Secularization or Revival; Polarization or Convergence?

An Assessment of Trends in the Religiosity of Young Adults in 21st Century Europe

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Abstract

In this article we analyse trends and differentials in religiosity by Christian denomination: Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox. Combining six measures of religiosity used in the European Values Study, we categorized young adult respondents as 'religious', 'fuzzy' or 'secular'. We found that, in the most secular countries, the 'religious' proportion has remained stable over recent decades; however, there has been a concurrent growth in the 'secular' proportion–hence a shrinking of the 'fuzzy' middle group. A post-communist revival has continued in some Orthodox countries but abated elsewhere, while Catholic countries have shown greater declines than already highly secularized Protestant countries.

Keywords: Christian denominations – religiosity – young people – Europe – secularization – religious trends

Secularization in Europe has been one of the most consensual findings in the sociology of religion (Voas and Doebler 2011; Stolz, Biolcati, et al. 2021; Molteni and Biolcati 2022). Its effects are often most prevalent among younger generations, reflecting weakening effects of religious socialization in family and schools and the declining societal authority of religious institutions. Yet the underlying drivers, its extent and manifestations, and the unfolding consequences of secularization vary across socio-cultural and geographic contexts, including the differing Christian confessional heritage of countries in Europe. This heritage includes predominantly Protestant, Catholic or Orthodox countries, as well as states with a mixed Christian profile. Moreover, countries in central and eastern Europe – Catholic or Orthodox – have seen distinctive changes and trends in Christian religious identity and involvement in the post-communist period (Northmore-Ball and Evans 2014; Stolz and Novak 2023).[1]

The main Christian denominations in Europe have shared fundamentals yet each has its own beliefs, practices, values and institutional expressions, so most people living in countries with the same major religion share them, even if diffusely (Cipriani 2017). These shared aspects include and influence the lived religions of its adherents, including how religious they are. The normative value of, and the extent of ordinary adherents' engagement with, different forms of religiosity vary across and within Christian denominations (Leege 1996; Molteni and Biolcati 2018). However, there has been a lack of recent research which has compared youth religiosity across European countries while distinguishing between the main Christian denominations.

Our analysis of youth religiosity provides a more targeted lens for identifying and explaining religious change in Europe, in contrast to recent studies driven by a broader cross-

[1] Christian denominations, or in other words Christian confessional heritage, are all the oldest Christian branches – Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant – that have been the main religions of European countries for centuries until the arrival of other Christian confessions as well as non-Christian religion (such as Islam, Judaism, Sikhism and Hinduism), through immigration. A mixed Christian profile means that states have had more than one Christian branch as a major religion, such as Protestantism and Catholicism, like in Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland. We discuss this further in section 3.

generational approach (Voas and Doebler 2011; Molteni 2017; Molteni and Biolcati 2018; Stolz, Biolcati, et a. 2021). A specific focus on young people's religious engagement is important, 'as they can be seen as the bellwether of change' (Burkimsher 2014, 440). We use data from the European Values Study (EVS), taking a multi-dimensional approach to religiosity, in keeping with recent studies examining practice, belief and salience (Pollack 2008; Molteni 2017; Molteni and Biolcati 2018; Tromp, Pless, et al. 2020, 2022; Roberts 2023).

The data analysis has three strands. Firstly, it compares levels of religiosity within the main denominations at a country and individual level, using the latest wave of the EVS. Secondly, it examines trends in religiosity across the three most recent waves. Thirdly, we consider the contribution of core demographic factors to these trends and their association with Christian denomination. The insights generated make an important contribution to work on secularization and religious change Europe-wide (Voas and Doebler 2011; Burkimsher 2014; Molteni and Biolcati 2018, 2022; Tromp, Pless, et al. 2020, 2022; Meulemann and Schmidt-Catran 2023; Stolz and Voas 2023), as well as in Eastern Europe (Pickel and Sammet 2012; Northmore-Ball and Evans 2014; Pew Research Center 2017; Molteni 2017; Fedotenkov 2023; Stolz and Novak 2023).

The article is structured as follows. Firstly, we set out the key debates concerning secularization and Christian denominations in Europe. Secondly, we engage with research on youth and religiosity in Europe, which informs the formulation of three research questions. Thirdly, we discuss the data source, scope of analysis, and measurement of religiosity. Fourthly, we present the results for the three research questions. Fifthly, we discuss the main implications of the multi-wave analyses for research questions 2 and 3. Finally, we conclude and identify areas for further research.

1. Secularization and Christian Denominations in Europe

Secularization is an ongoing process in Europe. As Stolz shows in his recent synthesis of the secularization paradigm, it 'is not that different from the neoclassical version of secularization theory – but its mechanisms are better spelt out and many of its elements have been tested empirically' (2020, 300). Stolz argues that modernization leads to more existential security, more education, more pluralism, and more secular competition, which together decrease religious socialization and children's availability to be religiously socialized (299–300). European countries are among the most developed in the world, with more income, education, and health, as the Human Development Index (HDI) shows. Modernization also nurtures individualization (e.g., Hervieu-Léger 1999; Heelas and Woodhead 2005; Wuthnow 2007) and provides existential security (Norris and Inglehart 2004). Today's secular environment, inserted into a pluralistic framework, competes with religion, specifically in leisure time, influencing socialization, so pushing people away (Stolz, Könemann, et al. 2016). The decline of the traditional family, based on religious marriage, is another important factor for explaining religious decline, especially among youth, since family is the main socializing agent (Campiche, Azria, et al. 1997; Sherkat 2003; Guest 2011). Finally, the progressive loss of resources of the Catholic Church in Europe, specifically the number of priests, and the sexual scandals make it harder to keep people inside the Church through socialization. These aspects lead to the decline of adult religiosity through cohort replacement (Stolz, Biolcati, et al. 2021) or 'fuzzy' fidelity (Voas 2009), meaning that younger generations are increasingly less religious (Stolz 2020, 299-300).

Yet the existence of different Christian denominations in Europe promotes multiple secularizations (Martin 2005; Beck 2010). Christianity in Europe is a kaleidoscopic reality, in terms of denominations and regional and national contexts. The idea of multiple modernities is well represented by the multiplicity of realities associated with the different denominations

of Christianity in Europe: Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant (Cipriani 2009). Even though all Christian denominations have common elements, each has its own religious features. In this context, a key question is: do the different Christian denominations influence the religiosity of those belonging to them?

Of these three, Protestantism is probably the least demanding and most secularized Christian denomination. It is marked by the *Sola Scriptura*, it places no demands on practice, and it is more liberal in customs. In contrast, Catholicism is strongly marked by authority and centrality, though some changes emerged after the Second Vatican Council of the 1960s. It has five precepts that include a few mandatory practices, one of them being weekly attendance at Mass, and its hierarchical structure disallows heterodoxies and promotes a strict code of behavior. Orthodoxy is less strict than Catholicism since it is dominated by informal institutionalization and local standards (Tomka 2006, 259), and the clergy have a certain amount of freedom to deal with controversial social issues, such as abortion (Naletova 2009, 380). Orthodoxy features the richest liturgy of all but attending church is not a requirement, with people particularly going during festivals (Naletova 2009, 386). Catholicism and Orthodoxy share the cult for Mary and the saints, which may induce higher levels of prayer.

Associated with religion is the question discussed by Weber (1930) regarding the impact of Protestantism on the spirit of capitalism, in other words on modernization. Despite all the controversies raised by his work, the idea that modern professional ethics was developed or reinforced with Protestantism, especially along the Calvinist line, holds some truth. Looking at the HDI of European countries with Christian denominations, in general terms Protestant countries are clearly the most developed while Orthodox countries are towards or at the bottom (United Nations Development Programme 2025). Are Protestant countries more modernized than others because they are Protestant or due to other factors? This is not the place to discuss this issue nor the connection with other factors (such as

former communist regimes), but the main line of reasoning is that Protestantism is undeniably connected with modernization. Since Protestantism and modernization are connected, directly or indirectly, Protestant countries could be expected to be more secularized than the others.

2. Youth and religiosity in Europe: a literature review

Existing research has shown that, in general, young people are less religious than older generations in European countries (Bréchon 2007; Luchau 2007; Voas 2009; Voas and Doebler 2011; Burkimsher 2014; Molteni 2017; Molteni and Biolcati 2018, 2022; Stolz, Biolcati, et al. 2021). Still, given its multi-dimensional nature, important distinctions must be made in terms of different aspects of religiosity and their varying prevalence among age groups. While aspects, such as religious affiliation and church attendance, have higher values in older generations, the patterns for belief are not so clear. Studies show that belief in God, Heaven, and Hell increase with age, but belief in life after death may be higher in younger people or there are only small differences across age cohorts (Bréchon 2007, 481-83; Molteni 2017, 43; Molteni and Biolcati 2018, 425). This generational decrease has, in general, been explained by cohort replacement (Voas 2009; Voas and Doebler 2011; Molteni 2017; Molteni and Biolcati 2018, 2022; Stolz, Biolcati, et al. 2021), with younger cohorts becoming less religious over time.

