Jonathan R. Peterson[1]
North Park University
United States of America

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RELIGIOSITY AND POLITICAL TOLERANCE: REASSESING THE RELATIONSHIP

Abstract

Political tolerance––the willingness to afford basic civil rights to individuals or groups that one finds disagreeable––is fundamental to liberal democracy. For several decades, political scientists believed that widespread religious adherence in the United States threatened political tolerance. Recent research casts doubt on the direct relationship between religiosity and political tolerance. However, this research is based on decades-old data or a sample collected from a single county. My study tests the relationship between religiosity and political tolerance using more recent national survey data. It confirms that, although religiosity is related to dogmatism, no direct relationship exists between religiosity and political tolerance.

Keywords: religion, political tolerance, democratic values, church attendance

Political tolerance, the "willingness to 'put up with' those things one rejects or opposes"[2] or "allowing one's political enemies to compete openly for political power",[3] is fundamental to liberal democracy. Widespread political tolerance makes liberal democracy possible, since it allows diverse groups the freedom to enjoy basic civil liberties. At the individual level, political tolerance exists to the degree that each individual affords basic civic liberties to all other individuals, even to (or especially to) those individuals one finds objectionable.[4]

Over the centuries, few social distinctives have led to as much discord and violence as those rooted in religion. Indeed, the very concept of political toler-

1 Jonathan R. Peterson is Associate Professor of Politics and Government at North Park University, Chicago, where he has taught American politics since 2009. He received a B.A. in political science from Wheaton College (IL) and Ph.D. in political science from the University of Minnesota. Contact E-mail: jpeterson2@northpark.edu

2 John L Sullivan, *et al.*, An Alternative Conceptualization of Political Tolerance: Illusory Increases 1950s-1970s, *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 73, 1979, p. 2.

3 James L.Gibson, Enigmas of Intolerance: Fifty Years After Stouffer's Communism, Conformity, and Civil Liberties, *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 4, Issue 1, 2006, p. 23.

4 In common English, "tolerance" is sometimes equated with acceptance, just as "intolerance" is equated with prejudice. But political scientists do not understand tolerance in this way. By definition, one can only tolerate that which he or she finds objectionable. So tolerance is not about *agreeing* with objectionable individuals or groups, but with affording "procedural fairness" to such groups (Sullivan et al., 1982).

ance emerged in response to centuries of religious strife in Europe, as an effort "to moderate the harmful and often violent effects of religious conflict."[5] Given its history as a moderator of religious conflict, political tolerance has long been seen as being at odds with religion. As a result, political scientists have generally viewed religion "as an obstacle to the development of democratic values and support for civil liberties."[6]

But recent research, using robust measures of religion and political tolerance, casts doubt on the incompatibility of religion and political tolerance. Such studies argue that individuals with high levels of religious commitment or orthodox religious beliefs are, in fact, not less tolerant than other individuals.[7] Although they raise questions about the connection between religion and political tolerance, these studies suffer from some methodological shortcomings. Gaddy relies on a 30-year-old data set, and Eisenstein uses a regional sample that limits generalizability.[8]

In this study, I use a newer national data set to test the hypothesis that religion has a direct negative effect on political tolerance. I begin with a review of what political science tells us about political tolerance and its predictors, including religion. Then I use a publicly available national data set to test the hypothesis that religion and political tolerance are negatively related, using regression and structural equation models that include robust measures of political tolerance and religiosity, as well as the standard predictors of political tolerance.

Predictors of Political Tolerance

Research on the extent to which Americans are willing to extend civil liberties to politically deviant groups began as early as the 1930s.[9] But Samuel Stouffer's *Communism, Conformity, and Civil Liberties* is widely viewed as a milestone in political tolerance research since it was the first to explore political tolerance of objectionable groups using a national sample of Americans. In that study, Stouffer found surprisingly low levels of political tolerance among the American public.[10] For example, only 59 percent of Americans agreed that a socialist should be permitted to speak in their community. Thirty-seven percent would afford that right to an atheist, and 27 percent to a communist. Twenty years later, Nunn, Crockett,

5 John L. Sullivan and John E. Transue, The Psychological Underpinnings of Democracy: A Selective Review of Research on Political Tolerance, Interpersonal Trust, and Social Capital, *Annual Review of Psychology*, Vol. 50, 1999, p. 630.

6 Marie A. Eisenstein and April K. Clark, "Heterogeneous Religion Measures and Political Tolerance Outcomes", in: *Religion and Political Tolerance in America: Advances in the State of the Art*, Paul Djupe (ed.), Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 2015, p. 83.

7 Beverly Gaddy, "Faith, Tolerance, and Civil Society", in: *Faith, Morality, and Civil Society*, Dale McConkey and Peter Augustine Lawler (eds.), Lexington Books, Lanham, MD, 2003; Marie A. Eisenstein, *Religion and the Politics of Tolerance: How Christianity Builds Democracy*, Baylor University Press, Waco, TX, 2008.

8 See note 6 above.

9 Martha L. Cottam, *et al*., *Introduction to Political Psychology*, Psychology Press, New York, 2010.

10 Samuel A. Stouffer, *Communism, Conformity, and Civil Liberties*, Doubleday, New York, 1955.

and Williams replicated Stouffer's study and found an increase in political tolerance toward communists, socialists, and atheists.[11] However, Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus demonstrated that this increase in political tolerance was illusory.[12] Americans had not become more tolerant; they just felt less threatened. Since they saw communists, socialists, and atheists as less threatening in the 1970s than in the 1950s, Americans were more willing to express tolerant attitudes to those groups.

