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Religious Discrimination Toward Other Religious Groups by Descendants of Religiously Heterogamous Versus Homogamous Parents

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Abstract
This study aimed to develop a model that explains personal attitudes toward religious groups and the role of parental religious heterogamy and homogamy. The sample included 32,595 participants from 26 countries around the world and was obtained from the International Social Survey Programme. Participants whose parents were religiously homogamous presented higher well-being, better health perception, and higher religiosity than participants whose parents were religiously heterogamous. Having had parental heterogamy or homogamy is a moderator of the relationship between religious practice and attitudes toward religious groups, with this relationship being stronger among participants who had parental homogamy. Religious variables are directly related to heterogamy/homogamy and indirectly related to well-being and personal attitude toward religious groups through parents' religious heterogamy/homogamy. Religious variables are related to personal attitudes toward religious groups through patents' religious heterogamy/homogamy and well-being. Participants whose parents are religiously heterogamous present a more negative attitude toward Christians, Muslims, Hindus, and Jews, and participants whose parents are religiously homogamous present a more negative attitude toward atheists or nonbelievers. In the context of globalization and the merging of cultures, these results open new research questions and may support religious, spiritual, and clinical practitioners in their approach to religious discrimination.

Keywords Religious heterogamy · Religious homogamy · Religious discrimination · Religiosity

Introduction

Heterogamy is a marriage between individuals with different characteristics and statuses, such as religion, socioeconomic status, or ethnicity (Thompson et al., 2016). Religious heterogamy or religious dissimilarity is present when spouses do not share

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the same religious affiliation (McPhail & Yang, 2020). Other denominations and specific definitions are presented in the literature, namely, interreligious marriage or religious intermarriage that "occurs when persons who belong to or are identified with different ones of the major religious groups of a society marry" (Yinger, 1968, p. 104). Additionally, interfaith marriage or mixed-faith marriage is a marriage between spouses professing different religions (Kurttekin, 2020). In an interfaith marriage, each partner usually adheres to their own religion. Some religions prohibit interfaith marriage, others differ on the level of permissibility, and still others allow it with stipulations (Kurttekin, 2020). However, a "couple can be religiously different in several ways, not just one, each of which can affect their interaction" (Yinger, 1968, p. 104).

The literature on religious heterogamy has focused mainly on its marital consequences and its impact on the religiosity and well-being of descendants. Families usually incorporate religion as a way of finding meaning in family relationships; in daily lives, families are the primary source of religious socialization (Petts, 2019). Parenting and/or family religiosity are related to parenting styles and practices and to family relationships; in turn, these influence moral development directly as well as through child or adolescent religiosity (Hardy et al., 2019).

Religious heterogamy and religious participation

Religious heterogamy and its impact on religiosity have been interpreted as a result of secularization (McPhail & Yang, 2020), and the impact of parents' religious heterogamy on religious inheritance is viewed as negative (McPhail, 2019). Petts and Knoester (2007) found evidence that religious heterogamy is negatively associated with religious participation, although religiously heterogamous parents who affiliate with different Protestant groups report similar religious participation as same-faith parents. The strength of religious denominational identity at the moment when couples became engaged was the strongest predictor of religious behavior among interchurch participants, while church attendance at the moment when couples became engaged was the strongest predictor of religious behavior among same-church participants (Williams & Lawler, 2001).

Having religiously heterogamous parents or parents with dissimilar religious attendance patterns is associated with lower religiosity in participants (McPhail, 2019). However, parents' religious practices mediate this relationship when each parent has a different religion; additionally, having one unaffiliated parent is associated with lower religiosity regardless of parents' levels of religious attendance (McPhail, 2019). Parent–child agreement on religious values is high in families where the father is religious and the mother is secular and in homogeneous religious families; in contrast, families with a religious mother and a secular father and homogeneous secular families have a low transmission of religious values (Luria & Katz, 2020).

Religious heterogamy and marital conflict

Petts and Knoester (2007) found evidence that religious heterogamy is associated with marital conflict. Marriage to a person from a distinctive religion can be prone to conflict (Hohmann-Marriott & Amato, 2008), with a high risk of marriage dissolution (Kalmijn et al., 2005). Religiously heterogamous couples who affiliated with different Protestant

groups reported similar levels of marital conflict as same-faith couples (Petts & Knoester, 2007). In addition, religiously heterogamous couples had less frequent sex and engaged in less nonsexual touch than religiously homogamous couples (Schafer & Kwon, 2019). Husbands whose wives were highly religious and who shared the same religion exhibited greater initial levels of marital satisfaction than those who had wives of weaker religious intensity and were of a different religion (Hwang et al., 2021). Curtis and Ellison (2002) showed that religious heterogamy has negligible effects on marital conflict or stability. In sum, the effect of religious compatibility or heterogamy on marital stability or happiness remains debatable (Chen & Chen, 2021).

Religious heterogamy and children

Some authors have studied the impact of having parents of dissimilar faiths on children's well-being. Petts and Knoester (2007) found evidence that children whose parents are religiously heterogamous are more likely to engage in marijuana use and underage drinking than children with religiously homogamous parents, especially in families where parents' religious heterogamy is the result of enormous religious distance (e.g., one parent is not religious or the two parents identify with different religions). However, these children report similar levels of delinquency as children of same-faith parents (Petts & Knoester, 2007). Interchurch married couples were less likely to emphasize religion in raising children than same-church married couples (Williams & Lawler, 2001). In addition, greater religious heterogamy is associated with less interaction and more relational distance between fathers and children (Kim & Swan, 2019). High religious conflict between heterogamous parents is associated with worse mental health for children (Buehler et al., 2007). In fact, religion can undermine child development if it is a source of conflict within families (Bartkowski et al., 2008). Nelson and Uecker (2018) found that personal religiosity is positively associated with parenting satisfaction; however, these authors also found that religious heterogamy among couples is associated with lower odds of parenting satisfaction.

