Accepted 31/8/23 *Research in the Social Scientific Study of Religion, 34*

Human Rights as Implicit Religion: Exploring the psychological correlates of belief in human rights and human rights activism among 15- to 18-year-old adolescents in England and Wales

Leslie J. Francis

Centre for Educational Development, Appraisal and Research (CEDAR)
University of Warwick, Coventry, UK
The Edward Bailey Centre for the Study of Implicit Religion
Bishop Grosseteste University, Lincoln, UK
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2946-9980

Ursula McKenna

The Edward Bailey Centre for the Study of Implicit Religion
Bishop Grosseteste University, Lincoln, UK
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2625-7731

Francis Stewart

Department of Sociology
University of Stirling, Stirling, UK
The Edward Bailey Centre for the Study of Implicit Religion
Bishop Grosseteste University, Lincoln, UK
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2679-119X

Author note:
Corresponding author:
Francis Stewart
Department of Sociology
University of Stirling
Email: francis.stewart1@stir.ac.uk

Abstract

Bailey's notion of implicit religion suggests that in contemporary societies the functions served by formal or explicit religions may be assumed by other systems of beliefs. The present paper tests this thesis in respect of the apparently growing significance of concern with human rights, drawing on a sample of 1,001 adolescents in England and Wales between the ages of 15 and 18 years. Just as the study of explicit religion distinguishes between religious belief and religious practice, so the conceptualisation of concern with human rights as implicit religion may distinguish between belief (in the sense of acceptance of the claims made within the human rights legislation) and practice (in the sense of activism to assert the causes of human rights). Previously published research has shown that, after controlling for personal and psychological factors, explicit religion has a positive effect on explaining individual differences in empathy. Data from the present study demonstrate that both belief in human rights and human rights activism, conceptualised as implicit religion, also have a positive effect on explaining individual differences in empathy. These new data provide some support for Bailey's conceptualisation of implicit religion by indicating that belief in human rights and human rights activism are functioning in relation to empathy in the same way as explicit religion.

Keywords: implicit religion, belief in human rights, human rights activism, psychology of religion, empathy

Introduction

Introducing implicit religion

Growing interest within the psychology of religion in the notion of implicit religion proposed by Bailey (1997, 1998, 2002) resulted in two special issues of relevant journals: a special issue of *Implicit Religion* edited by Schnell, Francis, and Lewis (2011), and a special issue of *Mental Health, Religion and Culture* edited by Lewis (2013). Bailey's conceptualisation of implicit religion provides a heuristic tool for interrogating the presence of phenomena within secular societies that behave in ways analogous to explicit religion. For Bailey implicit religion may be characterised by (but is not limited to) three key qualities:

> Implicit religion displays *commitment*; it is something to which individuals feel committed. Implicit religion provides *integrating foci*; it is something that draws together the identity of an individual (or a group) and in doing so furnishes meaning and generates purpose. Implicit religion displays *intensive concerns with extensive effects*; it is something that helps to shape a worldview and carries implications for the way in which life is lived. (Francis, Flere, Klanjšek, Williams, & Robbins, 2013, p. 953)

Intentionally, Bailey's account of implicit religion is a multi-faceted and broad construct that explores the persistence in contemporary societies of religious, spiritual and secular worldviews in ways either continuous with or discontinuous from the conventional practice of Christianity (Bailey, 1997, 1998, 2002). Empirical research concerned with the study of this aspect of implicit religion has operationalised the concept of implicit religion in three main ways. The implicit religion of contemporary belief systems and spiritual practices has been operationalised as concerning belief in luck (Francis, Robbins, & Williams, 2006; Francis, Williams, & Robbins, 2006, 2008), belief in the paranormal (Williams, Francis, & Robbins, 2011), commitment to spirituality (Hughes, 2013), commitment to New Age beliefs