Rather than measure tolerance toward a fixed set of groups (like communists, socialists, and atheists), Sullivan and his colleagues argued that researchers should measure tolerance "by looking at the attitudes *toward groups that a person dislikes*".[13] To do this, they developed a content-controlled measure of political tolerance. First, survey respondents selected their least-liked group from a list of extremist groups across the ideological spectrum (e.g., the Ku Klux Klan, American Nazis, atheists, militarists). Next, they reported their willingness to extend civil rights (e.g., the right to run for office, make a speech, or hold a public demonstration) to members of their least-liked group. Because it takes into account the idiosyncratic nature of groups that individuals perceive as threatening, this content-controlled method has become a standard method for measuring political tolerance in political science.[14]

Over the last sixty years, three variables have emerged as key individual predictors of political tolerance: (1) perceived group threat, (2) support for democratic norms, and (3) certain personality traits like dogmatism.[15] Perceived group threat takes into consideration the contextual nature of political tolerance judgments. The latter two variables (support for democratic norms and personality traits) take into consideration longer-term forces. They are sometimes called "antecedent considerations" since they are predispositions and standing decisions that precede tolerance judgments.[16] Taken together, these three predictors form the "standard model of political tolerance" depicted in Figure 1.[17] Because these variables are central to political tolerance research, I briefly discuss each of them below, followed by an explanation of religion's place in the model.

11 Clyde Z. Nunn, *et al*., *Tolerance for Nonconformity*, CA: Jossey-Bass, San Francisko,1978.

12 John L. Sullivan *et al*., An Alternative Conceptualization of Political Tolerance: Illusory Increases 1950s-1970s. . .; John L. Sullivan, *et al*., *Political Tolerance and American Democracy*, University of Chicago Press, 1982.

13 Cottam *et al*., *Introduction to Political Psychology*. . . (emphasis added).

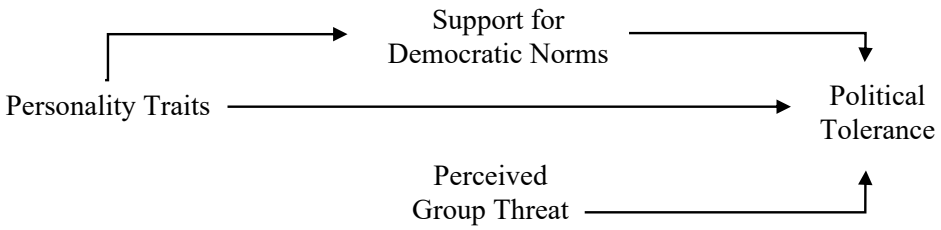
14 There are two additional widely used methods of measuring political tolerance: (1) the fixed groups approach (used in the General Social Survey [GSS] since 1972), and (2) an approach that focuses on support for restrictive policies (e.g., Darren W. Davis, *Negative Liberty: Public Opinion and the Terrorist Attacks on America*, Russell Sage Foundation, New York, 2007). According to Gibson (2013), the latter approach is a preferred method for measuring support for civil liberties, a construct related to (but the not the same as) political tolerance.

15 Sullivan and Transue, 1999.

16 George E. Marcus, *et al*., *With Malice Toward Some: How People Make Civil Liberties Judgments*, Cambridge University Press, 1995.

17 See Gibson, 2006.

Figure 1: The Standard Model of Political Tolerance



Perceived Group Threat: To the degree that an individual perceives a group as threatening, he or she will tend to be intolerant of that group. Stouffer was among the first to discuss the positive relationship between perceived group threat and political intolerance. This affective component of political tolerance is an important reason why Sullivan and his colleagues developed the content-controlled measure. Whether or not an individual perceives a group as threatening may come from a personality predisposition, or it may come from information an individual acquires about that group (e.g., framing).[18]

Support for Democratic Norm: Individuals who have internalized democratic norms like freedom of speech, the rights of minority groups, or democratic institutions like political parties, tend to be more politically tolerant than individuals with weaker commitments to democratic norms. Protho and Grigg[19] and McClosky[20] showed that although Americans overwhelmingly support democratic norms in the abstract, they are frequently unwilling to extend those norms in specific situations to groups they find objectionable. Nevertheless, subsequent studies showed that the more an individual supports democratic norms, the more likely he or she will also tolerate objectionable groups.[21] Marcus and his colleagues described this support for democratic norms as a "standing decision" since it is an established attitude that an individual has developed to a specific situation.[22]

Personality Traits: Certain personality traits are important predictors of political tolerance. Stouffer found lower levels of political tolerance among individuals who endorsed stern child-rearing techniques or among those who tended toward pessimism. Sullivan and his colleagues showed that psychological inse-

18 Thomas Nelson, Rosalee A. Clawson, and Zoe M. Oxley, Media Framing of a Civil Liberties Conflict and its Effect on Tolerance, *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 91, 1997, pp. 567-583.

19 James W. Protho and Charles M. Grigg, Fundamental Principles of Democracy: Bases of Agreement and Disagreement, *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 22, 1960, pp. 276-294.

20 Herbert McCloskey, Consensus and Ideology in American Politics, *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 58, 1964, pp. 361-382.