Religious heterogamy and well-being

According to Schafer and Kwon (2019), religious service heterogamy predicts lower relationship happiness and satisfaction as both partners report relatively little joint activity in their free time. Religious heterogamy is not related to marital happiness in Catholics (Shehan et al., 1990). Fathers' marital happiness has an important role in mediating the association between religious heterogamy and paternal engagement (Kim & Swan, 2019). Older women in highly religious homogamous marriages report better mental and physical health than women in heterogamous and secular (nonreligious) marriages, but no significant associations were found for men (Upenieks et al., 2022).

Religious heterogamy and religious discrimination

An individual's attitude toward other religions can be positive, neutral, or negative (Darmana et al., 2022). Religious discrimination refers to the unequal treatment of individuals and/or groups based on religious beliefs and is a direct assault on an individual's

belief system (Ysseldyk et al., 2010). Although higher religiosity is associated with higher levels of life satisfaction, which tends to reduce the negative effect of religious discrimination, Vang et al. (2019) found a negative effect of religious discrimination on life satisfaction that was equivalent to the effects of some major life events (e.g., widowhood, unemployment). Religiously heterogamous couples suffer discrimination and oppression or, at least, receive less sympathy and support than religiously homogamous couples, which makes it more difficult for them to raise their children (Huber & Fieder, 2017). In fact, religious discrimination is a threat to mental health, irrespective of religious affiliation (Wu & Schimmele, 2021). Jordanova et al. (2015) reported that people who experienced religious discrimination had an increased prevalence of all common mental disorders. However, atheists seem to be the group most targeted by religious discrimination (Cragun et al., 2012).

Van der Straten Waillet and Roskam (2012) studied the developmental and contextual factors that are related to religious discrimination and found that age, homogeneity of school attended, group status, and parental promotion of mistrust (i.e., parental religious socialization) were all significant predictors of religious discrimination. To the best of our knowledge, no studies have assessed the level of religious discrimination of descendants of religiously heterogamous parents compared to those of homogamous parents. To fill this gap, this study aims to find a model that explains personal attitudes toward religious groups and the role of religious heterogamy and homogamy in this model. To this end, we hypothesized that there are significant differences between participants whose parents are religiously heterogamous and participants whose parents are religiously homogamous concerning well-being, religious variables, and personal attitudes toward religious groups (H1). We also hypothesized that religious variables and attitudes toward religious groups contribute to explaining well-being and that religious variables and well-being explain personal attitudes toward religious groups (H2). Additionally, we hypothesized that parents' religious heterogamy and parents' religious homogamy moderate the relation between religious variables and well-being and moderate the relation between religious variables and attitudes toward religious groups (H3). Finally, we hypothesized that religious variables (religious identity, religious practice, religious beliefs, and positive religiosity) explain parents' religious heterogamy/homogamy, which, in turn, explains well-being and attitudes toward religious groups and that well-being contributes to explaining attitudes toward religious groups (H4).

Methods

Procedures

This study's protocol was approved by the institutional ethical committee, and all procedures followed the guidelines of the Declaration of Helsinki, although this study was based on a public database that does not require authorization for its use. After selecting the database and retrieving it from the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) site (http://www.issp.org/), the items that gave rise to the dimensions to be studied were chosen. Some variables were recoded considering that a high score would reflect high religiosity. Then, bivariate correlations were established between the variables of each dimension, retaining those with correlations above $r = 0.300$. Cronbach's alpha was calculated for each

dimension, with the minimum acceptable value being 0.70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Finally, variables were standardized to create the indices.

Measures

The public database used in this study was retrieved from the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP): Religion IV−ISSP 2018, as ISSP is a cross-national collaboration program. This database includes several items related to sociodemographic variables (Table 1) as well as religious variables and psychological variables (well-being and attitudes toward religious groups; Table 2). Religious variables include religious identity, religious beliefs, religious practice, positive religiosity, and negative religiosity.

Data analysis

The data were analyzed using SPSS 28.0 and AMOS 28.0 programs. First, the demographic characteristics of the sample and descriptive statistics for the study variables were carried out (frequencies, percentage, mean, standard deviation, minimum, maximum, skewness and kurtosis to evaluate the data's distribution; skewness < 3 and kurtosis < 11; Mardia, 1970). The internal reliability of the variables was measured using Cronbach's alpha (α). Bivariate correlations between items and dimensions were assessed by Spearman's rank correlations. Next, differences between samples concerning dependent and independent variables were assessed through *t-test*, *p value*, and size effect Cohen's *d*. Several multiple linear regressions were performed to identify the variables that contribute to well-being and personal attitudes toward religious groups. The SPSS macro PROCESS (Hayes, 2017) was used to perform moderation analysis. Structural equation modeling with path analysis, employing maximum likelihood estimation (Byrne, 2010), was used to test a model that explains the relations between religious variables and well-being and personal attitudes toward religious groups. The goodness-of-fit of the model was tested using $\chi 2/df$, comparative fit index (CFI; > 0.90), Tucker−Lewis index (TLI; > 0.90), incremental fit index (IFI; > 0.90), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA; < 0.08) and standardized root mean square residual (SRMR; < 0.06) (Byrne, 2010; Kaplan, 2000; Kline, 2015).