(Kemp, 2001; Francis, Flere, Klanjšek, Williams, & Robbins, 2013), personal belief in supernatural forces (Schuurmans-Stekhoven, 2014), secularisation (Nelson, 2015), belief in science (Francis, Astley, & McKenna, 2018), environmentalism (McCalman, 2019), and political concerns (Lombaard, 2019). The implicit religion of secular activities has been operationalised as the interior life of a British public house (Bailey, 1997), the practice of football (French, 2002), the practice of belly dancing (Kraus, 2009), the personality cult of Prince (Till, 2010), American commercial sales organisations (Palmisano & Pannofino, 2013), celebrity worship (Aruguete, Griffith, Edman, Green, & McCutcheon, 2014), fly fishing (Fife, 2017), knitting (Fisk, 2017), consumerism (Kurenlahti & Salonen, 2018), Straight Edge Punk (Stewart, 2017), cosplay (Stewart, 2022), the Grateful Dead (Carrasco, 2022) and British TV situation comedies (Spoliar, 2022). The implicit religion of more conventional religious practices has been operationalised as the implicit religion of contemporary pilgrimage and ritual (Schnell & Pali, 2013), and the implicit religion of prayer requests (ap Sion & Edwards, 2013; ap Sion & Nash, 2013). Working within this broad theoretical framework of implicit religion, the present study is concerned to explore the extent to which the notion of human rights may function as an implicit religion within the lives of believers.

Psychology of implicit religion

A series of studies framed within the psychology of religion has tested the notion of implicit religion by exploring the extent to which constructs identified as accessing aspects of implicit religion serve the same psychological functions in people's lives as constructs employed to access aspects of explicit religion. This approach was applied initially within the strand of implicit religion concerned with the residual persistence of Christian believing within the UK. For example, Walker, Francis, and Robbins (2010) and Walker (2013) proposed the belief that 'You don't have to go to church to be a Christian' as one possible valid indicator

of implicit religion within British society. Employing this indicator of implicit religion, Francis (2013a, 2013b) tested the extent to which this form of implicit religion served the same psychological functions in people's lives as explicit religion. In the first study, Francis (2013a) tested the hypothesis against a measure of purpose in life, since established research has consistently reported an association between explicit religion and an enhanced sense of purpose in life (see Francis & Robbins, 2009). In the second study, Francis (2013b) tested the hypothesis against a measure of suicidal ideation, since established research has consistently reported an association between explicit religion and lower levels of suicidal ideation (see Robbins & Francis, 2009).

The findings from these two studies were not identical. The study on purpose in life demonstrated that both explicit religiosity and implicit religiosity predicted significantly higher scores. However, in the study on suicidal ideation, while explicit religiosity predicted significantly lower scores, implicit religiosity was not significantly related to suicidal ideation. The difference in the findings from the two studies suggested that implicit religion captured by the view that you do not have to go to church to be a Christian may work in the lives of individuals in the same way as explicit religion to generate positive psychological outcomes (like the sense of meaning and purpose), but that this expression of implicit religion may not work in the lives of individuals in the same way as explicit religion to offer protection from negative psychological outcomes (like suicidal ideation).

Penny and Francis (2015) operationalised Bailey's notion of implicit religion by a different measure, by focusing on attachment to traditional Christian rites of passage at the times of birth, marriage, and death. In this study, Penny and Francis (2015) employed as their dependent variable a nine-item scale of attitude toward substances, since established research has consistently reported an association between explicit religion (as accessed by church attendance) and lower levels of alcohol consumption, drunkenness, and alcohol-related

problems among young people and adults (see Fawcett, Francis, Linkletter, & Robbins, 2012). The findings supported the view that this operationalisation of implicit religion functioned in the same way as explicit religion in terms of predicting proscriptive attitudes toward substances.

Building on the earlier study reported by Penny and Francis (2015), Francis and Penny (2016) employed the same measure of implicit religion among a different population and with different dependent measures. In this study, the participants were young people drawn from a large survey who checked the religious affiliation question 'none' and the religious attendance question 'never'. Here were young people living and growing up outside the sphere of explicit religion who remained committed to traditional Christian rites of passage. This study employed two dependent measures, one concerned with positive affect (purpose in life) and one concerned with negative affect (suicidal ideation). These data demonstrated that young people who have no religious affiliation and who never attend worship services but who remained attached to traditional Christian rites of passage (conceived as an indicator of implicit religion) displayed higher levels of psychological wellbeing. Moreover, implicit religion exercised a stronger influence on strengthening positive affect than on reducing negative affect.