21 For example, see Sullivan *et al*., 1982; Herbert McCloskey and Alida Brill, *Dimensions of Tolerance*, Russell Sage Foundation, New York, 1983; James L. Gibson, Homosexuals and the Ku Klux Klan: A Contextual Analysis of Political Tolerance, *Western Political Quarterly,* Vol. 40, 1987, pp. 427-448; and James L. Gibson, The Political Consequences of Intolerance: Cultural Conformity and Political Freedom, *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 86, 1992, pp. 338-356.

22 Marcus *et al*., 1995, p. 20.

curity, measured by Rokeach's dogmatism scale (or, d-scale, a measure of an individual's tendency toward authoritarianism), was a powerful predictor of political (in)tolerance.[23] Marcus and his colleagues described such personality variables as "predispositions" since they are "deeply rooted and stable individual characteristics" that influence how individuals think, feel, and behave.[24]

Religion: Although it is not included in the standard model of political tolerance, religion has long been assumed by political scientists to play a role in political tolerance. Stouffer found that regular church attenders were less politically tolerant than non-attenders, and southern Protestants were less politically tolerant northern Protestants, Roman Catholics, and Jews. In their replication of Stouffer's study, Nunn and his colleagues confirmed that regular churchgoers display lower levels of political tolerance, but they found no difference in political tolerance between Catholics and Protestants.[25] Although subsequent research has found little difference in levels of political tolerance between individuals in various large religious traditions (e.g., Catholics, Evangelical Protestants, and Mainline Protestants),[26] others have confirmed that more frequent church attendance is affiliated with less political tolerance.[27]

The theoretical explanation for why church attendance should affect political tolerance is not well developed. Some studies in political science suggest that religious behavior and religious belief influence political tolerance judgments by first affecting personality predispositions like dogmatism. For example, Wilcox and Jelen suggested that individuals who are religiously committed––especially in churches of fundamentalist traditions––are likely to pick up anti-intellectual and separatist attitudes that then encourage dogmatism and political intolerance.[28] Figure 2 depicts the Standard Model of Political Tolerance with religion included as an antecedent to personality traits.[29]

23 Milton Rokeach, *The Open and Closed Mind*, Basic Books, New York, 1960.

24 Marcus *et al*., 1995, p. 19.

25 They did, however, find more political tolerance among Jews and the religiously unaffiliated than Catholics and Protestants.

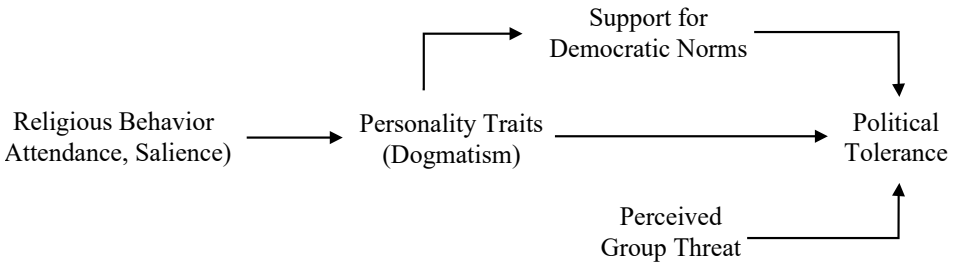
26 Note that a few studies have continued to show some differences in religious affiliation, as individuals without a religious preference or those who identify as Jewish have tended to be more politically tolerant than either Protestants or Catholics (e.g., Michael Corbett, *Political Tolerance in America: Freedom and Equality in Public Attitudes*, Longman, New York, 1982; David A. Gay and Christopher G. Ellison, Religious Subcultures and Political Tolerance: Do Denominations Still Matter?, *Review of Religious Research*, Vol. 34, 1993, pp. 311-332.

27 Erik Filsinger, Tolerance of Non-believers: A Cross-Tabular and Log Linear Analysis of Some Religious Correlates, *Review of Religious Research*, Vol. 17, 1976, pp. 232-240; Corbett, 1982; Corwin E. Smidt and James M. Penning, Religious Commitment, Political Conservatism, and Political and Social Tolerance in the United States: A Longitudinal Analysis, *Sociological Analysis*, Vol. 43, 1982, pp. 231-246; Christopher G. Ellison and Marc A. Musick, Southern Intolerance: A Fundamentalist Effect?, *Social Forces*, Vol. 72, 1993, pp. 379-398; Vyacheslav Karpov, Political Tolerance in Poland and the United States, *Social Forces*, Vol. 77, 1999, pp. 1525-1549; Samuel Reimer and Jerry Z. Park, Tolerant (In)Civility? A Longitudinal Analysis of White Conservative Protestants' Willingness to Grant Civil Liberties, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, Vol. 40, 2001, pp. 735-745; but also see Eisenstein, 2015.

28 Clyde Wilcox and Ted Jelen, Evangelicals and Political Tolerance, *American Politics Research*, Vol. 18, 1990, pp. 25-46. Also see Marie E. Eisenstein, "Predispositions, Standing Decisions, Political Tolerance, and the Role of Religion", in: *Religion and Political Tolerance in America: Advances in the State of the Art*, Paul Djupe (ed.), Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 2015.

29 This model is very similar to Eisenstein, 2015, Figure 10.2. But due to the limitations of the Citizen, Involvement, Democracy survey that I describe below, it does not include religious belief nor group threat as predisposition.