Results

Descriptive

Table 1 presents the sociodemographic characteristics of the sample, grouped by country. The sample is mostly female, with a mean age of approximately 49 years, with approximately 13 years of education, employed, and living with a romantic partner. Participants are mainly from Europe and Asia. Participants from Bulgaria, France, the Czech Republic, Japan, and Sweden present the highest mean age, and participants from Thailand, New Zealand, Croatia, and the Philippines present the lowest mean age. Participants from Iceland, France, New Zealand, Finland, Norway, and Switzerland have more years of education than those from other countries, and those from Hungary, Bulgaria, Austria, Chile, Thailand, and the Philippines have fewer years of education. New Zealand (73.7%), Sweden (72.9%), Thailand (71.6%), and the Philippines (70.0%) are the countries where more participants live with a partner. Switzerland (9.2%), Spain (8.7%), Finland (8.4%), and the

Table 1 Sample frequencies

			Gender		Age (years)		Education (years)		Paid work		Partner		
	N	%	Male	Female	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*N*	%	Yes Live Together	Yes Do Not Live Together	No
Total sample	32595	100	15409	17186	49.28	17.41	12.94	4.18	19969	61.3	20134	1715	10746
Country													
Austria	1158	3.6	548	610	51.86	17.50	11.44	2.61	699	60.4	658	78	422
Bulgaria	795	2.4	333	462	58.43	17.58	11.68	3.68	336	42.3	371	31	393
Chile	1235	3.8	454	781	48.23	17.14	11.15	4.12	656	53.1	660	71	504
Croatia	977	3.0	425	552	44.57	15.82	12.57	2.57	588	60.2	532	9	436
Czech Republic	1261	3.9	553	708	55.34	16.69	13.09	3.25	686	54.4	761	70	430
Denmark	1574	4.8	872	702	46.42	16.78	14.01	5.93	1068	67.9	1063	104	407
Finland	1180	3.6	536	644	46.09	17.41	14.77	3.90	701	59.4	739	99	342
France	920	2.8	410	510	55.99	16.66	15.00	5.70	471	51.2	591	68	261
Germany	1653	5.1	832	821	51.37	17.93	12.66	3.84	976	59.0	1125	108	420
Hungary	969	3.0	413	556	49.47	15.51	11.95	2.76	638	65.8	499	25	445
Iceland	991	3.0	478	513	48.30	17.65	15.82	4.53	730	73.7	680	53	258
Israel	1173	3.6	615	558	49.80	18.71	13.60	3.72	711	60.6	782	42	349
Japan	1183	3.6	587	596	53.83	17.92	13.14	2.54	788	66.6	770	24	389
Korea (South)	806	2.5	392	414	46.98	16.97	13.02	3.85	554	68.7	419	40	347
New Zealand	905	2.8	449	456	45.67	16.56	14.93	4.34	648	71.6	667	23	215
Norway	1206	3.7	590	616	49.85	16.65	14.70	3.83	882	73.1	841	76	289
Philippines	1184	3.6	593	591	43.15	15.85	9.26	3.42	632	53.4	829	36	319
Russia	1578	4.8	714	864	46.41	16.96	12.67	2.65	886	56.1	904	22	652
Slovak Republic	1302	4.0	626	676	46.87	18.32	12.62	2.48	663	50.9	481	77	744

Table 1 (continued)

			Gender		Age (years)		Education (years)		Paid work		Partner		
	N	%	Male	Female	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*N*	%	Yes Live Together	Yes Do Not Live Together	No
Total sample	32595	100	15409	17186	49.28	17.41	12.94	4.18	19969	61.3	20134	1715	10746
Country													
Slovenia	1046	3.2	512	534	51.97	18.33	12.84	3.48	542	51.8	690	43	313
Spain	1631	5.0	809	822	49.40	17.77	12.10	5.38	905	55.5	1069	142	420
Sweden	1614	5.0	765	849	53.44	16.17	13.60	3.31	990	61.3	1176	103	335
Switzerland	1989	6.1	976	1013	47.88	16.86	14.50	3.66	1393	70.0	1311	191	487
Taiwan	1841	5.6	898	943	48.40	17.30	12.28	4.54	1194	64.9	1017	40	784
Thailand	1261	3.9	550	711	45.87	13.56	9.62	4.54	907	71.9	903	50	308
United States	1163	3.6	479	684	48.96	18.15	13.66	3.01	725	62.3	596	90	477