Studies carried out in Catholic countries, the largest European Christian denomination, tend to confirm this: religiosity is in decline among young people with limited exceptions, including belief in life after death. Catholic belonging, or religious affiliation as a whole, has declined in Austria, Slovenia, and Spain (Heinzlmaier and Ikrath 2012, 39; González-Anleo 2017, 243; González-Anleo Sánchez, Ballesteros Guerra, et al. 2020, 64; Dezelan and Lavric 2021, 69). Frequency of religious service attendance has declined in

Hungary, Poland, Slovenia, Spain, but remained stable in Croatia (Boguszewski 2012, 6; Rosta 2013, 320; Flere, Klanjsek, et al. 2014, 204; Glowacki 2017, 146; González-Anleo 2017, 255; Lavric, Tomanovic, and Jusic 2019, 40; Dezelan and Lavric 2021, 70). Belief in God or its importance has declined in Austria, Croatia, Slovenia, and Spain, while belief in life after death has grown or declined little in Spain (Dezelan and Lavric 2021, 71; Flere, Klanjsek, et al. 2014, 203; González-Anleo 2017, 261; González-Anleo Sánchez, Ballesteros Guerra, et al. 2020, 68; Heinzlmaier and Ikrath 201, 41; Lavric, Tomanovic, et al. 2019, 41). Though these studies do not include all Catholic European countries, they show a relatively consistent pattern of change.

Differences are evident in terms of whether a country is majority Catholic, majority Protestant or has a mixed religious profile. In general, Protestants are less religious than Catholics (Lambert 2004, 37-38; Bréchon 2007, 473; Molteni and Biolcati 2018, 426). When comparing Catholics and Orthodox, levels of religiosity vary across different aspects of religiosity: Catholics generally exhibit higher levels of religious practice and Orthodox Christians are more likely to hold particular beliefs (Molteni 2017, 44; Molteni and Biolcati 2018, 426). In religiously mixed countries, practice and belief are at levels broadly similar to Protestant countries (Molteni 2017, 44; Molteni and Biolcati 2018, 426).

These existing studies have had notable limitations: by focusing on only a few countries; not using the most recent cross-national data; or using relatively few variables to analyze something as complex and multifaceted as religiosity (Glock and Stark 1965; Stark and Glock 1968). Looking at recent research, Molteni and Biolcati's study (2022), although studying many European countries, only used one indicator of religiosity (attendance at services) and did not look at youth religiosity specifically. Meulemann and Schmidt-Catran (2023), Molteni and Biolcati (2018) and Molteni (2017) did not focus specifically on youth religiosity; and while the first two studies focused on European countries more widely, the

latter covered Eastern European countries. This lack of existing insights is especially pronounced when comparing the main Christian denominations in Europe. It is this significant gap in the literature that this article addresses, providing a robust analysis of youth religiosity across recent decades using the multiwave survey data. In so doing, it pays careful attention to both general and denomination-specific patterns and trends and provides a multi-dimensional approach to religiosity (Molteni 2017; Molteni and Biolcati 2018).

Based on this discussion, we focus our analysis on three research questions, looking solely at young adults:

1 Are there differences in levels of religiosity by individual affiliation and country denominational profile (Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox)?
2 Do we see convergence or polarization in the proportions of young people who are religious, 'fuzzy' or secular across European countries?
3 How are these trends in religiosity associated with denominational profile and demographic factors?

3. Data and method

The next section discusses the data source, the scope of the analysis, and the development of a religiosity index.

3.1 Data source and scope of the analysis

We use data collected in the European Values Study (EVS). Covering almost all European countries, it offers a rich resource for assessing Christian religiosity over time – with five waves undertaken since 1980 – but has limitations for examining religiosity within other faiths (Tromp, Pless, et al. 2022, 141). In terms of geographic coverage, the Caucasus countries of Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia were not included in our analysis, but Russia

(because of its historical bonds to Europe), Ukraine and Belarus were included. Given our focus on Christian denominations, we omitted countries which are majority-Muslim, or which have substantial Muslim minorities (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and North Macedonia).

The survey question on prayer caused a limitation for the countries studied and the survey waves. We felt that prayer was an essential facet of religious practice (Guveli and Platt 2023, 9); however, the EVS only included a question on prayer from Wave 3 onwards. Serbia, Switzerland, and Norway had to be excluded from the trends analyses (sections 4.2 and 4.3) because they did not participate in wave 3. Sweden and Slovenia did not pose the question on prayer in Wave 3 but did in later waves. Therefore, for the cross-sectional analysis of religiosity by affiliation (section 4.1, Table 2), which used data from waves 4 and 5 of the EVS, 29 countries were included; whereas for the trend analyses, which used data from waves 3, 4 and 5, we had comparable data for only 24 countries. Wave 3 was conducted mostly in 1999, with two countries completing the surveys in 2000. Wave 4 was conducted mostly in 2008, with five countries completing in 2009. For wave 5, most surveys were completed in 2017-2018, with 3 countries completing the surveys in 2020-2021.

The definition of 'young people' is challenging, not least because the 'transitions to adulthood' (completing education, leaving home, partnering, marrying, parenthood) have been trending ever later in life across Europe (Billari and Liefbroer 2010). The mean age of marriage is over 30 for several European countries and still trending upwards (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, nda, ndb), and childbearing has become partly dissociated from marriage. We decided a fixed age band is more comparable to other studies (Voas and Doebler 2011; Burkimsher 2014; Coutinho 2023), using 18-35 to maximize sample sizes. The sample size for each country and each wave ranged between 214-714, with

an average of just under 400. We included respondents in the 'no religion' category, but not those affiliated to non-Christian religions.

3.2 Measuring religiosity

To assess levels and trends in religiosity across different facets, we calculated a 'Religiosity Index', a common approach in the scholarly literature (Roberts 2023, 7). We followed a similar logic to that of Remizova, Rudnev, et al. (2022), using two measures for each dimension of practice, belief and salience. We included five of the six measures used by them but substituted a measure of 'Confidence in the church' with the variable we term 'Type of God'. We felt that confidence in the church might be more likely to explain the fundamental reason for the trends seen rather than be a measure of individual religiosity.

Church affiliation was not included in the Religiosity Index, as its meaning varies widely between countries in Europe, leading to problems with comparison (Liedhengener and Odermatt 2018). However, it was used for categorizing each country's primary denominational group: Catholic, Protestant or Orthodox. Countries categorized as 'Mixed' have >35% of Christian adherents affiliated to the smaller denomination (see Table 2). There is a Protestant-Catholic mix in Germany, Switzerland and the Netherlands; a Protestant-Orthodox mix in Estonia; and a 3-way Protestant-Catholic-Orthodox mix in Latvia.

Religious practice was measured by church attendance and prayer frequency; religious beliefs by belief in God and importance of God in one's life; salience involved self-assessed religiosity and the importance of religion in one's life (see Table 1). To develop a Religiosity Index, three criteria were used: minimizing missing data, maximizing nuance, and balancing as much as possible the average score of each of the six religiosity domains. For some variables, the proportion of 'don't knows' (in particular for belief in God) was not insignificant. Therefore, we assigned a low score to the 'don't know' answers, to minimize

the proportion of respondents who had a null score because they answered 'don't know' to one or more of the questions. We wanted to maximize 'nuance' given that individuals can have heterodox beliefs, attitudes and behaviors. In addition, we wanted to investigate not just the most religious group but also the intermediate 'fuzzies' (Voas 2009) as well as the most secular individuals.

Table 1: Recoding of the religiosity variables

Church attendance

Original code	Attend score	Frequency of attendance
1	12	>1/week
2	12	1/week
3	11	>=1/month
4	5	Special holy days
5	5	Other holy days
6	4	1/year
7	1	<1/year
-1	1	Don't know
8	0	Never/practically never

Prayer frequency

Original code	Prayer score	Frequency of prayer
1	12	Every day
2	11	>1/week
3	10	1/week
4	8	>=1/month
5	4	Several times/year
6	1	Less often
-1	1	Don't know
7	0	Never

Type of God

Original code	Type God score	Desciption of God
1	8	There is a personal God
2	5	There is some sort of spirit or life force
3	3	I don't really know what to think
4	0	I don't really think there is any sort of spirit, God or life force
-1	2	Don't know

Importance of God

Original code	Imp God score	
-1	1	Don't know
1	0	Not al all important
2	2	
3	3	
4	4	
5	5	
6	6	
7	7	
8	8	
9	9	
10	10	Very important

Self-assessed religiosity

Original code	Religious score	
1	8	A religious person
2	2	Not a religious person
3	0	A convinced atheist
-1	1	Don't know

Importance of religion

Oringinal code	Imp religion score	
1	10	Very important
2	8	Rather important
3	3	Not very important
4	0	Not at all important
-1	2	Don't know

The choice of possible answers to the pertinent questions varied from four (self-assessed religiosity including 'don't knows') to eleven (importance of God) and there were different patterns of response to each question (see Appendix Table A1). A considerable proportion of respondents said they were "a religious person" and/or acknowledged "there is a personal God" yet gave no indication in their other responses of any religious practice or their beliefs having any salience in their lives. Therefore, to approximately balance the scores for each domain, lower weights were given to those questions than those for religious practice (see Table 1 for the original coding and the assigned weights to each response). The values obtained were summed to create an individual's 'Religiosity Score', ranging between 0 (completely secular, self-defined atheists) and 60 (actively involved, believing Christians). A respondent answering 'don't know' in every domain would receive a score of 8. We found validation for the weighting of the six variables as their relative average values are quite similar (Appendix Figure A1).