Figure 2: Political Tolerance Model With Religion as Antecedent



Unfortunately, very few of the studies listed above use the robust content-controlled measure of political tolerance, preferring instead the fixed groups approach that has been used for decades by the General Social Survey (GSS). This is problematic, because although the GSS offers a wide variety of religion variables (making it a preferred data source for studying religion), when it comes to measuring political tolerance, the GSS asks all respondents to make judgments on the same groups (i.e., atheists, communists, homosexuals, militarists, and racists). This fixed-groups approach shortchanges the contextual nature of political tolerance judgments that Sullivan and his colleagues demonstrated. Over time, individuals perceive certain groups as more threatening than others. For this reason, political scientists interested in measuring political tolerance as its own construct (rather than tolerance attitudes toward certain fixed groups) generally prefer the content-controlled measure over the fixed-groups approach.[30]

Surveys using *both* a content-controlled measure of political tolerance and a variety of religious measures are exceedingly rare. In one of the few studies to do so, Eisenstein challenged the conclusion that religion directly influences political tolerance. Using a random sample phone survey of 601 individuals in Lake County, Indiana, she first asked respondents to identify their most disliked group. Respondents were then asked whether or not they would allow individuals in the group they selected to run for office, teach in a public school, make a public speech, or hold public rallies. Religious commitment was measured using frequency of church attendance, prayer, and religious salience; religious beliefs were measured using a question on biblical literalism. She concluded that, after controlling for the standard predictors of political tolerance (i.e., personality predispositions, support for democratic norms, and perceived group threat), "increased religious commitment [i.e., religious behavior] did not directly lead to decreased levels of political tolerance and doctrinal orthodoxy [i.e., religious beliefs] did not directly lead to decreased political tolerance."[31]

30 Eisenstein, 2008; Ted G. Jelen, "Conclusion: Reflections on the Study of Religion and Political Tolerance", in: *Religion and Political Tolerance in America: Advances in the State of the Art*, Paul Djupe (ed.), Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 2015; but also see Gibson, 2006.

31 Eisenstein, 2008, p. 58.

Data and Measures

Recent studies like this indicating that religion has no direct effect on political tolerance merit further investigation. Eisenstein's study was confined to a sample from a single county in Indiana. Would a national survey that uses a content-controlled measure of political tolerance yield similar results? One of the few publicly available national surveys that includes a content-controlled measure of political tolerance along with a few religion variables is the 2006 U.S. Citizenship, Involvement, Democracy (CID) survey.[32] I use this survey to test the hypothesis that religion has no direct effect on political tolerance.

Before discussing my methods in detail, I need to point out two limitations of the CID data set. First, although the CID includes measures of religious behavior (church attendance) and religious salience (identification with religion), it does not include any measures of religious belief. This is a problem, since several studies have suggested that individuals who agree that the Bible should be read literally (i.e., those holding to biblical literalism) are more likely to be politically intolerant.[33] Indeed, Eisenstein argues that whenever feasible religious *belief* rather than religious *behavior* should be the standard measure when it comes to testing the relationship between religion and political tolerance.[34] Nevertheless, church attendance and religious salience are standard measures of individual religiosity within political science,[35] so it is reasonable to use these variable given the limitations of this data set.

The second weakness of the CID is not as limiting. The CID does not include a wide range of personality variables like neuroticism, extraversion, or openness, variables that are occasionally used in political tolerance research. Fortunately, the CID includes variables to measure dogmatism, which is the predominant personality variable that influences political tolerance.[36] Despite these limitations of the dataset, the CID has the unusual advantage of including both a content-controlled measure of political tolerance and religion variables in a national sample of 1001 interviews.

I now turn to the variables included in this study. I created indexes from the CID dataset for the independent variables of support for democratic norms, dog-

32 Marc M. Howard, James L. Gibson, and Dietlind Stolle, *United States Citizenship, Involvement, Democracy (CID) Survey*, Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor], Ann Arbor, 2016-10-11, available at: *https://doi.org/10.3886/ICPSR04607.v2,* 2006.

33 Lilian Mason and Stanley Feldman, "Religion, Fundamentalism, and Intolerance", paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago, IL, 2007.

34 Eisenstein, 2015.

35 Jamel L. Guth and John C. Green, "Salience: The Core Concept?", in: *Rediscovering the Religious Factor in American Politics*, David C. Leege and Lyman A. Kellstedt (eds.), M.E. Sharpe, Armonk, 1993; Lyman A. Kellstedt, "Religion, the Neglected Variable: An Agenda for Future Research on Religion and Political Behavior", in: *Rediscovering the Religious Factor in American Politics*, David C. Leege and Lyman A. Kellstedt (eds.), M.E. Sharpe, Armonk, 1993.

36 Marie A. Eisenstein and April K. Clark, Political Tolerance, Psychological Security, and Religion: Disaggregating the Mediating Influence of Psychological Security, *Politics and Religion*, Vol. 7, 2014.

matism, and perceived group threat, and various control variables. I also created an index for the dependent variable, political tolerance. The paragraphs that follow describe the construction and descriptive summaries of these indexes (see the Appendix for the specific items included in each index).

Religiosity is measured using an index that combines frequency of church attendance and strength of religious identification (i.e., religious salience). Eisenstein measured religious behavior using the same variables, except that she also included a variable on prayer frequency which is not included in the CID[37]. In the CID respondents were asked how often they attend religious services apart from special occasions like weddings and funerals. The range for this variable is 1 to 7, where 1 equals "Never" and 7 equals "Daily." Respondents were also asked how religious they are, regardless of their particular religious affiliation. The range for this variable is 1 to 7, where 1 equals "Not at all Religious" and 7 equals "Very Religious." I summed these two variables to create a religious behavior index with values range from 2 to 14, where 2 indicates a low level of religiosity and 14 indicates a high level of religiosity. The mean for religious behavior was 8.09 (SD=2.72). The data distribution for religious behavior was symmetric, with a skewness of -0.18 (SE=0.08) with a negative kurtosis of -0.65 (SE=0.16). I expect religious behavior to have no direct influence on political tolerance.