N frequency, % percentage, *M* mean, *SD* standard deviation

Table 2 Differences Between Parents' Religious Heterogamy and Homogamy

	Father and Mother Different Religions ($N=4717$)		Father and Mother Same Religion ($N=27,294$)		Differences		
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*	*d*
Well-Being Index (α = 0.60)	-0.06	0.64	0.01	0.63	-7.57	**< 0.001**	-0.12
How happy or unhappy? ($r=0.66$)	2.99	0.77	3.01	0.76	-1.68	0.094	-0.02
How satisfied with relationships with family members? ($r=0.44$)	5.64	1.14	5.79	1.05	-8.69	**< 0.001**	-0.15
How do you rate your health? ($r=0.75$)	3.22	1.06	3.29	1.04	-4.10	**< 0.001**	-0.07
Religious Identity Index (α = 0.88)	-0.19	0.85	0.05	0.86	-17.29	**< 0.001**	-0.28
Closest to respondent's belief about God ($r=0.88$)	3.39	1.84	3.77	1.88	-13.12	**< 0.001**	-0.20
Best describes beliefs about God ($r=0.81$)	2.16	1.28	2.45	1.29	-12.35	**< 0.001**	-0.19
Respondent describes self as religious ($r=0.88$)	3.42	1.69	3.84	1.62	-15.59	**< 0.001**	-0.25
Best describes respondent ($r=0.87$)	2.14	1.10	2.46	1.12	-17.72	**< 0.001**	-0.29
Religious Beliefs Index (α = 0.90)	-0.15	0.82	0.00	0.86	-11.03	**< 0.001**	-0.19
Belief in life after death ($r=0.87$)	2.39	1.09	2.53	1.09	-7.90	**< 0.001**	-0.13
Belief in heaven ($r=0.90$)	2.18	1.11	2.41	1.13	-12.83	**< 0.001**	-0.21
Belief in hell ($r=0.86$)	2.00	1.10	2.20	1.11	-11.67	**< 0.001**	-0.19
Belief in religious miracles ($r=0.86$)	2.21	1.08	2.37	1.09	-9.13	**< 0.001**	-0.15
Belief in supernatural powers of deceased ancestors ($r=0.74$)	1.98	0.99	2.10	1.02	-7.149	**< 0.001**	-0.12
Religious Practice Index (α = 0.85)	-0.23	0.62	0.05	0.74	-24.50	**< 0.001**	-0.39
Respondent's attendance of religious services ($r=0.75$)	2.52	2.19	3.07	2.34	-16.27	**< 0.001**	-0.24
Respondent child, mother attend church ($r=0.77$)	3.34	2.53	4.00	2.60	-13.35	**< 0.001**	-0.24
Respondent child, father attend church ($r=0.72$)	1.90	2.89	3.60	2.65	-50.54	**< 0.001**	-0.65
Respondent age 11–12 attended church ($r=0.77$)	3.51	2.55	4.13	2.62	-14.92	**< 0.001**	-0.23
How often respondent prays ($r=0.73$)	3.92	3.51	4.58	3.63	-11.99	**< 0.001**	-0.18
Takes part in church activities ($r=0.64$)	2.09	1.85	2.42	1.98	-11.15	**< 0.001**	-0.17
Visits holy places ($r=0.62$)	1.71	1.13	2.03	1.25	-17.35	**< 0.001**	-0.25
Positive Religiosity Index (α = 0.79)	-0.12	0.88	0.02	0.91	-9.82	**< 0.001**	-0.15
God concerns Himself with human beings ($r=0.90$)	2.66	1.43	2.93	1.40	-11.88	**< 0.001**	-0.19
Life meaningful because God exists ($r=0.92$)	2.07	1.27	2.32	1.30	-12.41	**< 0.001**	-0.20
Negative Religiosity Index (α = 0.70)	-0.07	0.82	0.01	0.88	-5.87	**< 0.001**	-0.09
Religions bring conflict ($r=0.91$)	2.18	1.17	2.26	1.22	-4.19	**< 0.001**	-0.06
Religious people too intolerant ($r=0.82$)	2.18	1.17	2.29	1.24	-5.94	**< 0.001**	-0.09
Personal Attitude Toward Religious Groups Index (α = 0.87)	0.05	0.75	-0.01	0.78	4.93	**< 0.001**	0.08
Personal attitude toward Christians ($r=0.61$)	2.21	1.05	2.02	1.01	11.70	**< 0.001**	0.19
Personal attitude toward Muslims ($r=0.68$)	2.83	1.37	2.76	1.42	2.94	**0.003**	0.05
Personal attitude toward Hindus ($r=0.87$)	2.32	1.31	2.25	1.36	3.36	**< 0.001**	0.05
Personal attitude toward Buddhists ($r=0.83$)	2.20	1.20	2.18	1.26	1.11	0.269	0.02
Personal attitude toward Jews ($r=0.83$)	2.40	1.26	2.29	1.30	5.51	**< 0.001**	0.08
Personal attitude toward atheists or non-believers ($r=0.65$)	2.31	1.18	2.36	1.27	-2.46	**0.014**	-0.04

M mean, *SD* standard deviation, *t* t-test, *p* p-value, *d* Cohen's d size effect, **bold** significant results, α Cronbach's alpha, *r* Spearman correlation with the respective dimension

United States (7.7%) are the countries where more participants do not live with a partner. Finally, the Slovak Republic (57.1%), Bulgaria (49.4%), Hungary (45.9%), and Croatia (44.6%) are the countries where more participants have no partner.

Differences (hypothesis 1)

Table 2 shows dimension reliability and correlations between items and respective dimensions. All these dimensions present good reliability values except the well-being dimension, whose Cronbach's alpha is below 0.70. All the correlations between items and respective dimensions are significant at the $p < 0.001$ level and above $r > 0.400$.

Table 2 also shows the differences between participants whose parents are religiously homogamous and participants whose parents are religiously heterogamous concerning well-being, religious variables, and personal attitude toward religious groups. In relation to individual well-being variables, there are no statistically significant differences regarding happiness, but there are statistically significant differences regarding the degree of satisfaction with family relationships as participants whose parents are religiously homogamous have higher satisfaction values than participants whose parents are religiously heterogamous. Concerning health, there are statistically significant differences regarding health perception as participants whose parents are religiously homogamous present better health perception than participants whose parents are religiously heterogamous. Regarding the well-being index, there are statistically significant differences between the participants as participants whose parents are religiously homogamous present higher well-being values than participants whose parents are religiously heterogamous.

In relation to the religious variables, all the differences are statistically significant as participants whose parents are religiously homogamous show more religiosity than participants whose parents are religiously heterogamous (Table 2). Concerning personal attitude toward religious groups, all the differences are statistically significant except personal attitude toward Buddhists. Participants whose parents are religiously heterogamous present a more negative attitude toward Christians, Muslims, Hindus, and Jews than participants whose parents are religiously homogamous. In turn, these participants present a more negative attitude toward atheists or nonbelievers than participants whose parents are religiously heterogamous (Table 2).