To ascertain if the changes wave-to-wave were statistically significant, we used binary logistic regressions. We carried out a set of three analyses: on changes in the proportion of 'religious' respondents; on changes in the most secular; and on changes in the proportion of 'fuzzy' respondents. Individuals were classified as 'religious', 'fuzzy' or 'secular' from their Religiosity Score. The apposite question was how to define these three groups without applying *a priori* definitions. The Religiosity Scores were spread relatively evenly across the full spectrum with only slight excesses at the two extremities (3.4% of the full sample scored 0 while 2.2% scored 60). It was decided therefore that, considering all young adult respondents across all countries studied, over the three EVS waves, the top scoring 20% would be classified as 'religious', the middle 60% as 'fuzzy' and the bottom 20% as 'secular'. The closest Religiosity Scores for achieving this split were as follows: 'secular' = 0-7; 'fuzzy' = 8-45; 'religious' = 46-60.

4. Results

4.1 Religiosity by Christian denomination

Using the most recent EVS wave, for research question 1 we analyze whether there are significant differences in religiosity by denomination at both the country level and at the individual level (Table 2). The traditionally Protestant countries have the least religious young people (the Scandinavian countries and Great Britain). The Orthodox countries are the most religious: all six feature in the top half of the scale. The countries of mixed denominational heritage are in the lower half of the scale. The Catholic countries are spread across the scale, from very religious Poland to the highly secular Czech Republic.

Looking at the religiosity scores of young people without a declared religious affiliation (see the right side of Table 2), these are similar across all countries, although somewhat higher in Orthodox countries (highest in Serbia). In general, where there are significant numbers of affiliates to different denominations – in mixed or majority domination countries – levels of religiosity are similar (the notable exception being young Protestants in the Netherlands).

It is illuminating to examine the composition of the Religiosity Scores from the six components (see Appendix Table A1 and Figure A2). In most cases, there is a fairly even balance between measures of practice, belief and salience. Self-defined Protestants in Protestant countries are the exception: their scores are low for religious practice and the importance of God and religion relative to their scores for belief and (perhaps more surprisingly) self-assessed religiosity. The level of religiosity of Protestants in non-Protestant countries is manifestly higher than for Protestant affiliates in Protestant countries yet is very similar to Catholics in Catholic countries and Orthodox Christians in Orthodox countries. Catholics in non-Catholic countries are somewhat more 'religious' than in traditionally Catholic countries but the difference is much less marked than for Protestants outside

Protestant countries. For Orthodox Christians outside their Orthodox 'homelands', the pattern is the opposite: they are less religious.

Table 2: Religiosity score of young adults by country and by affiliation in each country

		Scores by denomination affiliation of individuals			
Country & denomination*	Religiosity Score	Orthodox	Catholic	Protestant	No affiliation
Romania	43.7	44	44	*51*	*26*
Poland	41.2		46		11
Croatia	36.9		42		20
Ukraine	33.1	42	52		19
Serbia	32.0	38	*35*		**26**
Italy	30.2		43		13
Portugal	28.1		37		14
Bulgaria	27.7	34			18
Slovakia	27.7		42	35	10
Belarus	25.6	31	38		18
Russia	25.4	38			17
Lithuania	24.7		31		9
Hungary	24.2		36	37	14
Slovenia	24.1		32		12
Austria	21.5		27	24	10
Germany	20.1		28	22	10
Switzerland	19.8	*34*	27	26	11
Latvia	17.9	32	33	30	13
Spain	17.8		29		9
Great Britain	17.0		37	34	10
France	17.0		29		10
Norway	16.9		*40*	21	10
Netherlands	16.2		30	**50**	11
Iceland	16.1			24	11
Finland	16.0			21	**7**
Sweden	15.4			16	13
Denmark	15.3			17	14
Estonia	14.7	32		31	12
Czech Republic	13.6		39		9

Notes: Countries with a mix of denominational adherents are colored **purple**. The country Religiosity Score is calculated as the mean Religiosity Score of each young adult for each country in Wave 5 of the EVS. The scores by affiliation are calculated from Waves 4 and 5 (for higher sample size). Where sample size was <20 values were not included in table. For sample sizes in range 20-30, values are entered in grey type. Protestant samples include both those in mainstream denominations and 'other Christian', which includes Evangelicals, Pentecostal and Free Church. Bold values are discussed in the text. Religiosity Scores shaded from red (low score) to green (high score). Equilibrated weights applied.

4.2 Trends in religiosity

The next question to investigate was whether there had been significant changes in the likelihood of an individual being 'religious', 'secular' or 'fuzzy' (research question 2). Using

Wave 3 (1999-2001) of the EVS as the reference, we compared subsequent waves 4 (2008-2010) and 5 (2017-2021). The results of the regression analyses performed on each country are given in Appendix Tables A2, A3 and A4, and the proportions of individuals in each category at each wave are plotted on the bar charts in Appendix Figure A3. To draw general conclusions about the trends, we categorized the 24 countries into three groups which, overall, exhibited similar trends:

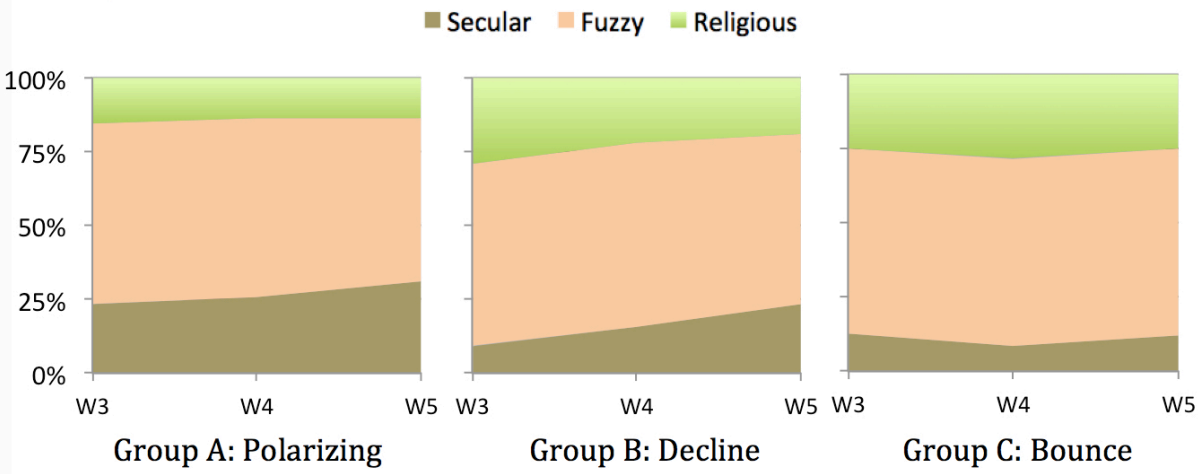
Group A: Polarizing. These countries showed no significant change (up or down) in the likelihood of an individual in that country being 'Religious', comparing wave 5 with wave 3. However, in eight of the ten countries, there was an increase in the likelihood of an individual being 'Secular'; hence the proportion of 'fuzzies' declined. The ten countries in this group (in order of Religiosity Score, low to high) are Czech Republic, Denmark, the Netherlands, France, Great Britain, Spain, Latvia, Germany, Hungary and Croatia. They are a mixture of Catholic and Protestant heritage (with Latvia also including Orthodoxy).

Group B: Decline. In these countries there was a significant decline in the likelihood of being religious compared to wave 3, either across both waves 4 and 5 or solely in wave 5. In addition, there was a significant increase in the likelihood of an individual being 'Secular', generally in both waves 4 and 5. The level of religiosity varies widely between the countries in this group, from Estonia at the lowest end, to Poland with initially very high religiosity scores. Finland, Iceland, Austria, Lithuania, Portugal and Italy fall between these extremes. Five of these are Catholic countries; Finland and Iceland are Protestant; Estonia is mixed Protestant-Orthodox.

Group C: Bounce. These six countries (Russia, Belarus, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Ukraine and Romania) are all in Eastern Europe and at varying points in the post-communist rebound phase of religiosity (Northmore-Ball and Evans 2014; Stolz and Novak 2023). All the

Orthodox countries are in this group, and – in addition – Catholic Slovakia has been categorized in this group, although it bears some resemblance to Group B countries.

Figure 1: Proportions of 'secular', 'fuzzy' and 'religious' young adults by country groups in waves 3, 4 and 5 of the EVS



Notes: Countries categorized as follows: Group A: Polarizing: Czech Republic, Denmark, Netherlands, France, Great Britain, Spain, Latvia, Germany, Hungary, Croatia; Group B: Decline: Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Austria, Lithuania, Portugal, Italy, Poland; Group C: Bounce: Russia, Belarus, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Ukraine. W3 was sampled in 1999-2001; W4 in 2008-2010; W5 in 2017-2021. Across all 24 countries and waves 3, 4 and 5 we defined individuals with the lowest 20% religiosity scores to be 'secular'; the highest scoring 20% to be 'religious' and the middle 60% to be 'fuzzy' (see section 3.2).