Support for democratic norms is measured with a scale that combines five variables from the CID. Each variable gauged respondents' support for various norms of democracy (e.g., minority rights, freedom of speech, and democratic institutions like political parties) by asking them the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with statements like, "Our country would be better off if we just outlaw all political parties" (see the Appendix for the specific wording of all five variables). Each variable in the scale elicited a 5-point response, where 1 indicated strong agreement and 5 indicated strong disagreement. I combined these variables to create a scale whose values range from 5 to 25. All of the statements in this scale are written in such a way that *disagreement* indicates *support* for democratic norms, so that 25 indicates a high level of support for democratic norms and 5 indicates a low level of support for democratic norms. The alpha reliability coefficient for this scale is 0.72. The mean for support for democratic norms was 18.90 (SD=3.35). The data distribution for support for democratic norms was negatively skewed at -0.86 (SE=0.08) with a positive kurtosis of 1.23 (SE=0.15). I expect support for democratic norms to have a significant positive influence on political tolerance.

Dogmatism is measured using five variables from the CID that form a short version of the Rokeach d-scale. Each variable in the scale elicited responses to statements like, "Of all the different philosophies that exist in the world there is probably one that is correct" (see Appendix for the specific wording of all five variables). Each variable in the scale elicited a 5-point response, where 1 indi-

37 Eisenstein, 2015. Note her explanation that "although religious salience is an attitudinal variable, in the empirical measurement of religious commitment, scholars typically also include the subjective question of salience of religion" (p. 10).

cated strong disagreement and 5 indicated strong agreement. I combined these variables to creates a scale whose values range from 5 to 25, where 5 indicates a low level of dogmatism and 25 indicates a high level of dogmatism. The alpha reliability coefficient for this scale is 0.69. The mean for dogmatism was 14.16 (SD=3.47). The data distribution for dogmatism was positively skewed at 0.34 (SE=0.08) with a kurtosis of -0.13 (SE=0.15). I expect dogmatism to have a significant negative influence on political tolerance.

Perceived group threat is measured using a scale that combines seven variables from the CID that gauged respondents' sense that their least-liked groups were threatening, untrustworthy, un-American, or undemocratic. Because there were 13 threat variables included in the CID (too many to include in a single scale), I performed a principal components analysis that extracted four components. The first component was comprised of seven variables that I used for this measure of perceived group threat. Each variable in the scale elicited a 7-point response, where 1 indicated low perceived threat and 7 indicated high perceived threat. I combined these variables to create a scale whose values range from 13 to 49, where 13 indicates a low level of perceived threat and 49 indicates a high level of perceived threat. The alpha reliability coefficient for this scale is 0.78. The mean for perceived group threat was 41.09 (SD=6.89). The data distribution for perceived group threat was negatively skewed at -0.96 (SE=0.08) with a positive kurtosis of 0.70 (SE=0.16). I expect perceived group threat to have a significant positive influence on political tolerance.

Control variables

Because previous research has demonstrated that certain demographic variables influence political tolerance, I include them in the models in this study. These variables include age (older individuals tend to be more tolerant than younger individuals);[38] education (individuals with more schooling tend to be more tolerant than individuals with less schooling);[39] party identification (Democrats tend to be more tolerant than Republicans);[40] gender (women tend to be more tolerant than men);[41] and region (Southerners tend to be less tolerant than residents of other regions).[42]

38 Hunter James D., *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America*, New York: Basic Books, 1992; Wilson Thomas C., Trends in Tolerance Toward Rightist and Leftist Groups, 1976-1988: Effects of Attitude Change and Cohort Succession, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 58, pp. 539-556, 1994.

39 Nunn *et al*., 1978; McCloskey and Brill, 1983; Bobo Lawrence, and Frederick C. Licari, Education and Political Tolerance: Testing the Effects of Cognitive Sophistication and Target Group Affect. *Public Opinion Quarterly*. Vol. 53, pp. 285-308, 1989.

40 Wilcox and Jelen, 1990; Reimer and Park, 2001.

41 Gibson, 1982; Froese Paul, *et al*., Political Tolerance and God's Wrath in the United States, *Sociology of Religion*, Vol. 69, 2008, p. 29; Eisenstein, 2015.

42 Ellison Christopher G., and Darren Sherkat, Conservative Protestantism and Support for Corporal Punishment, *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 58, pp. 131-44, 1993.

Political tolerance is the dependent variable. I measure it using the content-controlled method. In the CID, respondents first indicated which group they liked the least from a list of 18 groups (they were also given the option of adding a group if they disliked it more than the groups that were listed). Table 1 displays the list of groups respondents in the CID selected as least-liked. Next, respondents were asked the degree to which they agreed or disagreed that their particular least-liked group should be afforded certain civil rights like making a speech in their communities, running for office, and demonstrating in public. Each variable in the scale elicited a 5-point response, where 1 indicated low political tolerance for the least-liked group and 5 indicated high political tolerance for the least-liked group. I combined these variables to create a 12-point scale whose values range from 3 to 15, where 3 indicates a low level of general political tolerance and 15 indicates a high level of general political tolerance. The alpha reliability coefficient for this scale is 0.83. The mean for political tolerance was 5.27 (SD=3.30). The data distribution for political tolerance was symmetric, with a skewness of 0.28 (SE=0.08) with a negative kurtosis of -1.17 (SE=0.16). I expect commitment to democratic values to have a significant positive influence on political tolerance and dogmatism and perceived group threat to have a significant negative influence on political tolerance. I expect religious behavior to have no direct influence on political tolerance.