Francis, Astley, and McKenna (2018) took this research tradition in a different direction. In place of conceptualising implicit religion in terms of the residual persistence of Christian believing, they conceptualised implicit religion in terms of an alternative belief system, testing the hypothesis that an exaggerated, uncritical, and unqualified belief in the inerrancy of science, which they labelled as 'scientific fundamentalism', functioned as implicit religion. Drawing on data provided by a sample of 11,809 13- to 15-year-old students from the four nations of the UK, they demonstrated that scientific fundamentalism,

conceptualised as implicit religion, had a positive effect on both self-esteem and empathy in a way similar to the positive effect exerted by explicit religion.

Religion and empathy

Exploring the connection between implicit religion and empathy may be of particular significance in light of the way in which empathy underpins altruistic behaviour and pro-social values (for discussion, see Huber & MacDonald, 2012; Persson & Kajonius, 2016). The connection between explicit religion and empathy has been explored by a number of studies, including Watson, Hood, Morris, and Hall (1984), Watson, Hood, and Morris (1985), Francis and Pearson (1987), Duriez (2004a, 2004b), Furrow, King, and White (2004), Khan, Watson, and Habib (2005), Paek (2006), Francis (2007), Markstrom, Huey, Stilos, and Kraus (2010), Francis, Croft, and Pyke (2012), Hardy, Walker, Rackham, and Olsen (2012), Huber and MacDonald (2012), Glaz (2015), Rashidi, Mousavi, and Esmaeili (2016), Damiano et al. (2017), Francis, Lewis, and McKenna (2017), Lowicki and Zajenkowski (2017), Ward and King (2018), and Stewart, Lawrence, and Burg (2019). Taken together these studies demonstrate that the association between religiosity and empathy may vary according to the conceptualisation and operationalisation of explicit religion employed and according to the conceptualisation and operationalisation of empathy employed. However, there is also consistent evidence of a positive association between measures of empathy derived from Mehrabian and Epstein (1972) and intrinsic religiosity, positive religious affect, and loving God images.

For example, Francis and Pearson (1987) administered the empathy scale derived from Mehrabian and Epstein (1972) included within the Junior Eysenck Impulsiveness Inventory (Eysenck, Easting, & Pearson, 1984) together with the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity (Francis, Lewis, Philipchalk, Brown, & Lester, 1995) to a sample of 569 11- to 17-year-old students. They found a positive correlation between empathy and

religiosity, after controlling for sex and age. Francis (2007) administered the same empathy scale together with the semantic differential God Images Scale developed by Francis, Robbins, and Gibson (2006) to a sample of 1,826 secondary school students in England. After controlling for sex, age, and personality, they found a significant link between higher levels of empathy and positive God images and a significant link between lower levels of empathy and negative God images. The same empathy scale was administered for the third time by Francis, Croft, and Pyke (2012) together with the New Index of God Images developed for that study to a sample of 5,993 13- to 15-year-old students. After controlling for sex, age, and personality, they found the image of God as a God of mercy is associated with higher empathy scores, while the image of God as a God of justice is associated with lower empathy scores.

Human rights as implicit religion

The specific notion of discussing human rights as implicit religion was advanced by Walters and Perez (2016) in a discussion of cultural commitments and gender parity. Without specifically referring to Bailey's concept of implicit religion, a similar point is made in two papers that discuss the discourse of human rights as a 'secular religion' (Reader, 2003) or as a 'world-wide secular religion' (Féron, 2014). In order to qualify for consideration as implicit religion, human rights discourse needs to be tested against two main criteria. The first criterion tests whether human rights discourse may be conceptualised to function in ways similar to explicit religious discourse. The second criterion tests whether human rights discourse may serve the core functions in human lives that Bailey (1997, 1998, 2002) identified as characterising implicit religion: specifically as displaying *commitment*, as providing *integrating foci*, and as displaying *intensive concerns with extensive effects*.

In response to the first criterion (whether human rights discourse may be conceptualised to function in ways similar to explicit religious discourse), the following case

can be advanced. At the heart of the philosophical underpinning of human rights discourse there is a strong and well conceptualised doctrinal system. Like so much of Christian doctrine, these rights are grounded in a co-ordinated set of assumptions regarding what it means to be human. Human rights and freedoms are based on beliefs and doctrines. From the central doctrine of human dignity arise commitments to fairness, equality, and respect. Within the doctrinal system of human rights the appeal to human dignity serves the same foundational function as the doctrine of creation that roots Christian anthropology within the *Imago Dei*.