Multiple linear regressions (hypothesis 2)

Three multiple linear regressions were performed to determine the variables that explain the well-being index in the entire sample, in the sample with participants whose parents are religiously heterogamous, and in the sample with participants whose parents are religiously homogamous. Age of participants, having paid work, relationship status, heterogamy/homogamy, religious beliefs index, religious practice index, and personal attitude toward religious groups index together explain 9% of the well-being index in all the participants; i.e., being younger, having a paid job, having a partner, having religiously homogamous parents, having fewer religious beliefs, exhibiting more religious practices, and having a positive attitude toward other religions explain well-being (Table 3). Years of full-time schooling and personal attitude toward religious groups together explain 5% of the well-being index in participants with parental heterogamy, i.e., having more years of full-time schooling and a positive attitude toward religious groups explain well-being (Table 4). Age of participants, paid work, relation status, religious identity index, religious beliefs index, religious practice

Table 3 Variables That Contribute to Well-Being in Entire Sample

	Model 1			Model 2		
	B	EP B	β	B	EP B	β
Age of respondent	-0.001	0.000	-0.026	-0.001	0.000	-0.031
Paid work	-0.016	0.007	-0.016	-0.018	0.007	-0.017
Relation status	-0.048	0.005	-0.070	-0.047	0.005	-0.068
Heterogamy/homogamy	0.071	0.011	0.040	0.064	0.012	0.037
Religious Beliefs Index				-0.015	0.006	-0.021
Religious Practice Index				0.029	0.007	0.034
Personal Attitude Toward Religious Groups Index				-0.032	0.006	-0.036
R^2 (R^2 Adj.)		0.007 (0.007)			0.009 (0.009)	
F for change in R^2		44.230**			15.986**	

R^2 R squared, *R^2 Adj.* R squared adjusted, *B* unstandardized regression coeficients, *EP B* unstandardized error of B, *β* standardized regression coefficients

** $p < 0.001$

index, and personal attitude toward religious groups index together explain 9% of the well-being index in participants with parental homogamy, i.e., being younger, having a paid job and a partner, presenting a high degree of religious identity, exhibiting religious practices and lower religious beliefs, and having a more positive attitude toward religious groups explain well-being (Table 5).

Three multiple linear regressions were performed to determine the variables that explain the personal attitude toward religious groups index in the entire sample, in the sample with participants whose parents are religiously heterogamous, and in the sample with participants whose parents are religiously homogamous. Gender, paid work, relationship status, well-being index, religious identity index, religious beliefs index, religious practice index, positive religiosity index, and negative religiosity index altogether explain 20% of personal attitude toward religious groups index in all the participants, i.e., being male, having paid work, not having a partner, feeling lower well-being, presenting lower values of religious identity, religious beliefs, and negative religiosity index, and presenting high values of religious practice index and positive religiosity

Table 4 Variables That Contribute to Well-Being in Parental Heterogamy

	Model 1			Model 2		
	B	EP B	β	B	EP B	β
Years of full-time schooling	0.008	0.002	0.049	0.009	0.002	0.052
Personal Attitude Toward Religious Groups Index				-0.048	0.013	-0.055
R^2 (R^2 Adj.)		0.002 (0.002)			0.005 (0.005)	
F for change in R^2		10.928**			13.810**	

R^2 R squared, *R^2 Adj.* R squared adjusted, *B* unstandardized regression coeficients, *EP B* unstandardized error of B, *β* standardized regression coefficients

** $p < 0.001$

Table 5 Variables that contribute to Well-being in parental homogamy

	Model 1			Model 2		
	B	EP B	β	B	EP B	β
Age of respondent	-0.001	0.000	-0.026	-0.001	0.000	-0.034
Paid work	-0.015	0.008	-0.014	-0.017	0.008	-0.017
Relation Status	-0.050	0.005	-0.074	-0.050	0.005	-0.073
Religious Identity Index				0.019	0.009	0.027
Religious Beliefs Index				-0.026	0.008	-0.035
Religious Practice Index				0.024	0.009	0.028
Personal Attitude Towards Religious Groups Index				-0.033	0.007	-0.037
R^2 (R^2 Adj.)		0.006 (0.006)			0.009 (0.009)	
F for change in R^2		39.911**			12.687**	

R^2 R squared, *R^2 Adj.* R squared adjusted, *B* unstandardized regression coeficients, *EP B* unstandardized error of B, *β* standardized regression coefficients

**$p < 0.001$

index explain the personal attitude toward religious groups in all the sample (Table 6). Gender, paid work, relationship status, well-being index, religious identity index, religious beliefs index, and negative religiosity index explain 32% of the personal attitude toward religious groups index in participants with parental heterogamy, i.e., being male, having a paid job, not having a partner, low well-being index, low religious identity index, low religious beliefs index, and low negative religiosity index explain the personal attitude toward religious groups index in participants with parental heterogamy (Table 7). Gender, well-being index, religious identity index, religious beliefs index,

Table 6 Variables that contribute to Personal Attitude Towards Religious Groups in all sample