Table 1: Least-Liked Groups in the 2006 CID

Groups (Percent of respondents who cited as their least-liked group):

1. The Ku Klux Klan (44.3)
2. American Nazis (13.1)
3. Radical Muslims (13.1)
4. People who are against all churches and religion (6.9)
5. Those who would do away with elections and let the military run the country (6.4)
6. U.S. Communist Party (4.2)
7. Gay Rights Activists (3.7)
8. Those who would allow all abortions (2.7)
9. Those who would prohibit all abortions (1.8)
10. Christian Fundamentalists (1.4)
11. Liberals (0.6)
12. Illegal Mexicans/Mexicans (0.4)
13. Arabs/Arab Americans (0.5)
14. Conservatives (0.3)
15. Black Panthers (0.2)
16. PETA (0.2)
17. The Society for a New America (a fictional group) (0.1)

Results

In order to assess the different influences of religiosity, support for democratic norms, dogmatism, and perceived group threat on political tolerance, I begin with multivariate ordinary least squares (OLS) regression. OLS regression will allow me to assess the effects of these variables in relationship with one another before I evaluate the Religion as Antecedent Model (Figure 2) as a whole using structural equation modeling (SEM). That is, I hope it will lend initial support to my hypotheses that will allow me to test them further in a structural model. The first two columns of Table 2 show the unstandardized regression coefficients for two models predicting political tolerance. Model 1 includes the control variables and religiosity. In Model 2 I add the three variables from the standard model of political tolerance (i.e., dogmatism, support for democratic norms, and perceived threat). Because I am most interested in the effects (if any) of religiosity on political tolerance, I have boldfaced the religiosity coefficients in their row.

Table 2. Predictors of Political Tolerance, Perceived Threat, Dogmatism, and Democratic Norms

	Political Tolerance Model 1	Political Tolerance Model 2	Perceived Threat	Dogmatism	Democratic Norms
Constant	3.41***	6.62***	33.16***	23.09***	21.31***
Age	.00	.01	.06***	.01	.01
Education	.61***	.36***	-.19	-.47***	.30***
Region (South)	-.63*	-.48*	.04	.43	-.05
Gender (Male)	.73**	.82***	.26	.17	-.04
Party ID (Democrat)	-.05	-.03	.23	-.08	-.05
Religiosity	-.02	.02	-.02	.14**	-.01
Perceived Threat	–	-.13***	–	-.01	.06***
Dogmatism	–	-.15***	-.07	–	-.42***
Democratic Norms	–	.23***	.33***	-.44***	–
Adjusted R^2	.09	.23	.04	.29	.27
F	13.80***	26.88***	5.53***	40.98***	36.23***

*p ≤ 0.05 **p ≤ 0.01 ***p ≤ .001

OLS regression. Unstandardized coefficients.

The adjusted r-squared statistic shows that the set of predictors in Model 1 weakly predict political tolerance, as only nine percent of the variance in political tolerance is explained by the variables in this model. The only statistically sig-

nificant predictors of political tolerance in Model 1 are education, region (South), and gender (male). Each level of education completed[43] increases political tolerance by 0.61 points on the 12-point scale of political tolerance. Individuals in the South are less tolerant than individuals from other regions. Unexpectedly, men are more tolerant than women in this dataset. Age and party identification have no significant influence on political tolerance. Religiosity also has no significant influence on political tolerance, a result in this national sample that confirms the findings from Eisenstein's local sample. Recall that the religiosity scale is comprised of a church attendance variable and a religious salience variable. The results of Model 1 indicate that these variables are simply not good predictors of political tolerance[44].

Model 2 adds the three standard predictors of political tolerance. Model 2 is a stronger predictor of political tolerance than Model 1, with 23 percent of the variance in political tolerance explained by the variables in this model. Education, region (South), and gender (male) remain statistically significant. More importantly, each of the three standard predictors of tolerance is significant in the expected directions. That is, political tolerance rises with support for democratic norms, and it falls with greater perceived group threat and higher levels of dogmatism. Religiosity continues to have no significant independent effect on political tolerance. To test whether or not religiosity interacts with the standard predictors of political tolerance, I also ran regressions using the interactions of these variable and found no significant influence of any of the interactions on political tolerance (results not shown).

The last three columns of Table 2 show the unstandardized coefficients when religiosity is regressed on perceived threat, dogmatism, and support for democratic norms. Religiosity has no significant effect on either perceived threat or support for democratic norms. But it has a positive and significant effect on dogmatism. So religiosity, measured by church attendance and religious salience, has a small, but independent and statistically significant effect on one of the main predictors of political tolerance (dogmatism), but not on political tolerance itself.

These results provide initial support for my hypothesis that an individual's religiosity has no direct effect on his or her level of political tolerance. In order to further test these results and assess the Religion as Antecedent Model (shown in Figure 2) as a whole, I analyze the data using SEM with weighted least squares estimators. SEM is a method of measuring the relationships between variables that is similar to path analysis, except that SEM allows for latent variables to be simultaneously inferred from multiple observed variables. This method helps

43 There are seven education levels in the CID: none, high school incomplete, high school graduate, business/technical/vocational school, some college, college graduate, and post-graduate training.