Like well-grounded theological doctrines, claims are made about the binding and extensive reach of human rights. Human rights and freedoms are universal (they belong to every single person), they are inalienable (they cannot be taken away from anyone), they are indivisible and independent (from the canon of human rights it is illegitimate to pick and choose).

These strong doctrines about the universality of human rights generate conceptual difficulties analogous to those identified within religious systems. For example, in the Christian system the universal dignity of those created in the image of God (the doctrine of creation) may be qualified by the equally powerful doctrine of the fall. In the doctrinal system of human rights, while inalienable rights may never be taken away, they may be restricted, for example when individuals fall short of expected standards or when nations stand in defiance of expected standards.

The negation between universal application (the doctrine of dignity or creation) and the restriction of such application (the doctrine of fall) requires careful management. Within Christian doctrinal structures, the third doctrine of redemption or salvation intervenes. Salvation mitigates the reach and the effects of the fall. It is at this point that major schisms emerge within the Christian doctrinal structures. Churches that prioritise the doctrine of the

fall (the Reformed and the Conservative traditions) may find it easier to decide on the implementations of restricting universal application of God's grace. Churches that prioritise the doctrine of salvation (the Catholic and the Liberal traditions) may find it less easy to define the boundaries. Similar internal divisions exist within the interpretation of the reach of human rights.

Within religious traditions the claim to universal application comes into problematic territory when the claims of different religions come into conflict. Within doctrinal and theological debate, this particular problem has been conceptualised as the theology of religions. The theology of religions, as discussed by Astley and Francis (2016), distinguishes among positions such as exclusivism (only one religion is really true and all others are totally false), inclusivism (only one religions is really true, but at least one other is partly true), pluralism (all religions express the same truth in different ways), and interreligious perspective (real truth comes from listening to all religions).

It is, *par excellence*, this negotiation among religions, characterised by the theology of religions, that may help to capture the status of religious debate. Human rights theory enters the debate among religions on equal terms when the claim to universal application among the adherents of human rights comes into direct conflict with the claims of other established religions as discussed, for example, by Haliday (1995) in relation to Islam and by Tomalin (2006) in relation to Buddhism and Hinduism. This conflict, reflecting the theology of religions, emerges, for example, when human rights beliefs come into direct conflict with the beliefs of Judaism over the ritual of infant male circumcision, or when human rights beliefs come into direct conflict with the beliefs of Islam over the dress of women.

According to the test of conflicting doctrinal systems, human rights seem to be functioning as an implicit religion. Human rights are, however, much more than and much stronger than a set of doctrines or of abstract principles. They have been systematically

codified and embodied in laws. Laws, however, require interpretation, adjudication, application, and implementation. Thus, alongside the doctrinal system underpinning human rights, there has developed a juridical system which has required formal institutions, like the European Court of Human Rights, and a professional elite to administer such formal institutions. Such developments mirror the development of major church structures, and priestly leadership. In these ways too 'The Church of Human Rights' seems to be functioning as an implicit religion.

In response to the second criterion (whether human rights discourse may serve the core functions in human lives that Bailey characterises as commitment, integrating foci, and intensive concerns with extensive effects), Walters and Perez (2016) concluded that their research and findings:

> point to existential paths within, across, and extraneous to more ordinary religious, political, and economic groupings – paths that legal texts and concerted actions invest with ultimate meaning and which are thereby appropriately cast as a form of implicit religion. (Waters & Perez, 2016, p. 481)

As yet, however, these claims have not been tested by empirical research. The aim of the present study is to address that gap in the literature, working in the tradition pioneered by Francis, Astley, and McKenna (2018), and employing empathy as the dependent variable.

Socio-economic human rights

Within the empirical project undertaken as part of The International Empirical Research Program Religion and Human Rights 2.0 (see Ziebertz & Sterkens, 2018; Sterkens & Ziebertz, 2018; Ziebertz & Zaccaria, 2019) seven types of socio-economic rights were identified and expressed as follows: the state's obligation regarding the right to work; the state's obligation regarding the right to social security; the state's obligation regarding living wages; the state's obligation regarding rest and leisure; the state's obligation regarding the

rights of the child; the state's obligation regarding prohibition of discrimination against women; and the state's obligation regarding prohibition of discrimination against homosexuals. These seven obligations were operationalised, each using two survey items.