For each country group the trends are summarized in Figure 1. Group A shows a steady proportion of 'religious', a rising proportion of 'secular' and a declining proportion of 'fuzzies'. For Group B, there is a fall in the proportion 'religious' and a rise in the proportion 'secular', sharper than for Group A, while the proportion 'fuzzy' is fairly stable. In Group C there was an increase in the proportion of 'religious' from wave 3 to wave 4, mirrored by a fall in the 'secular' proportion, though from wave 4 to wave 5 those trends reversed to some extent.

4.3 Demographic factors and religiosity

Here we analyze how core socio-demographic factors impact religiosity (research question 3). Our initial analyses were binary logistic regressions by country. We used the standard

control variables of gender, education level (including current students, as this covered a considerable number in the 18-35 age group), and civil status. Full results are shown in Appendix Tables A2-A4. For the three country groups the odds ratios calculated from the regression analyses show significant differences in the likelihood of being 'religious', 'secular' or 'fuzzy' associated with some of these variables (Table 3).

Looking at the country groups, women are at least 1.6 times as likely to be religious as men and only half as likely to be secular. However, re-examining the data by country, we see that the gender patterns are quite nuanced (Appendix Tables A2-A4). Men are just as likely as women to be religious in some of the highly secular countries: Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Finland, Spain, Latvia and Austria. In these countries (plus Denmark, the Netherlands, Great Britain, Russia and Iceland, but not Austria), women are more likely to fall into the 'fuzzy' category than men. However, in highly religious countries they are less likely to be 'fuzzy' (Croatia, Portugal, Italy, Poland, Romania).

In country groups A and B, the association of marital status and religiosity is significant: married individuals are twice as likely to be religious compared to single people. At a country level this was generally the case, with only the Czech Republic, Belarus, Bulgaria and Ukraine not conforming to the pattern. Might the religious trends of young adults be explained by the postponement and decline of marriage? We repeated the regression analyses omitting marital status. In this simplified model, for Group A countries there was a small but significant decline in the likelihood of being religious in waves 4 and 5, whereas in the full model including marital status there was no significant change. Table 4 shows the substantial increase in the proportion of young people aged 18-35 who had never married. Table 4 also suggests that married individuals may have become slightly more religious (between waves 3 and 4), while single people have become slightly less religious since 1999. We discuss the implications of this later. There are notable differences in marriage rates of

young people by region: in 1999-2000 fewer than half of those aged 18-35 in the Group C countries were unmarried, compared to over 70% in the most secular countries in the most recent wave. In our initial analyses we also included parenthood as a potential explanatory variable, but this was not found to be significant; marriage versus being single was the key variable.

Table 3: Odds ratios (relative likelihood compared to wave 3) of being 'religious', 'secular' or 'fuzzy' by Country Group

	Group A Polarising		Group B Decline		Group C Bounce	
If Religious	Sig.	Exp(B)	Sig.	Exp(B)	Sig.	Exp(B)
Wave 3 (ref)	0.59		<.001		0.09	
Wave 4	0.43	*0.94*	<.001	0.72	0.03	1.20
Wave 5	0.81	*1.02*	<.001	0.62	0.61	*1.05*
Gender Male (ref)						
Female	<.001	1.82	<.001	1.61	<.001	1.90
Single (ref)	<.001		<.001		0.01	
Married or widowed	<.001	2.08	<.001	2.01	0.03	1.19
Cohabiting	0.10	*0.66*	<.001	0.36	0.55	*0.84*
Divorced or separated	0.83	*1.04*	0.19	*0.79*	0.08	*0.76*
Intermediate (ref)	<.001		0.10		<.001	
Low ed	<.001	0.63	0.98	*1.00*	0.01	1.49
Tertiary	0.07	*0.86*	0.05	0.87	0.01	0.82
Current student	<.001	1.45	0.60	*1.05*	0.52	0.93
Constant	<.001	0.10	<.001	0.27	<.001	0.22
If Secular						
Wave 3 (ref)	<.001		<.001		<.001	
Wave 4	0.05	1.14	<.001	1.69	<.001	0.65
Wave 5	<.001	1.46	<.001	2.81	0.81	*0.97*
Gender Male (ref)						
Female	<.001	0.53	<.001	0.48	<.001	0.51
Single (ref)	<.001		<.001		<.001	
Married or widowed	<.001	0.67	<.001	0.51	<.001	0.64
Cohabiting	0.16	*0.81*	0.01	1.47	0.60	*1.20*
Divorced or separated	0.92	*0.99*	0.87	*1.03*	0.27	*0.80*
Intermediate (ref)	<.001		0.03		0.75	
Low ed	<.001	1.53	0.97	*0.99*	0.62	*1.11*
Tertiary	0.61	*1.04*	0.02	1.24	0.54	*1.07*
Current student	0.17	*0.89*	0.79	*0.97*	0.57	*0.92*
Constant	<.001	0.44	<.001	0.16	<.001	0.24
If Fuzzy						
Wave 3 (ref)	<.001		0.00		0.83	
Wave 4	0.26	*0.94*	0.61	*1.03*	0.76	*1.02*
Wave 5	<.001	0.74	0.01	0.83	0.74	*0.97*
Gender Male (ref)						
Female	<.001	1.25	0.57	*1.03*	<.001	0.80
Single (ref)	0.03		<.001		0.13	
Married or widowed	0.14	*0.92*	<.001	0.75	0.55	*1.04*
Cohabiting	0.02	1.39	0.03	1.32	0.84	*1.05*
Divorced or separated	0.93	*1.01*	0.25	*1.18*	0.02	1.39
Intermediate (ref)	0.06		1.00		0.00	
Low ed	0.05	*0.87*	0.95	*1.00*	0.00	0.68
Tertiary	0.34	*1.06*	0.89	*1.01*	0.06	*1.15*
Current student	0.33	*0.93*	0.99	*1.00*	0.30	*1.11*
Constant	<.001	1.49	<.001	1.70	<.001	1.75

Notes: Values of significance ($p<0.05$) are highlighted in yellow (i.e. are statistically significantly different from the reference category). Elements highlighted in green have an odds ratio >1, i.e., these have a statistically positive increase in likelihood of an individual having that attribute ('religious', 'secular' or 'fuzzy'). Elements highlighted in red have an odds ratio <1, i.e., these have a statistically negative impact on the likelihood. Values in grey and italic are not statistically significant. Equilibrated weights applied.

Table 4: Average Religiosity Score by gender, education, civil status and migrant status

	EVS wave	Men	Women	Tertiary	Inter-mediate	Low ed	Student	Single	Married	% never married	Born in country	Immig-rant	% immigs
Group A	W3	20	26	24	24	19	25	21	26	58%			
Polarising	W4	18	26	23	23	20	23	20	28	63%	22	34	7%
	W5	18	23	20	22	19	22	19	26	71%	20	29	8%
Group B	W3	28	36	30	32	36	33	30	37	56%			
Decline	W4	25	31	29	29	28	28	27	33	66%	28	29	4%
	W5	22	27	25	26	23	23	23	32	67%	24	31	5%
Group C	W3	26	34	29	30	33	32	30	31	45%			
Bounce	W4	30	35	32	34	34	32	31	36	53%	33	30	4%
	W5	27	35	31	32	30	29	29	34	51%	31	27	2%

Note: The proportion of immigrants is taken from the EVS dataset and may not be representative. Color shading of boxes is by conditional formatting within each country group, green for highest scores, red for lowest. For % never married all groups are color shaded with the highest % shaded yellow, the lowest % shaded green.

In comparison to gender and marital status, education level generally has a less significant association with religiosity (Appendix Tables A2-A4). We used an intermediate level of education (secondary school graduation) as the reference category. Averaged across all countries, tertiary education has a somewhat dampening effect on religiosity, but looking at individual countries the effects were diverse. In some countries tertiary education (or being a current student) increased the likelihood of being religious (such as in the Czech Republic, Finland, Hungary, Lithuania, Bulgaria). In the Group A countries the low educated were the least religious, whereas in other countries it was the lower educated who had higher religiosity; and in others there was no significant difference by education level. We cannot draw any overall conclusions on the impact of education on religiosity, although for individual countries it can be significant.

As shown in Table 4, immigrants score more highly on religiosity than do residents born in the country (except in Group C), and at a comparable level across all country groups, despite their diverse mix of countries of origin. Unfortunately, there was no information on migration status collected in wave 3 of the EVS (nor in earlier waves).