44 I also ran Model 1 with the church attendance and religious salience variables treated separately, and neither was a statistically significant predictor of political tolerance.

improve the validity of studying variables that cannot be directly observed—variables like dogmatism, support for democratic norms, perceived group threat, and political tolerance.[45] Weighted least square estimators are preferred in SEM when using non-normal data and large sample sizes.[46]

Figure 3 displays the pathway relationships between the latent variables (in circles) in the Religion as Antecedent Model. Consistent with the OLS regression results, religiosity has no direct influence on political tolerance. Further, its indirect effects on political tolerance are negative. Political tolerance is negatively affected by dogmatism and perceived group threat, and it is positively affected by support for democratic norms. As expected, religiosity directly influences dogmatism. The relationships between political tolerance and the control variables (not shown) are also consistent with Model 2 in Table 2: education and gender (male) positively affect political tolerance, and region (South) negatively affect it. Age and party identification have no significant effect on political tolerance, results which are also consistent with Model 2. Taken together, the direct effects of personality traits (in this case, dogmatism) and perceived group threat on political tolerance far outweigh the direct and indirect effects of religiosity[47]. These results are consistent with recent research on religion and political tolerance discussed above.

There is considerable debate in the social sciences on how to best report SEM model fit, with more than a dozen different fit statistics to serve this purpose.[48] The most widely used fit statistics are model chi-square, standardized root mean residual (SRMR, an absolute fit index like chi-square, but less sensitive to sample size), comparative fit index (CFI, which compares the specified model to a null model), and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA, a parsimony-adjusted index of residuals). The Religion as Antecedent Model chi-square is 856.2 (df = 288.0, $p < .001$), which is well outside the recommended cutoff for good model fit ($p > .05$). However, because model chi-square is sensitive to large sample sizes (recall that n=1001 in the CID data set), it is helpful to look at other indices. In this model, SRMR is .06 (the recommended cutoff for good fit is less than .08); CFI is .90 (the recommended cutoff for good fit is less than or equal to .90); and RMSEA is .05 with a confidence interval of .05-.06 (the recommended cutoff for good fit is less than .08). Therefore, these statistics indicate a good model fit for the Religion as Antecedent Model in Figure 3.

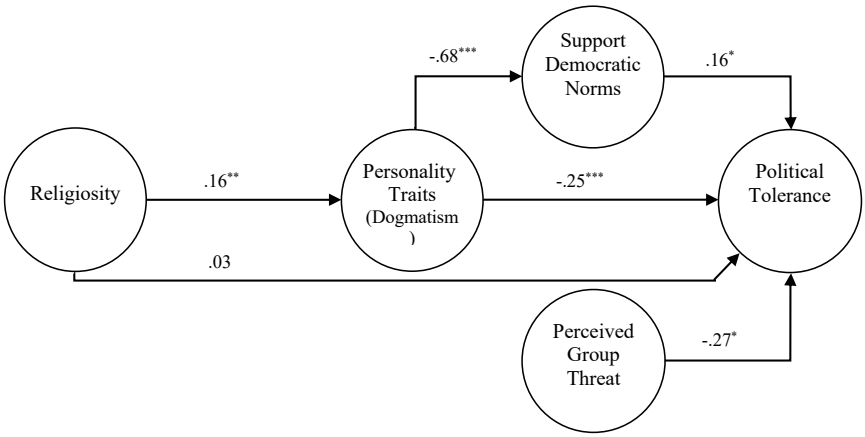
45 Instead of using the index scores (described in the Data and Measures section above and used in the OLS), I treat these as latent variables in the SEM measured by the variables described in the Appendix. I thank an anonymous reviewer for suggesting I clarify this.

46 Ulaf Henning Olsson, Tron Foss, Sigurd V. Troye, and Roy D. Howell, The Performance of ML, GLS, and WLS Estimation in Structural Equation Modeling Under Conditions of Misspecification and Nonnormality, *Structural Equation Modeling: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, Vol. 7, 2000.

47 I thank an anonymous reviewer for suggesting this language to describe religiosity's direct and indirect effects on political tolerance.

48 Rex B. Kline, *Principles and Practice of Structural Equation Modeling: Fourth Edition*, Guilford Press, New York, 2016.

Figure 3: Estimates for the Political Tolerance Model With Religion as Antecedent



Note: Standardized coefficients. The measured variables for religiosity (not shown) are attendance and salience; the measured variables for the other latent variables in the model (not shown) are listed in the appendix. $^{*}p \leq .05$, $^{**}p \leq .01$, $^{***}p \leq 001$.

Discussion

Because religiosity is not significantly related to political tolerance in either Model 1 or Model 2 (OLS regression) or in the Religion as Antecedent Model (SEM), I cannot say that religiosity mediates *or* moderates the relationship between political tolerance and its key predictors like perceived group threat, dogmatism, and support for democratic norms. So what is the relationship between religiosity and these variables?

On the one hand, one might expect churchgoing to contribute to greater political tolerance, since churches are not only places of worship, but places where different groups of people learn civic skills like interacting with one another, participating in groups, and solving social problems.[49] But I find no positive relationship between church attendance and political tolerance. This is the case even when I split the religiosity index and treat church attendance separate from religious salience. Church attendance alone has no direct effect on political tolerance in either the OLS or SEM models (results not shown).