The state's obligation regarding the *right to work* was operationalised in the items:

- The government should provide a job for everybody who wants one;
- The government should provide a decent standard of living for the unemployed.

That the state has an obligation in respect of the right to work is enshrined in two pieces of legislation: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 23), and in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Article 6). That the state should provide access to social security in the event of unemployment is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 25).

The state's obligation regarding the *right to social security* was operationalised in the items:

- The government should provide health care for the sick;
- The government should provide a decent standard of living for the elderly.

It is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 22) that enshrines the state's wider obligation in respect of the right to social security. The right to health care makes up the broader network of rights to health and wellbeing that are outlined in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Article 12). Furthermore, 'old age' is identified as a specified category for support within the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 25.1).

The state's obligation regarding the *right to living wages* was operationalised in the items:

- Everyone should have the right to equal pay for equal work;
- Everyone should have the right to a fair wage for their work.

That the state has an obligation in respect of the right to a living wage is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 23) and in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Article 7) which promote the right of everyone to a just and fair wage together with a decent standard of living for themselves and their family.

The state's obligation regarding the *right to rest and leisure* was operationalised by the items:

- Everyone should have the right to a reasonable limitation of working hours;
- Employment without paid holiday leave should be forbidden.

That the state has an obligation in respect of the right to rest and leisure is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 24) and in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Article 7) which set out the right of individuals to rest and leisure, including limitation of working hours and entitlement to paid holidays.

The state's obligation regarding the *rights of the child* was operationalised by the items:

- The state should protect children from forced labour;
- The state should protect children's rights to play and recreation.

That the state has an obligation in respect of the rights of the child is enshrined in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (Article 10) which maintains that children should be protected from economic and social exploitation and harmful employment. The rights of the child to rest and leisure and to engage in play and recreational activities, is also clearly identified in The Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 31).

The state's obligation to prohibit *discrimination against women* was operationalised by the items:

- The state should protect women's rights to adequate job opportunities;
- Women should have the right to equal pay for equal work.

That the state has an obligation to prohibit discrimination against women is enshrined in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights with special reference to the socio-economic area (Article 7), and corroborated in the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979).

The state's obligation to prohibit *discrimination against homosexuals* was operationalised by the items:

- Homosexuals should have the right to hold any public office;
- The state should prosecute discrimination against homosexuals.

That the state has an obligation to prohibit discrimination against homosexuals is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 2), in the European Convention on Human Rights (Article 14) and in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Articles 2 and 26). The crux of these Articles is that individuals have a right to equal treatment and non-discrimination in the exercise of all the other rights contained within each piece of legislation. Additionally, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights demands equality before the law when it states that the 'law shall prohibit any discrimination and guarantee to all persons equal and effective protection against discrimination on any ground such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status' (Article 26). In Australia in 1994, in a legal case before the Human Rights Committee, it was further decreed that the references to 'sex' in Articles 2 and 26 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights should be taken to include sexual orientation (see http://hrlibrary.umn.edu/undocs/html/vws488.htm).

Scales measuring attitudes toward socio-economic human rights drawing on the items proposed by The International Program Religion and Human Rights have been tested in England and Wales by Francis, McKenna and Sahin (2020), and in Romania by Rogobete and Vitelar (2020) and Rogobete, Francis, and McKenna (2021).

Control variables

Empirical studies exploring the connections between religion and empathy need to take two main control variables into account. The first main control variable is sex. In his pioneering review of empirical studies within the psychology of religion, Argyle (1958) concluded that the most secure finding was that women were more religious than men. More recent reviews have confirmed that, within Christian and post-Christian cultures, this finding has remained secure in relation to a number of indices of religious practice, religious beliefs, and religious attitudes (Francis, 1997; Francis & Penny, 2014). Women also record higher scores of empathy on measures derived from Mehrabian and Epstein (1972), as evidenced by Francis and Pearson (1987), Gudjonsson, Einarsson, Bragason, and Sigurdsson (2006), and Francis, Croft, and Pyke (2012).