The final strand of investigation in this section is to compare the trends in self-defined affiliates of the different denominations (Table 5). We found that, in general, the trends for individuals reflected the trends of their country of residence. Young Catholics and Protestants in respective Catholic and Protestant countries have become less religious. Protestants became more secular in Protestant countries but less 'fuzzy'. Catholics in Catholic countries did not become significantly more secular but did become 'fuzzier'. Changes in the religiosity of Orthodox affiliates in Orthodox countries were not statistically significant. There is some evidence of self-defined Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox young adults becoming more religious by wave 5, although these results are not statistically significant. The underlying reason for this may be that the less religious are increasingly likely to self-define as non-affiliated, especially those living in countries without a 'state' religion. Protestants residing in non-Protestant countries became less 'fuzzy' by wave 5. This pattern of results shows that trends in youth religiosity differed somewhat between individuals affiliated to specific denominations.

Table 5: Odds ratios (relative likelihood compared to wave 3) of being 'religious', 'secular' or 'fuzzy' depending on respondent's declared affiliation and the primary affiliation of country of residence

	Sig.	Catholics in Catholic countries	Sig.	Protestants in Protestant countries	Sig.	Orthodox in Orthodox countries	Sig.	Catholics in non-Catholic countries	Sig.	Protestants in non-Protestant countries	Sig.	Orthodox in non-Orthodox countries
If Religious												
Wave 3 (ref)	<.001		0.09		0.26		0.18		0.13		0.09	
Wave 4	<.001	0.75	0.65	*1.08*	0.15	*1.17*	0.08	*1.69*	0.64	*0.87*	0.17	*0.37*
Wave 5	0.04	0.86	0.06	*0.68*	0.15	*1.19*	0.15	*1.64*	0.11	*1.58*	0.59	*1.48*
If Secular												
Wave 3 (ref)	<.001		<.001		0.49		0.48		0.30		0.93	
Wave 4	0.81	*0.95*	0.00	1.51	0.25	*0.64*	0.23	*0.40*	0.55	*1.65*	0.71	*1.57*
Wave 5	0.86	*1.04*	<.001	2.64	0.41	*0.72*	0.64	*0.68*	0.13	*3.11*	1.00	*0.00*
If Fuzzy												
Wave 3 (ref)	<.001		<.001		0.43		0.37		0.04		0.52	
Wave 4	<.001	1.33	0.01	0.74	0.28	*0.89*	0.21	*0.69*	0.78	*1.08*	0.37	*1.81*
Wave 5	0.05	*1.16*	<.001	0.60	0.24	*0.87*	0.22	*0.66*	0.03	0.53	0.98	*1.02*

Notes: Values of significance ($p<0.05$) are highlighted in yellow (i.e., are statistically significantly different from the reference category). Countries with a mixed balance of denominations not included in this analysis. Control variables of gender, civil status, and educational level included in analyses. Green: odds ratio >1; red: odds ratio <1. Values in grey and italic are not statistically significant. Equilibrated weights applied.

5. Discussion

Our analysis of youth religiosity in Europe has provided new insights into patterns and trends – for the continent generally, for the main Christian denominations, for country groups, and for the interconnections between the latter two aspects. We organize this discussion around the main findings pertaining to religious trends – research questions 2 and 3 – which involved multi-wave analysis of the EVS.

For the categorization of countries in terms of religiosity trends – research question 2 – we found that the most secular countries at the outset of the time period covered here have not become any less religious since 2000, with some already at that level in the two waves prior to 2000. These countries have a variety of denominational backgrounds, being Catholic, Protestant and mixed. Our analysis also showed a revival in most religiosity measures in the Orthodox countries post-1989, which has continued in recent decades, confirming recent studies (Meulemann and Schmidt-Catran 2023; Sholz and Novak 2023). We broadly agree with Voas and Doebler that there has been 'a post-communist rebound in religiosity (or at least openness about being religious)' (2011, 444), although we also note that Sholz and Novak argue that this general revival has come to something of a standstill (2023: 155). We show that this revival has had more solid regional foundations and greater temporal traction in Orthodox countries (as noted elsewhere: Molteni and Biolcati 2018). There have, therefore, been distinct trajectories for countries in Eastern Europe with different denominational profiles (Northmore-Ball and Evans 2014). These findings provide support for the argument put forward by Stolz and Novak, that in the immediate aftermath of the fall of Communist regimes and in subsequent decades:

> The Orthodox revival [from 1985 to 2015] is based mainly on the mechanisms of removing state oppression and a crisis so severe that de-modernization set in. When

all other institutions seemed to fail, the Orthodox church was the one place where individuals could get a positive social identity and some reassurance (2023, 154).

We also focused on the extent of convergence or divergence in the proportions of young people who are religious, 'fuzzy' or secular across Europe, contributing insights to debates over 'fuzzy fidelity' (Voas 2009). These findings for trends in religiosity show a complex pattern for countries of different confessional heritage, varying across countries in Western and Eastern Europe. There is no uniform picture across the main regions of the continent, and this shows the importance of paying close attention to countries of different heritage.

Our further analysis of individual-level religiosity – research question 3 – provided some important findings regarding the role of core demographic factors for religiosity. Firstly, regarding the significant role of marriage for religiosity, the probable explanation – we contend – is a population composition change: the changing relative balance of single to married people in the 18-35 age group. Young adults are increasingly postponing the main transitions to adulthood: finishing education, leaving the parental home, partnering, marrying, and starting a family (Billari and Liefbroer 2010; Lesthaeghe 2014). They are continuing their education for a longer period (particularly by going into higher education), staying at the family home for longer until they can find their own place to rent or buy, and are settling down with a partner and – in many cases – having children at an older age. We posit that two underlying processes for this could be at work. Firstly, that it is the more religious individuals who are choosing to marry. Otherwise, they opt for cohabitation instead of marriage, or simply remain unattached. Secondly, operating alongside or to some extent instead of this process, differences in personality move individuals in one of two directions: to become religious and marry; or remain single and secular. Life as a single person has often been seen as an 'unrooted', 'floating' phase of life (and non-religious, secular), and that phase of life

has been steadily lengthening in Europe over the past decades (Billari and Liefbroer 2010; Lesthaeghe 2014).

Second, the effect of inwards flows of immigrants – settling and staying long-term in European societies – in changing the religiosity in a country could become increasingly significant. Many Western European countries have a high and increasing immigrant population. A quarter or more of young adults in their early 30s were not born in their country of current residence in Denmark, Germany, Spain, Austria, Norway, Sweden, Iceland and Great Britain (Eurostat 2025). This is a broad-ranging trend and encompasses not only Muslim immigrants originating from countries in the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia, but also more religious Christian migrants from Eastern Europe, Africa and South America (Hout 2003; van Tubergen 2006; van Tubergen and Sindradóttir 2011; Guveli and Platt 2023). This can obviously serve to make a society more generally religious, but can also make particular faiths or denominations more religious, as immigrants with higher levels of practice and belief revitalize an existing religious community. Recent research has found that, within immigrant populations in West European countries, both first-generation and second-generation Protestants, other Christians and Muslims have seen increased levels of religiosity over time, indicative of a 'religious revival' (Guveli and Platt 2023, 19). Within particular West European countries, Catholic populations have received significant infusions of younger co-religionists coming from Eastern and Central European countries – such as majority-Catholic Poland – since the 2004 round of EU enlargement enabled economic migration between newer and older member states.

6. Conclusion

We have provided a detailed analysis of religiosity among young people in Europe, paying attention to patterns and trends across countries and groups with different Christian

confessional heritage. This is a significant contribution to research into ongoing processes of secularization in European countries with differing religious profiles, recognizing the 'multiple modernities' within the wider landscape (Cipriani 2009). We have also advanced research into to what extent, and why, trends in religiosity – and its different dimensions – vary across different population groups within European societies, an area already producing fruitful insights into native and migrant populations (Hout 2003; van Tubergen 2006; van Tubergen and Sindradóttir 2011; Guveli and Platt 2023).

We have also engaged in depth with, and provided new empirical insights for, two important and contested issues for scholarly inquiry in this area: 'the unity or diversity of the trends observed across the continent, and the significance of the large subpopulation that is neither religious nor unreligious' (Voas 2009, 155). Of course, our study, like others researching religious change in Europe, acknowledges the 'tension between the search for common patterns and describing the complexity of a situation' (Voas 2009, 155). We have focused on the former aim while also trying to show due attention to variation in patterns and trends in religiosity across national contexts and denominational heritage.

While the EVS has served our purposes well for investigating religiosity amongst Christian affiliates, it has more evident limitations for equivalent studies of non-Christian faiths, or of spirituality more generally, in Europe. Like other scholars, we reiterate the need for finely-grained and context-specific studies of how younger adherents of different denominations – Christian and otherwise – are living out their faith in terms of the different elements – and the interconnections between them – of religiosity. This is particularly important given that different forms of religiosity are more normatively important and more prevalent within particular faiths and denominations; and the interconnections between them may vary in complex ways. Recent studies have furnished insights in relation to young Catholics' religious engagement in different European countries (Clements and Bullivant

2022b; Coutinho, Conway, et al. 2023), shedding light on how they are navigating processes of religious change, and it would be instructive to see this focus widened to other faiths in future research. Further studies of youth religiosity – using quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis – are welcome to shed light on the complexity of the European religious landscape, due its dynamic profile resulting from the process of secularization process and from immigration flows.

