is confronted with the harshness of life | 0.70 |
| 2. God is only a name for the inexplicable. | 0.66 |
| 3. Too many people have been oppressed in the name of belief; this is another reason why I have my doubts. | 0.62 |
| 4. The world of Bible stories is so far removed from us that it has little relevance to my life. | 0.57 |
| 5. The scientific clarifications of human life and the world have made religious ones superfluous. | 0.56 |
| 6. I know that the testimony of my belief is sometimes weak and vulnerable, but I still want to go on talking about my belief. (<i>after inversion</i>) | 0.47 |
| 7. I sometimes find it hard to believe, because you never can be really certain. | 0.44 |

Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.77$ ($N = 497$);
 Mean score = 3.79 ($N = 518$, $SD = 1.36$).

| 5. <i>Relativism</i> | Loading |
|---|---------|
| 1. I am well aware of the fact that each assertion on God is determined by the time in which it is formulated. | 0.65 |
| 2. For me, assertions regarding the absolute, like dogmas, will also always remain relative, because they are pronounced by human beings at a certain period of time. | 0.60 |
| 3. God grows together with the history of man and therefore is changeable. | 0.45 |
| 4. Ultimately, for me, religion means commitment without absolute guarantee. | 0.40 |

Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.60$ ($N = 486$);
 Mean score = 4.58 ($N = 518$, $SD = 1.32$).

| 6. <i>Second Naïveté</i> | Loading |
|---|---------|
| 1. Despite the fact that the Bible has been written in a completely different historical context from ours, for me, it retains a basic message. | 0.86 |
| 2. For me, the Bible holds a deeper truth which needs to be revealed by personal reflection. | 0.80 |
| 3. I consider the Bible to be a guide, full of signposts in my search for God, and not a historical account. | 0.74 |

Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.85$ ($N = 508$);
 Mean score = 3.90 ($N = 518$, $SD = 1.88$).