The second main control variable is personality. A model of personality that has proved to be particularly fertile within the empirical psychology of religion is the three dimensional model proposed by Hans Eysenck and his associates and operationalised in a series of self-completion instruments for application both among adults, including the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1975) and the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire Revised (Eysenck, Eysenck, & Barrett, 1985), and among young people, including the Junior Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1975) and the Junior Eysenck Questionnaire Revised (Corulla, 1990). Eysenck's dimensional model of personality proposes that individual differences in personality can be most economically and adequately summarised in terms of three orthogonal higher order factors: extraversion, neuroticism, and psychoticism. Recent studies have demonstrated that higher levels of explicit religiosity are especially associated with lower psychoticism scores (Francis, 1992; Francis & Hermans, 2009; Lewis & Francis, 2014), and that higher levels of empathy are especially associated with higher neuroticism scores, higher extraversion scores, and lower

psychoticism scores (Gudjonsson, Einarsson, Bragason, & Sigurdsson, 2006; Francis, Croft, & Pyke, 2012; Neumann, Chan, Wang, & Boyle, 2016).

Research question

Against this background, the aim of the present analysis is to draw on the rich data generated by the International Empirical Research Program Religion and Human Rights 2.0 (see Ziebertz & Sterkens, 2018; Sterkens & Ziebertz, 2018; Ziebertz & Zaccaria, 2019) in order to address the following research question: Conceptualised as implicit religion do beliefs and practices related to human rights exert similar effects on a measure of empathy as generally found in respect of beliefs and practice associated with explicit religion.

Method

Procedure

Selected schools within England and Wales in conurbations where there was evidence of Christian, Muslim and religiously-unaffiliated students were invited to participate in the study. Within participating schools complete classes of year 11, year 12, and year 13 students (15- to 18-year-olds) were invited to complete the questionnaire within the context of a normal lesson. Students were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. Although all students were given the choice not to present their questionnaire for analysis very few decided not to submit their response.

Measures

Implicit religious practice was assessed by a five-item scale of human rights activism in which the items (signing a petition, joining a boycott, attending approved demonstrations, attending non-approved demonstrations, and occupying buildings or factories) were rated on a four-point scale: would never do (1), don't know (2), might do (3), and have done (4).

Implicit religious belief was assessed by a 14-item scale of attitude toward socio-economic rights designed to operationalise seven specific issues (Francis, McKenna, &

Sahin, 2020): the state's obligation regarding the right to work; the state's obligation regarding the right to social security; the state's obligation regarding living wages; the state's obligation regarding rest and leisure; the state's obligation to the rights of children; the state's obligation to protect women from discrimination; and the state's obligation to protect homosexuals from discrimination. Each of the seven areas was operationalised by two items. Each item was rated on a five-point Likert scale: disagree strongly (1), disagree (2), not certain (3), agree (4), and agree strongly (5).

Personal factors were assessed by two variables: sex, male (1) and female (2); and school year, year 11 (1), year 12 (2) and year 13 (3).

Psychological factors were assessed by the abbreviated form of the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire Revised (EPQR-A) as developed originally by Francis, Brown, and Philipchalk (1992) and further modified by Francis, Robbins, Louden, and Haley (2001). This instrument comprised three six-item measures for extraversion, neuroticism and psychoticism. Each item is rated on a two-point scale: yes (1), and no (0).

Explicit religious practice was assessed by the question 'How often do you take part in religious services at a church or mosque or another place?' rated on a six-point scale: never (1), hardly ever (2), a few times a year (3), one to three times a month (4), once a week (5), and more than once a week (6).

Explicit religious belief was assessed by the question 'To what extent do you believe that God or something divine exists?' rated on a five-point scale: not at all (1), not very much (2), moderately (3), quite a bit (4), and very much so (5).

Empathy was assessed by four items derived from the seven-item scale of empathetic concern proposed by the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (Davis, 1983). Each item was assessed on a five-point Likert scale: disagree strongly (1), disagree (2), not certain (3), agree (4), and agree strongly (5).

Participants

The analyses reported in this paper were conducted on the 1,001 students who completed all the required variables. The group comprised 384 males and 617 females; 195 15-year-old students, 403 16-year-old students, 308 17-year-old students, and 95 18-year-old students.

Results

Explicit religion

In terms of explicit religious practice, 49% of the students never attended religious services, 21% hardly ever attended, 14% attended a few times a year, 5% attended one to three times a month, 5% attended once a week, and 6% attended more than once a week.