Supplementary Material

All datasets are available online from the EVS website:

https://europeanvaluesst udy.eu/methodology-data-documentation/data-and-documentation/

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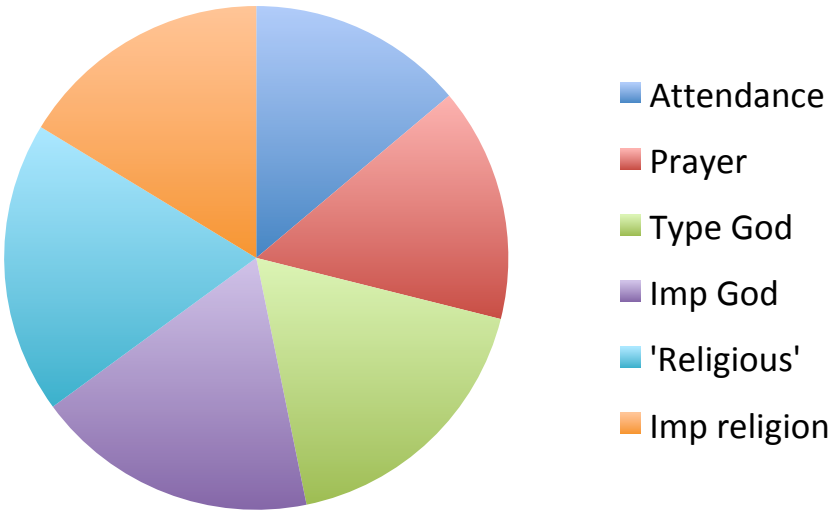
Appendix

Table A1: Score in each religiosity domain, by country

	Attendance	Prayer	Type God	Imp God	'Religious'	Imp religion	Overall Religiosity Score (0-60)
Romania	7.0	9.0	5.3	8.3	6.6	7.3	43.8
Poland	8.2	7.2	6.5	7.0	6.5	6.5	42.2
Croatia	5.8	7.2	5.5	6.7	6.4	6.0	37.7
Ukraine	4.9	5.8	5.7	6.5	6.3	5.3	35.1
Italy	5.4	5.4	5.2	5.8	5.9	5.8	33.6
Serbia	4.3	4.8	4.8	6.5	6.4	6.5	33.4
Portugal	4.0	4.6	5.8	5.9	5.5	5.1	31.1
Slovakia	4.7	4.8	4.5	5.3	5.9	4.6	30.7
Bulgaria	4.3	3.4	5.2	4.7	4.8	5.0	27.9
Belarus	4.0	4.3	4.6	5.5	3.4	4.9	26.9
Russia	2.8	3.7	4.7	5.3	5.5	4.4	26.5
Lithuania	3.9	3.0	4.6	4.8	6.0	3.8	26.3
Slovenia	3.8	2.6	4.7	4.1	5.3	3.6	24.1
Hungary	2.5	3.6	4.6	4.6	4.4	3.7	23.5
Austria	3.2	3.4	4.1	4.1	4.3	3.5	22.8
Latvia	2.7	3.1	4.0	4.2	5.0	2.9	22.2
Iceland	2.1	3.2	4.2	3.6	4.0	3.5	20.7
Switzerland	2.3	3.4	4.4	3.9	3.7	3.0	20.7
Germany	2.8	2.9	3.8	3.6	3.8	3.0	20.0
Spain	1.9	2.8	4.1	3.8	3.4	2.7	18.9
Netherlands	2.6	2.5	3.7	3.0	3.7	3.2	18.6
Norway	2.6	2.3	3.4	2.5	3.4	3.5	17.6
Great Britain	1.9	2.2	3.8	2.9	3.0	3.1	16.9
Finland	1.9	2.5	3.7	2.9	3.3	2.4	16.7
Denmark	2.3	1.9	3.4	2.5	4.1	2.6	16.7
France	1.5	1.7	3.7	2.8	2.9	3.3	16.0
Estonia	1.6	1.5	3.8	2.7	3.5	2.2	15.2
Sweden	1.8	2.0	3.4	2.5	2.7	2.8	15.1
Czech Republic	1.4	1.6	2.8	2.6	2.9	1.9	13.4
MEAN	3.4	3.7	4.4	4.5	4.6	4.0	24.6

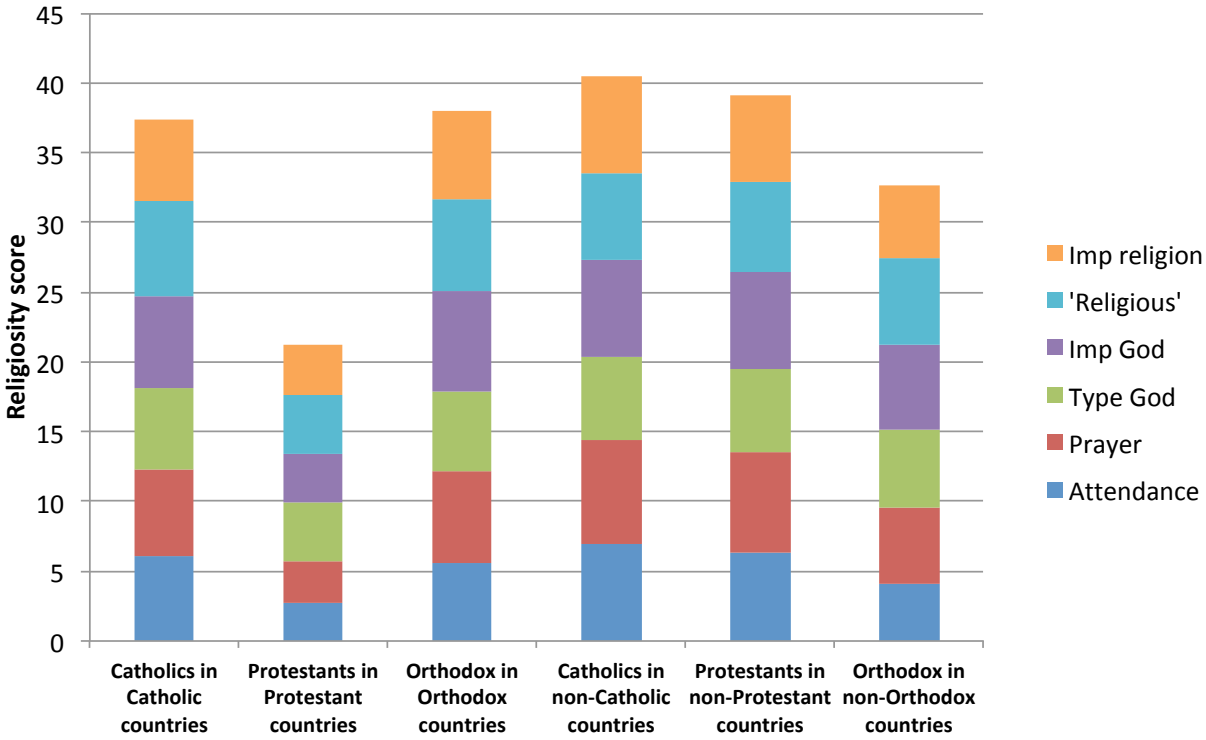
Notes: Data for young adults, Waves 4 and 5 combined, equilibrated weights applied

Figure A1: Balance of contribution of each domain of religiosity to the overall Religiosity Score



Notes: Young adults, Waves 4 and 5, 29 countries listed in Appendix table A1

Figure A2: Composition of Religiosity Scores by affiliation and primary denomination of country of residence



Notes: Data from Waves 4 and 5; young adults aged 18-35. Mixed denomination countries not included. Equilibrated weights applied.

Figure A3: Proportion of 'religious', 'secular' and 'fuzzy' young adults by EVS wave