	Model 1			Model 2		
	B	EP B	β	B	EP B	β
Gender	-0.085	0.010	-0.060	-0.056	0.010	-0.040
Paid work	-0.020	0.008	-0.017	-0.016	0.008	-0.014
Relation status	0.015	0.005	0.019	0.014	0.005	0.018
Well-being Index				-0.042	0.007	-0.037
Religious Identity Index				-0.093	0.010	-0.114
Religious Beliefs Index				-0.046	0.009	-0.055
Religious Practice Index				0.035	0.009	0.037
Positive Religiosity Index				0.031	0.009	0.039
Negative Religiosity Index				-0.031	0.006	-0.037
R^2 (R^2 Adj.)		0.004 (0.004)			0.021 (0.020)	
F for change in R^2		31.142**			61.530**	

R^2 R squared, *R^2 Adj.* R squared adjusted, *B* unstandardized regression coeficients, *EP B* unstandardized error of B, *β* standardized regression coefficients

**$p < 0.001$

Table 7 Variables that contribute to Personal Attitude Towards Religious Groups in parental heterogamy

	Model 1			Model 2		
	B	EP B	β	B	EP B	β
Gender	-0.125	0.023	-0.090	-0.091	0.024	-0.066
Paid work	-0.046	0.020	-0.040	-0.040	0.020	-0.035
Relation status	0.033	0.013	0.044	0.030	0.013	0.041
Well-being Index				-0.055	0.018	-0.051
Religious Identity Index				-0.055	0.020	-0.068
Religious Beliefs Index				-0.047	0.021	-0.056
Negative Religiosity Index				-0.050	0.015	-0.058
R^2 (R^2 Adj.)		0.011 (0.011)			0.034 (0.032)	
F for change in R^2		13.464**			20.319**	

R^2 R squared, *R^2 Adj.* R squared adjusted, *B* unstandardized regression coeficients, *EP B* unstandardized error of B, *β* standardized regression coefficients

** $p < 0.001$

negative religiosity index, and positive religiosity index altogether explain 22% of the personal attitude toward religious groups index in participants with parental homogamy, i.e., being male, feeling lower well-being, presenting lower values of religious identity, religious beliefs, and negative religiosity index, and presenting high values of religious practice index and positive religiosity index explain the personal attitude toward religious groups index in participants with parental homogamy (Table 8).

Moderation (hypothesis 3)

Having had parental heterogamy or parental homogamy moderates the relationship between religious practice and well-being. The interaction between religious practice and well-being was found to be statistically significant (β = 0.034; 95% CI [0.002, 0.067], $t = 2.067$,

Table 8 Variables that contribute to Personal Attitude Towards Religious Groups in parental homogamy

	Model 1			Model 2		
	B	EP B	β	B	EP B	β
Gender	-0.082	0.010	-0.057	-0.051	0.010	-0.036
Well-being Index				-0.047	0.008	-0.042
Religious Identity Index				-0.101	0.010	-0.124
Religious Beliefs Index				-0.040	0.009	-0.047
Negative Religiosity Index				-0.021	0.006	-0.025
Positive Religiosity Index				0.046	0.009	0.056
R^2 (R^2 Adj.)		0.003 (0.003)			0.022 (0.022)	
F for change in R^2		63.351**			74.545**	

R^2 R squared, *R^2 Adj.* R squared adjusted, *B* unstandardized regression coeficients, *EP B* unstandardized error of B, *β* standardized regression coefficients

** $p < 0.001$

$p = 0.038$). The conditional effect of religious practice on well-being showed corresponding results. When participants had parental homogamy (high), the conditional effect of religious practice was 0.020, 95% CI [0.009, 0.031], $t = 3.653$, $p = 0.003$. When participants had parental homogamy (low), the conditional effect of religious practice on well-being was − 0.014, 95% CI [− 0.045, 0.017), $t = -0.899$, $p = 0.369$. These results identify having had parental heterogamy or parental homogamy as a significant moderator of the positive relationship between religious practice and well-being; this relationship is significant when the participant had parental homogamy.

Having had parental heterogamy or parental homogamy moderates the relationship between religious practice and attitudes toward religious groups. The interaction between religious practice and attitudes toward religious groups was found to be statistically significant ($\beta = 0.043$; 95% CI [0.005, 0.081], $t = 2.234$, $p = 0.026$). The conditional effect of religious practice on attitudes toward religious groups showed corresponding results. When participants had parental homogamy (high), the conditional effect of religious practice on attitudes toward religious groups is − 0.024, 95% CI [− 0.040, − 0.150], $t = 4.332$, $p < 0.001$. When participants had parental heterogamy (low), the conditional effect of religious practice on attitudes toward religious groups is − 0.070, 95% CI [− 0.106, − 0.035], $t = -3.887$, $p = 0.001$. These results identify having had parental heterogamy or parental homogamy as a significant moderator of the positive relationship between religious practice and attitudes toward religious groups; this relationship is stronger when the participant had parental homogamy.

Path analysis (hypothesis 4)

Concerning the path analysis, the model presents a good fit ($\chi^2(8) = 109.21$; CFI = 0.99; TLI = 0.96, IFI = 0.99; RMSEA = 0.06 CI [0.05, 0.06]; SRMR = 0.03]. Religious variables are directly related to heterogamy/homogamy and indirectly related to well-being and personal attitude toward religious groups through parents' religious heterogamy/homogamy. Religious variables are also related to personal attitudes toward religious groups through parents' religious heterogamy/homogamy and well-being (Fig. 1). All direct and indirect effects are statistically significant at the $p < 0.001$ level.

Discussion

Participants whose parents are religiously homogamous have higher satisfaction values than participants whose parents are religiously heterogamous. This result is in line with Schafer and Kwon (2019), who showed that religious service heterogamy predicted a lower relationship between happiness and satisfaction. Additionally, participants whose parents are religiously homogamous present better health perceptions than participants whose parents are religiously heterogamous. This result corroborates that of Upenieks et al. (2022), who found that older women in highly religious homogamous marriages report better mental and physical health than women in heterogamous marriages; however, this association was not significant for men. Participants whose parents are religiously homogamous present higher well-being values than participants whose parents are religiously heterogamous. Additionally, this result is in accordance with Kim and Swan (2019), who found an association between religious heterogamy and lower well-being.