In terms of explicit religious belief, responses to the question 'To what extent do you believe that God or something divine exists?' were as follows: not at all, 25%; not very much, 20%; moderately, 25%; quite a bit, 13%; and very much so, 17%.

Implicit religion

- insert table 1 about here -

Implicit religious practice was assessed by the five-item Scale of Human Rights Activism. Table 1 presents the correlation between the individual items and the sum of the other four items, together with the item endorsement. The correlations demonstrate that each item co-varies well with the sum of the remaining items. The item endorsements show a range of discrimination among the items. While just 4% of the participants state that they would never sign a petition, the proportion rises to 34% who would never occupy a building or factory.

- insert table 2 about here -

Implicit religious belief was assessed by the 14-item Scale of Attitude toward Socio-Economic Human Rights proposed by Francis, McKenna, and Sahin (2020). Table 2 presents the correlations between the individual items and the sum of the other 13 items, together with the item endorsement in terms of the sum of the agree and the agree strongly responses.

These data demonstrate that each of the 14 items contributed to a homogeneous scale with correlations between the individual items and the sum of the other 13 items ranging from .35 to .74. Overall the item endorsements reveal a positive endorsement of socio-economic human rights, especially in terms of social security, protection of women, living wages, and the rights of children. In terms of the state's obligation regarding the right to social security, 83% agreed that the government should provide health care for the sick, and 83% agreed that the government should provide a decent standard of living for the elderly. In terms of the state's obligation to protect women from discrimination, 86% agreed that women should have the right to equal pay for equal work, and 82% agreed that the state should protect women's rights to adequate job opportunities. In terms of the state's obligation regarding living wages, 83% agreed everyone should have the right to a fair wage for their work, and 80% agreed that everyone should have the right to equal pay for equal work. In terms of the state's obligation to the rights of children, 81% agreed that the state should protect children from forced labour, and 78% agreed that the state should protect children's right to play and recreation. Endorsement was somewhat lower in terms of protection of homosexuals, rights to rest and leisure, and the right to work. In terms of the state's obligation to protect homosexuals from discrimination, 76% agreed that homosexuals should have the right to hold any public office, and 70% agreed that the state should prosecute discrimination against homosexuals. In terms of the state's obligation regarding rest and leisure, 74% agreed that everyone should have the right to a reasonable limitation on working hours, and 43% agreed that employment without paid holidays should be forbidden. In terms of the state's obligation regarding the right to work, 61% agreed that the government should provide a job for everybody who wants one, and 44% agreed that the government should provide a decent standard of living for the unemployed.

Empathy

- insert table 3 about here -

Empathy was assessed by four items derived from the seven-item scale of empathetic concern proposed by Davis (1983). Table 3 presents the correlations between the individual items and the sum of the other three items together with three levels of item endorsement: yes (sum of the agree and agree strongly responses), ? (the not certain response), and no (sum of the disagree and disagree strongly responses). The correlations demonstrate that each item co-varies well with the sum of the other three items. The item endorsements show quite a good level of empathetic concern: 75% often feel sorry for people less fortunate than themselves; 70% say that when they see someone being taken advantage of they feel protective toward them; and 61% often feel quite moved by things they see happening. On the other hand, almost one in five (17%) say that other people's misfortunes do not usually disturb them a great deal.

Scale properties

- insert table 4 about here -

Table 4 presents an overview of the psychometric properties of the six scales employed in the study in terms of means, standard deviations, and alpha coefficients (Cronbach, 1951). The data presented in table 4 demonstrate that the 14-item scale concerned with attitude toward socio-economic human rights, the five-item scale concerned with human rights activism, the four-item scale of empathy, and two of the three scales concerned with psychological factors (extraversion and neuroticism) recorded internal consistency reliability in terms of alpha coefficients in excess of the threshold of .65 commended by DeVellis (2003). The lower alpha coefficient recorded by the psychoticism scale is consistent with the known operational difficulties incurred in measuring this dimension of personality (Francis, Brown, & Philipchalk, 1992).