Table A2: Regression coefficients (odds ratios): Group A countries Polarizing

	Czechia		Denmark		N'lands		France		Britain		Spain		Latvia		Germany		Hungary		Croatia	
If Religious																				
Wave 3 (ref)	0.17		0.61		0.05		0.04		0.86		0.34		0.31		0.39		0.05		0.66	
Wave 4	0.17	1.44	0.81	1.09	0.02	1.72	0.15	0.62	0.85	1.06	0.23	0.76	0.86	0.95	0.23	0.79	0.04	0.64	0.40	0.87
Wave 5	0.62	0.86	0.53	0.82	0.42	1.21	0.21	1.42	0.76	0.92	0.21	0.69	0.17	0.65	0.28	0.80	0.89	0.97	0.43	0.88
Gender Male (ref)																				
Female	0.20	1.33	0.01	1.94	0.05	1.42	0.77	1.08	<.001	2.37	0.10	1.41	0.13	1.42	<.001	3.09	<.001	2.76	<.001	1.89
Single (ref)	0.44		<.001		<.001		0.11		0.00		0.02		0.00		<.001		<.001		0.00	
Married/widowed	0.27	1.32	<.001	2.67	<.001	3.35	0.02	2.09	<.001	2.51	0.00	1.98	0.00	2.42	<.001	2.28	<.001	2.33	<.001	1.71
Cohabiting	1.00	0.00	0.86	0.84	0.17	0.50	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.42	0.65	0.80	0.88	0.80	1.21	0.57	1.28	0.78	0.87
Divorced/separated	0.32	0.47	0.01	3.88	0.86	1.13	0.31	1.64	0.31	1.59	0.44	1.62	0.73	0.81	0.12	0.21	0.01	2.45	0.75	0.86
Intermediate (ref)	0.16		0.04		0.03		0.66		<.001		0.07		0.53		0.18		<.001		0.03	
Low ed	0.43	1.29	0.37	0.73	0.51	1.25	0.84	0.93	0.00	0.43	0.12	0.66	0.82	1.12	0.03	0.65	0.02	1.87	0.69	0.91
Tertiary	0.04	1.79	0.02	0.48	0.05	0.67	0.90	1.04	0.12	1.51	0.02	0.52	0.29	1.32	0.55	0.85	0.01	1.87	0.02	0.69
Current student	0.82	0.92	0.02	0.44	0.40	1.27	0.27	1.50	0.38	0.67	0.96	1.02	0.18	1.67	0.66	0.90	<.001	3.41	0.24	1.25
Constant	<.001	0.04	<.001	0.04	<.001	0.07	<.001	0.05	<.001	0.05	<.001	0.13	<.001	0.05	<.001	0.07	<.001	0.06	<.001	0.50
If Secular																				
Wave 3 (ref)	0.01		<.001		<.001		0.08		0.02		0.00		<.001		0.37		0.34		0.07	
Wave 4	0.00	1.56	0.62	0.91	0.97	0.99	0.15	1.25	0.01	1.67	0.00	1.75	0.69	1.11	0.19	1.21	0.17	0.78	0.95	1.03
Wave 5	0.09	1.28	<.001	1.80	<.001	2.28	0.03	1.40	0.03	1.50	0.01	1.64	<.001	3.85	0.27	1.17	0.71	0.93	0.10	1.99
Gender Male (ref)																				
Female	<.001	0.61	<.001	0.33	<.001	0.56	0.00	0.69	<.001	0.48	<.001	0.59	<.001	0.32	<.001	0.55	<.001	0.56	<.001	0.26
Single (ref)	0.12		0.05		0.07		0.45		0.00		<.001		0.04		0.01		0.07		<.001	
Married/widowed	0.06	1.29	0.07	0.77	0.06	0.73	0.20	0.80	0.00	0.60	<.001	0.32	0.01	0.60	0.00	0.64	0.36	0.85	0.03	0.35
Cohabiting	0.18	4.14	0.03	0.46	0.03	0.55	0.41	1.30	0.70	1.29	0.08	1.56	0.14	0.53	0.34	0.63	0.02	0.33	<.001	10.62
Divorced/separated	0.19	1.44	0.53	0.76	0.87	0.93	0.90	1.04	0.01	0.37	0.68	1.22	0.18	0.53	0.53	1.22	0.58	1.19	0.07	3.38
Intermediate (ref)	<.001		0.94		0.27		0.98		0.03		<.001		0.49		0.04		0.37		0.07	
Low ed	0.99	1.00	0.57	1.11	0.99	1.00	0.70	0.93	0.01	1.54	0.27	1.27	0.51	0.81	0.01	1.43	0.90	1.03	0.26	0.32
Tertiary	<.001	0.41	0.80	1.04	0.96	1.01	0.91	0.98	0.71	1.08	<.001	2.23	0.85	0.96	0.10	1.39	0.60	0.91	0.07	1.77
Current student	0.32	0.86	0.68	1.06	0.10	0.71	0.97	0.99	0.96	0.99	0.05	1.58	0.14	0.68	0.83	1.04	0.09	0.69	0.42	0.68
Constant	0.66	0.94	<.001	0.50	<.001	0.46	<.001	0.51	<.001	0.51	<.001	0.27	<.001	0.29	<.001	0.50	<.001	0.50	<.001	0.07
If Fuzzy																				
Wave 3 (ref)	<.001		<.001		<.001		0.02		0.02		0.16		<.001		0.92		0.01		0.56	
Wave 4	<.001	0.59	0.59	1.10	0.12	0.78	0.45	0.90	0.01	0.63	0.06	0.75	0.86	0.97	0.69	0.95	0.01	1.52	0.40	1.14
Wave 5	0.14	0.81	0.00	0.62	<.001	0.45	0.01	0.68	0.05	0.73	0.21	0.80	<.001	0.42	0.81	0.97	0.67	1.08	0.96	0.99
Gender Male (ref)																				
Female	<.001	1.51	<.001	2.45	0.00	1.40	0.01	1.38	0.00	1.47	0.03	1.33	<.001	1.92	0.49	1.08	0.32	0.88	0.00	0.69
Single (ref)	0.07		0.16		<.001		0.95		0.23		0.02		0.16		0.80		0.01		0.01	
Married/widowed	0.01	0.72	0.92	0.99	0.01	0.67	0.97	1.01	0.58	1.09	0.02	1.50	0.98	1.00	0.67	0.95	0.03	0.73	0.01	0.67
Cohabiting	0.26	0.30	0.03	2.09	0.00	2.09	0.93	0.97	0.94	1.05	0.15	0.70	0.10	1.75	0.45	1.39	0.07	1.83	0.04	0.34
Divorced/separated	0.41	0.80	0.59	0.81	0.91	1.05	0.56	0.86	0.04	1.90	0.44	0.71	0.11	1.86	0.69	1.13	0.04	0.56	0.57	0.77
Intermediate (ref)	<.001		0.80		0.35		0.89		0.27		0.05		0.79		0.51		0.11		0.25	
Low ed	0.72	0.94	0.98	1.00	0.61	0.88	0.63	1.10	0.32	0.86	0.99	1.00	0.69	1.12	0.33	0.88	0.07	0.70	0.43	1.21
Tertiary	<.001	2.02	0.37	1.13	0.22	1.19	0.96	1.01	0.13	0.76	0.02	0.68	0.63	0.92	0.27	0.82	0.14	0.79	0.16	1.25
Current student	0.28	1.19	0.54	1.09	0.21	1.27	0.64	0.92	0.56	1.14	0.11	0.72	0.58	1.14	0.80	1.04	0.05	0.70	0.43	0.86
Constant	0.48	0.91	0.00	1.58	0.01	1.58	0.00	1.62	0.03	1.50	<.001	1.84	<.001	2.48	0.02	1.40	<.001	1.78	0.02	1.48

Notes: Significance cells highlighted in yellow if p<0.05. If factor is significant then coefficient cell is highlighted green if >1 or red if <1. Countries ordered (left-right) by average religiosity score Wave 5. Young adults aged 18-35 (inc.). Equilibrated weights applied.

Table A3: Regression coefficients (odds ratios): Group B countries - 'Decline'