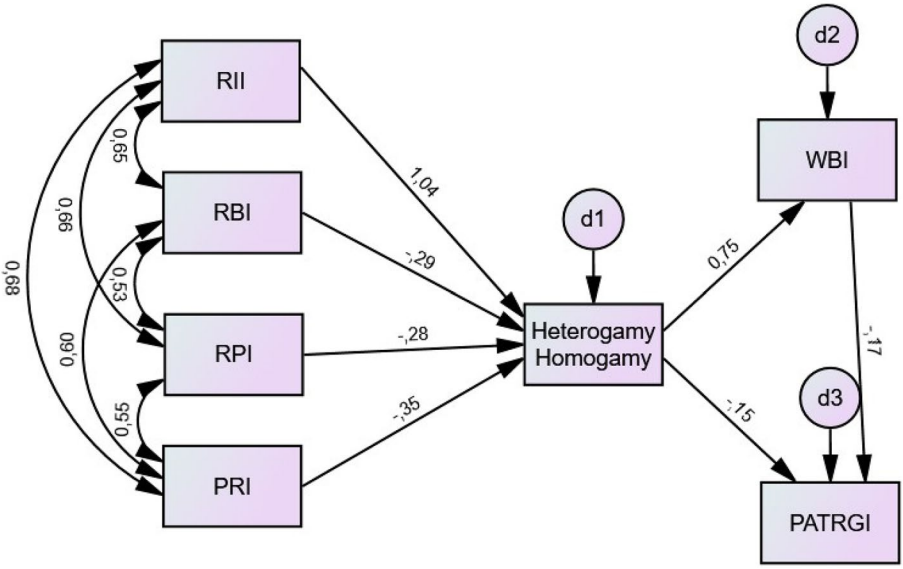

Fig. 1 Path Analysis

Participants whose parents are religiously homogamous show more religiosity than participants whose parents are religiously heterogamous, which is in line with the literature, as the impact of parents' religious heterogamy on religious inheritance is negative (McPhail, 2019). Interestingly, participants whose parents are religiously heterogamous present a more negative attitude toward Christians, Muslims, Hindus, and Jews than participants whose parents are religiously homogamous. This result was expected as families with parents with heterogamous religions are more likely to be targets of religious discrimination (Vang et al., 2019). Thus, the possibility of facing intergenerational religious discrimination can be considered. In turn, participants whose parents are religiously homogamous present a more negative attitude toward atheists or nonbelievers than participants whose parents are religiously heterogamous. In fact, "[I]t is clear that there is antipathy toward atheists" by homogamous couples (Cragun et al., 2012, p.106). These results suggest that children of parents who both belong to the same dominant religion (such as Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, or Judaism) feel more intolerant toward those who are not religious, which is in line with Hunsberger and Jackson (2005), who stated that "links between religion and prejudice have been interpreted to suggest that religion can both reduce and exacerbate prejudice" (p. 807).

Being younger, having a paid job, having a partner, having religiously homogamous parents, having fewer religious beliefs, exhibiting more religious practices, and having a positive attitude toward other religions explain well-being in all participants. Schafer and Kwon (2019), Shehan et al. (1990), Kim and Swan (2019), and Upenieks et al. (2022) found an association between religious heterogamy and lower well-being. Additionally, the impact of parents' religious heterogamy on religious inheritance is negative (McPhail, 2019; McPhail & Yang, 2020; Petts & Knoester, 2007; Williams & Lawler, 2001).

Having more years of full-time schooling and a positive attitude toward religious groups explain well-being in participants with parental religious heterogamy. However, Shehan et al. (1990) found that those with more education are more likely to enter into mixed

marriages. In line with our results, Petts and Knoester (2007) found evidence that religious heterogamy is negatively associated with religious participation.

Being younger (although Myers (2006) stated that religion increases with age and specific life course events), having a paid job (in line with Lehrer and Chiswick (1993)) and a partner, presenting high religious identity and religious practice (corroborating McPhail and Yang (2020)) and lower religious beliefs (Heaton and Pratt (1990) found that similar beliefs do not have a significant association with marital satisfaction; also, religious participation is a stronger and more consistent correlate of well-being than religious beliefs [Kortt et al., 2015]), and having a more positive attitude toward religious groups explain well-being in parental religious homogamy. According to Pauha et al. (2020), higher religious or spiritual identity is associated with more positive attitudes toward different religious groups.

Being male, having paid work, not having a partner, feeling lower well-being, presenting lower values on the religious identity, religious beliefs, and negative religiosity indexes and presenting high values on the religious practice and positive religiosity indexes explain personal attitude toward religious groups in the entire sample and in participants with parental heterogamy. Religious discrimination is expected to diminish well-being, but religiosity may have the opposite effect (Vang et al., 2019); in fact, religiosity may moderate the negative association between religious discrimination and well-being (Ysseldyk et al., 2010). The absence of positive well-being is a risk factor for depression (Wood & Joseph, 2010), which may explain the attitude of less openness to others and, therefore, greater intolerance.

Being male, feeling lower well-being, presenting lower values on the religious identity, religious beliefs, and negative religiosity indexes and presenting high values on the religious practice and positive religiosity indexes explain the personal attitude toward religious groups. Participants with parental homogamy (i.e., participants whose parents are religiously homogamous) present a more negative attitude toward atheists or nonbelievers. This last result may be explained by the fact that, unlike religious people, atheists and nonbelievers are generally low in cognitive and moral rigidity and thus low in prejudicial attitudes (Zuckerman et al., 2016).