On the other hand, one might expect churchgoing to contribute to greater political intolerance, since regular churchgoers are more dogmatic, a variable associated with lower levels of political tolerance[50]. But I find no negative relation-

49 Sindey Verba, Kay Schlozman, and Henry Brady, *Voice and Equality: Civic Volunteerism in American Politics*, Harvard University Press, 1995.

50 Explaining the relationship between religiosity and dogmatism is not the focus of this paper, but it is not surprising that churchgoers tend to be more dogmatic, given that many religious traditions teach a worldview of good versus evil, the existence of absolute truth, and obedience to moral laws.

ship between church attendance and political tolerance. In fact, churchgoing has no effect on tolerance—positively or negatively. This is true across religious traditions. Regressing religious affiliation (Catholic, Evangelical Protestant, Mainline Protestant, etc.) on political tolerance showed no significant relationship (results not shown).

The results of this study—using more recent data than Gaddy and a broader sample than Eisenstein—nevertheless confirm the conclusions of their recent work on religion and political tolerance. Neither religious behavior (i.e., church attendance) nor religious salience (i.e., an individual's sense of religious identification) has a direct effect on political tolerance. Since I did not have the ability in the CIS to look at questions which measure religious belief (e.g., an individual's views of scripture or belief in angelic or demonic beings), I cannot say anything about the relationship between that dimension of religion and political tolerance.

The precise relationship between religion and political tolerance remains unexplained in political science. In part, this is because most national surveys on political tolerance lack a comprehensive set of religion questions. The GSS has a number of questions on religious behavior and affiliation (which makes it appealing for sociologists of religion), but it lacks measurements of religious belief. And it uses a fixed method of measuring political tolerance toward specific groups. On the other hand, political tolerance surveys using the content-controlled approach rarely use more than a handful of religion variables (if they include any religion variables at all). Bringing these methods together––a content-controlled measure of political tolerance with variables that measure the various dimensions of religion including religious belief––would be helpful as we seek to understand the effects of religion on political tolerance.

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Appendix

Scales for variables in Table 2 from the 2006 CID

Support for democratic norms. Disagreement with the following statements indicates support for democratic values and institutions (where 1=Agree Strongly, 2=Agree, 3=Uncertain, 4=Disagree, 4=Disagree Strongly):

1. "Society shouldn't have to put up with those who have political ideas that are extremely different from the majority."
2. "Free speech is just not worth it if it means that we have to put up with the danger to society of extremist political views."
3. "What our country needs is one political party which will rule the country."
4. "The party that gets the support of the majority ought not to have to share political power with the minority."
5. "Our country would be better off if we just outlaw all political parties."

Dogmatism. Agreement with the following statements indicates dogmatism (where 5=Agree Strongly Agree, 4=Agree 3=Uncertain, 2=Disagree, 1=Disagree Strongly):

1. "Of all the different philosophies that exist in the world there is probably one that is correct."
2. "In the long run the best way to live is to pick friends and associates whose tastes and beliefs are the same as one's own."
3. "There are two kinds of people in this world: those who are for truth and those who are against it."
4. "To compromise with our political opponents is dangerous because it usually leads to the betrayal of our own side."
5. "A group which tolerates too many differences of opinion among its own members cannot exist for long."

Perceived group threat. Agreement with the following statements indicates perceived threat (each item has a 7-point response scale):

1. "[*Least liked group*] is dangerous to society."
2. "To what degree do you think [*least liked group*] is willing to follow the rules of democracy?" (*Reverse coded so that agreement indicates lower perceived threat*)
3. "To what degree do you think [*least liked group*] is trustworthy?" (R*everse coded so that agreement indicates lower perceived threat*)
4. "Let's suppose for a minute that the [*least liked group*] came to power in the United States. Using a scale where '1' means that nothing would change, and '7' means that everything would change completely,

please estimate how much you think the political situation in the country would change."

5. "Considering your own political freedom, to what extent would [*least liked group*] if it gained power, affect your personal political freedom?"
6. "Considering your own personal security, to what extent would the [*least like group*], if it gained power, affect your personal security?"
7. "To what degree do you think [*least liked group*] is American?" (*Reverse coded so that agreement indicates lower perceived threat*)

Political tolerance. Agreement with the following statements indicates political tolerance (each statement has a 5-point response scale):

1. "Members of the [least liked group] should be allowed to make a speech in our community."
2. "Members of the [least liked group] should be banned from running for public office." (Reverse coded so that agreement indicates lower political tolerance)
3. "Members of the [least liked group] should be allowed to hold public rallies and demonstrations in our community."

Џонатан Р. Петерсон

РЕЛИГИОЗНОСТ И ПОЛИТИЧКА ТОЛЕРАНЦИЈА: ПРЕИСПИТИВАЊЕ ОДНОСА

Сажетак

Политичка толеранција – воља да се обезбеде основна грађанска права појединцима и групама са којима се не слажемо – фундаментална је особина либералне демократије. Већ неколико деценија политиколози су веровали да висок степен религиозности у САД може да угрози политички толеранцију. Међутим, истраживања исказују сумњу у директну везу између религиозности и политичке толеранције. Али, ова истраживања се обично заснивају на деценију старим подацима, притом из само једне земље. Супротно томе, овај чланак тестира везу између религиозности и политичке толеранције користећи нове податке. Закључак истраживања је тај да, иако је религиозност повезана са догматизмом, не постоји директна веза између религиозности и политичке толеранције.

Кључне речи: религија, политичка толеранција, демократске вредности, црквеност

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