	Estonia		Finland		Iceland		Austria		Lithuania		Portugal		Italy		Poland	
If Religious																
Wave 3 (ref)	0.12		0.01		0.00		<.001		<.001		<.001		<.001		<.001	
Wave 4	0.14	0.59	0.05	0.54	0.88	1.04	<.001	0.43	<.001	0.42	<.001	0.48	0.10	0.79	<.001	0.39
Wave 5	0.06	0.44	0.00	0.34	0.00	0.38	<.001	0.40	0.00	0.50	<.001	0.52	<.001	0.37	<.001	0.44
Gender Male (ref)																
Female	0.16	1.59	0.25	1.36	0.01	1.74	0.28	1.19	<.001	2.25	<.001	2.16	<.001	2.00	<.001	1.70
Single (ref)	0.05		<.001		0.00		<.001		0.36		<.001		<.001		0.00	
Married/widowed	0.01	2.58	<.001	3.56	0.00	2.32	<.001	2.49	0.09	1.45	<.001	1.77	<.001	2.20	0.02	1.38
Cohabiting	1.00	0.00	0.14	0.44	0.31	1.40	1.00	0.00	0.80	1.18						
Divorced/separated	0.82	1.18	0.66	0.61	0.01	2.90	0.58	1.29	0.99	0.99	0.89	1.06	0.33	0.61	0.03	0.39
Intermediate (ref)	0.37		0.12		0.25		0.35		0.16		0.82		0.56		0.16	
Low ed	0.78	1.21	0.40	0.34	0.13	1.98	0.34	0.83	0.57	1.42	0.55	1.11	0.49	0.89	0.43	0.76
Tertiary	0.24	1.50	0.15	1.71	0.11	1.78	0.69	1.09	0.02	1.66	0.92	1.02	0.35	1.15	0.07	0.76
Current student	0.33	0.51	0.04	2.36	0.86	1.09	0.27	1.30	0.16	1.52	0.42	1.19	0.72	1.06	0.79	1.05
Constant	<.001	0.03	<.001	0.06	<.001	0.06	<.001	0.23	<.001	0.10	<.001	0.37	<.001	0.53	<.001	2.37
If Secular																
Wave 3 (ref)	0.00		<.001		<.001		<.001		<.001		<.001		<.001		0.00	
Wave 4	<.001	1.80	<.001	5.06	0.19	1.44	<.001	2.12	0.17	0.71	0.24	1.52	0.01	2.35	0.36	1.84
Wave 5	<.001	1.87	<.001	4.48	<.001	7.13	<.001	3.62	0.02	1.70	<.001	3.35	<.001	4.56	0.01	4.91
Gender Male (ref)																
Female	<.001	0.35	<.001	0.51	<.001	0.37	0.07	0.74	<.001	0.38	<.001	0.39	0.01	0.56	0.05	0.50
Single (ref)	0.02		0.02		0.03		0.01		0.12		0.17		0.02		0.11	
Married/widowed	0.00	0.59	0.01	0.58	0.01	0.43	<.001	0.46	0.05	0.64	0.06	0.58	0.01	0.44	0.04	0.46
Cohabiting	1.00	1.00	0.16	1.60	0.54	1.16	0.75	0.66	0.11	0.31						
Divorced/separated	0.92	1.04	0.72	0.86	0.40	1.45	0.84	1.11	0.49	0.73	0.94	0.95	0.34	1.94	1.00	0.00
Intermediate (ref)	0.94		0.33		0.27		0.90		0.67		0.00		0.28		0.03	
Low ed	0.59	1.16	0.72	1.17	0.08	1.96	0.80	0.95	0.86	0.91	0.02	0.41	0.12	1.62	0.71	1.58
Tertiary	0.80	1.04	0.50	0.87	0.07	1.72	0.87	1.04	0.25	0.77	0.08	1.60	0.09	1.63	0.03	2.38
Current student	0.67	1.09	0.10	0.68	0.13	1.74	0.52	0.86	0.34	0.78	0.87	0.95	0.21	1.42	0.41	0.60
Constant	<.001	0.49	<.001	0.22	<.001	0.11	<.001	0.12	<.001	0.30	<.001	0.08	<.001	0.04	<.001	0.02
If Fuzzy																
Wave 3 (ref)	0.03		<.001		<.001		0.06		<.001		<.001		<.001		<.001	
Wave 4	0.01	0.67	<.001	0.41	0.37	0.83	0.13	1.26	<.001	2.11	<.001	1.85	0.67	1.06	<.001	2.57
Wave 5	0.03	0.67	<.001	0.49	<.001	0.34	0.35	0.87	0.47	1.13	0.15	1.27	<.001	1.59	<.001	1.91
Gender Male (ref)																
Female	<.001	2.39	0.00	1.59	0.01	1.51	0.55	1.08	0.57	1.08	<.001	0.66	<.001	0.61	<.001	0.64
Single (ref)	0.46		0.87		0.07		0.26		0.67		0.02		<.001		0.00	
Married/widowed	0.12	1.29	0.59	0.90	0.86	0.96	0.06	0.76	0.88	1.03	0.01	0.68	<.001	0.56	0.12	0.81
Cohabiting	0.80	1.14	0.85	1.06	0.19	0.76	0.55	2.18	0.27	1.77						
Divorced/separated	0.92	0.97	0.63	1.21	0.02	0.43	0.62	0.83	0.54	1.23	0.94	0.97	0.71	1.19	0.01	3.16
Intermediate (ref)	0.85		0.93		0.05		0.63		0.84		0.38		0.39		0.71	
Low ed	0.51	0.84	0.99	1.00	0.01	0.45	0.38	1.15	0.77	0.88	0.62	1.08	0.85	0.97	0.48	1.28
Tertiary	0.50	0.90	0.72	0.93	0.01	0.55	0.64	0.92	0.37	0.86	0.22	0.81	0.10	0.79	0.34	1.15
Current student	0.96	0.99	0.81	1.05	0.13	0.63	0.72	0.94	0.69	0.92	0.48	0.87	0.33	0.87	0.91	1.02
Constant	0.00	1.67	<.001	2.48	<.001	4.86	<.001	2.04	<.001	2.06	0.00	1.69	<.001	1.52	<.001	0.37

Notes: Significance cells highlighted in yellow if p<0.05. If factor is significant then coefficient cell is highlighted green if >1 or red if <1. Countries ordered (left-right) by average religiosity score Wave 5. Young adults aged 18-35 (inc.). Equilibrated weights applied.

Table A4: Regression coefficients (odds ratios): Group C countries – 'Bounce'

	Russia		Belarus		Slovakia		Bulgaria		Ukraine		Romania	
If Religious												
Wave 3 (ref)	<.001		0.83		<.001		0.85		<.001		0.17	
Wave 4	<.001	2.18	0.72	1.09	0.17	1.21	0.81	1.06	<.001	3.45	0.06	1.33
Wave 5	<.001	2.08	0.87	0.96	0.01	0.66	0.73	0.89	<.001	2.70	0.26	1.20
Gender Male (ref)												
Female	<.001	1.96	<.001	1.99	<.001	1.91	0.01	1.88	0.00	1.51	<.001	2.19
Single (ref)	0.01		0.94		<.001		0.49		0.59		<.001	
Married/widowed	0.01	1.52	0.75	0.94	0.00	1.51	0.19	0.72	0.43	1.13	<.001	1.63
Cohabiting					0.01	0.36	0.56	1.45	0.31	1.53	1.00	##
Divorced/separated	0.00	1.91	0.99	1.00	0.03	0.40	0.88	0.93	0.66	0.87	0.16	0.60
Intermediate (ref)	0.38		0.38		0.46		0.05		<.001		0.01	
Low ed	0.77	0.93	0.14	1.93	0.30	0.75	0.21	0.53	0.00	0.27	0.03	1.53
Tertiary	0.86	0.97	0.93	1.02	0.35	1.17	0.03	1.72	<.001	0.54	0.04	0.72
Current student	0.08	0.64	0.46	0.80	0.60	0.91	0.56	1.21	0.01	0.55	0.85	0.97
Constant	<.001	0.05	<.001	0.10	<.001	0.35	<.001	0.13	<.001	0.21	<.001	0.57
If Secular												
Wave 3 (ref)	0.01		0.02		0.46		<.001		0.00		0.12	
Wave 4	0.02	0.68	0.24	0.74	0.78	0.95	<.001	0.35	<.001	0.38	0.20	0.38
Wave 5	0.01	0.68	0.21	1.35	0.37	1.17	0.10	0.59	0.34	0.78	0.45	1.53
Gender Male (ref)												
Female	<.001	0.45	<.001	0.47	0.01	0.68	0.01	0.50	0.02	0.59	0.47	0.69
Single (ref)	<.001		0.05		0.01		0.49		<.001		0.14	
Married/widowed	<.001	0.62	0.03	0.63	0.00	0.59	0.70	1.11	<.001	0.40	0.02	0.17
Cohabiting					0.55	1.19	0.23	0.12	0.13	0.24	1.00	0.00
Divorced/separated	0.01	0.53	0.69	1.15	0.29	0.60	0.42	0.55	0.18	0.51	0.86	1.22
Intermediate (ref)	0.91		0.36		0.05		0.23		<.001		0.44	
Low ed	0.67	1.10	0.12	2.08	0.15	1.49	0.05	2.12	0.33	1.70	0.44	0.44
Tertiary	0.69	1.06	0.24	1.28	0.11	0.67	0.95	1.02	0.00	1.98	0.56	1.39
Current student	0.52	1.13	0.34	1.33	0.16	1.32	0.59	1.21	0.08	0.48	0.32	0.47
Constant	<.001	0.45	<.001	0.17	<.001	0.29	<.001	0.28	<.001	0.24	<.001	0.03
If Fuzzy												
Wave 3 (ref)	0.53		0.25		0.02		0.02		<.001		0.23	
Wave 4	0.28	0.87	0.60	1.10	0.27	0.87	0.01	1.69	<.001	0.50	0.11	0.78
Wave 5	0.46	0.92	0.36	0.85	0.09	1.26	0.10	1.49	<.001	0.49	0.17	0.80
Gender Male (ref)												
Female	0.08	1.20	0.96	0.99	0.00	0.72	0.76	0.95	0.18	0.84	<.001	0.47
Single (ref)	0.58		0.13		0.00		0.81		0.28		0.01	
Married/widowed	0.30	1.13	0.06	1.32	0.41	0.90	0.43	1.17	0.09	1.28	0.01	0.67
Cohabiting					0.05	1.65	0.62	1.34	0.86	1.07	1.00	0.00
Divorced/separated	0.84	1.04	0.82	0.94	0.01	2.72	0.54	1.31	0.16	1.51	0.17	1.64
Intermediate (ref)	0.85		0.13		0.83		0.32		<.001		0.01	
Low ed	0.90	0.98	0.02	0.43	0.77	0.93	0.62	0.86	0.01	2.57	0.05	0.68
Tertiary	0.88	0.98	0.36	0.87	0.76	1.05	0.06	0.67	0.04	1.34	0.05	1.35
Current student	0.44	1.13	0.91	0.98	0.44	0.88	0.42	0.81	<.001	2.25	0.61	1.10
Constant	<.001	2.07	<.001	3.24	0.65	1.06	<.001	2.10	0.00	1.74	0.01	1.54

Notes: Significance cells highlighted in yellow if $p<0.05$. If factor is significant then coefficient cell is highlighted green if >1 or red if <1. Countries ordered (left-right) by average religiosity score Wave 5. Young adults aged 18-35 (inc.). Equilibrated weights applied.