Having had parental heterogamy or parental homogamy is a significant moderator of the positive relationship between religious practice and well-being; this relationship is significant when the participant has had parental homogamy. In fact, among married people, Christians are generally happier (Chen & Chen, 2021). Additionally, there is evidence of a positive relationship between religion and happiness (Swinyard et al., 2001), as well as evidence of a connection between marriage and religion, because religion can shape human life, including one's attitude toward marriage (Chen & Chen, 2021).

Having had parental heterogamy or parental homogamy is a significant moderator of the positive relationship between religious practice and attitudes toward religious groups; this relationship is stronger when the participant has had parental homogamy. In fact, higher religiosity is associated with higher levels of life satisfaction, which tends to compensate for the negative effect of religious discrimination (Vang et al., 2019).

Religious variables are directly related to heterogamy/homogamy and indirectly related to well-being and personal attitude toward religious groups through parents' religious heterogamy/homogamy. Religious variables are also related to personal attitudes toward religious groups through patents' religious heterogamy/homogamy and well-being. This result is novel insofar as, to our knowledge, the moderating role of children in homogamous/heterogamous marriages in the relationship between religious variables and well-being and attitudes toward other religious groups has not been studied. Although this study found that

participants whose parents are religiously homogamous present a more negative attitude toward atheists or nonbelievers than participants whose parents are religiously heterogamous, the latter participants also present a more negative attitude toward Christians, Muslims, Hindus, and Jews. For different reasons and with different targets of discrimination, having religiously homogamous parents seems to protect descendants from discrimination against other religious groups but not against atheists or nonbelievers. The theoretical contribution of these findings lies in expanding the knowledge about the role of the religious background of the victims of religious discrimination; in fact, religion is a subject that is still little explored in the scientific literature when compared, for example, to socioeconomic status or other variables, so the present study provides concrete evidence of the fundamental role of religious background in discrimination.

Additionally, this study contributes to the currently underresearched area of the transgenerational transmission of religion and its impact on religious discrimination. The practical implications of these findings include providing support to religious, spiritual, and clinical practitioners in their approach to religious discrimination, whose manifestations are widespread among both the civil and religious community and in mental disorders. Many religious leaders (Catholics) have supported ecumenism and a peaceful relationship between religions. In this way, mentioning that children of couples in which both belong to the same dominant religion are less tolerant is evidence that there is still much to be done to achieve fraternal relationships between religions. Religious teachings and gestures of religious leaders advocate ecumenism, love, and acceptance; however, we are aware that this is insufficient to mitigate prejudice and discrimination because "intergroup responses involve not only explicit (conscious) attitudes and motives that may be shaped by things such as teachings related to tolerance but also implicit (non-conscious) attitudes or processes that are shaped by less deliberative mechanisms such as emotional conditioning and early experience" (Hunsberger & Jackson, 2005, p. 821). In addition, "[T]o reduce prejudice we need to enlarge the population of intrinsically religious people. There is no simple formula, for each personality is unique, and is stubbornly resistant to change. Yet precisely here lies the pastor's task, his opportunity, and his challenge" (Allport, 1966, p. 30). For pastoral psychology, this means a challenge for research and practice; it is not only crucial to deepen our knowledge on other personal and interpersonal factors that are determinants of the development of discrimination practices but also to strive for universal educative strategies to promote fraternity and ecumenism and respect for different beliefs and practices. Additionally, intentional strategies to prevent or provide counseling to reduce the effect of religious discrimination are needed. Given the impact of religious heterogamy and homogamy on well-being, considering these issues in prevention but also in clinical practice is of the upmost importance.

This study has some theoretical limitations since there is very little literature on discriminatory attitudes toward other religions held by children of heterogamous couples. While there is evidence that religion can undermine child development if it is a source of conflict among families (Bartkowski et al., 2008), there is also evidence to the contrary. In fact, religion can sometimes be harmful to children when there is parental and family disagreement on the topic (Bornstein et al., 2017). Religious support of White supremacy (Boamah et al., 2022), moral scrupulosity (Miller & Hedges, 2008), and condemnation of the "other" (children are more likely to present discriminatory religious behaviors when parents frequently express messages promoting mistrust of other religious groups; Van der Straten Waillet & Roskam, 2012) are examples of the potential harm to a young person's development. On the other hand, there is evidence

that parental, couple, and familial religion are linked with youth prosocial behavior (Bartkowski et al., 2008; Holden & Williamson, 2014).

Another limitation lies in the composition of the sample. Participants are mainly from Europe and Asia; in fact, the Americas and Oceania are underrepresented, and Africa is not represented at all. Although the data were aggregated, except regarding the characterization of the sample, we cannot deem it as a global sample, which could bias the results. Future studies on the subject, especially studies that seek to understand the content of the relationship between couples (homogamous and heterogamous) and investigate whether it has a decisive influence on the religiosity of the children of these couples, can fill these gaps.

Authors' contributions Ângela Leite: Conceptualization, methodology, software, validation, formal analysis, investigation, resources, writing—original draft, writing—review and editing.

Paulo Dias: Conceptualization, resources, formal analysis, writing—review and editing, project administration.

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Declarations

Ethical approval The study was approved by the institutional review board (IRB) of XXX. All procedures were carried out in accordance with the 1964 Helsinki Declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards, although this study was based on a public database that does not require authorization for its use.

Competing interests No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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