Exploring correlations

- insert tables 5 and 6 about here -

Table 5 presents the correlations among all the variable employed in the analyses in order to make explicit the complex patterns of interrelationships. The correlations of key interest are also repeated in table 6 (first column) so that these bivariate correlations may be seen alongside the beta weights within the regression models. These correlations demonstrate that, when considered separately, personal factors, psychological factors, explicit religious factors and implicit religious factors are all significantly associated with individual differences in empathy. In terms of personal factors, females record significantly higher empathy scores compared with males, although age is not a significant factor. In terms of psychological factors, higher empathy scores are significantly associated with higher extraversion scores, higher neuroticism scores, and lower psychoticism scores. In terms of explicit religious factors, higher empathy scores are significantly associated with higher levels of religious belief and higher levels of religious practice. In terms of implicit religious factors, higher empathy scores are significantly associated with higher levels of endorsement of socio-economic human rights and higher levels of human rights activism.

In light of these multiple correlations, the final step in data analysis constructs a series of regression models with empathy as the dependent variable and with the independent variables being added incrementally in four steps (see table 6). Model one begins by introducing the personal factors (sex and age). Model two adds the psychological factors (extraversion, neuroticism, and psychoticism). Model three adds the explicit religion factors (belief in God, and worship attendance). Model four adds the implicit religion factors (attitude toward socio-economic rights, and human rights activism). It is the fourth model that is of greatest interest when the effect of implicit religion factors on empathy are explored, after taking into account the effect of personal factors, psychological factors, and explicit religion factors. In this model, the beta weights indicate that one personal factor remains

significant (sex), one psychological factor remains significant (psychoticism), both explicit religious factors remain significant, and both implicit religion factors remain significant. The increase in R^2 confirms that the two implicit religion factors account for significant additional variance in empathy scores after the personal, psychological, and explicit factors have been entered into the model.

Conclusion

The present study set out to explore current interest in and commitment to human rights through the heuristic lens of implicit religion as proposed by Bailey (1997, 1998, 2002). The argument proceeded in two main steps, the first conceptual and the second empirical.

The first (conceptual) step tested whether human rights discourse may be conceptualised to function in ways similar to explicit religious discourse, and whether human rights discourse may serve the core functions in human lives that Bailey identified as characterising implicit religion. On both counts the conceptual analysis supported the view that it is legitimate to regard human rights discourse as serving as implicit religion.

The second (empirical) step tested whether human rights discourse (conceptualised as implicit religion) serve the same psychological functions in people's lives as aspects of explicit religion. This empirical test was explored among a sample of 1,001 adolescents in England and Wales between the age of 14 and 18 years. The specific correlate of explicit religion employed in the present study was empathy. The specific operationalisations of human rights discourse in the present study were implicit religious belief (in the sense of acceptance of the claims made in human rights legislation with specific reference to socio-economic human rights) and implicit religious practice (in the sense of activism to assert the causes of human rights). The data from this empirical study demonstrated that both belief in human rights and human rights activism have a positive effect on empathy, after controlling for individual differences in personal factors (sex and age) and in psychological factors

(extraversion, neuroticism, and psychoticism). These data support the theory that human rights discourse functions as implicit religion in contemporary society.

Generalisability of the findings from the present study is caveated by two main considerations, the nature of the sample and the indices selected to operationalise human rights discourse. The sample is limited by both the age range (15- to 18-year-old students) and the geographical location (England and Wales) of the participants. The operationalisation of human rights discourse is limited by the measure of implicit religious belief focusing specifically on only one area of human rights (socio-economic human rights) and by the measure of implicit religious practice focusing specifically only on one area of behaviour (human rights activism). Both sets of limitations can be addressed by the replication and extension of the present empirical study.

References

ap Siôn, T., & Edwards, O. (2013). Say one for me: The implicit religion of prayers from the street. *Mental Health, Religion and Culture*, *9*, 922-935. doi.org/10.1080/13674676.2012.758398

ap Siôn, T., & Nash, P. (2013). Coping through prayer: An empirical study in implicit religion concerning prayers for children in hospital. *Mental Health, Religion and Culture, 9,* 936-952. doi.org/10.1080/13674676.2012.756186

Argyle, M. (1958). *Religious behaviour*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul. doi.org/10.4324/9780203001271

Aruguete, M., Griffith, J., Edman, J., Green, T., & McCutcheon, L. (2014). Body image and celebrity worship. *Implicit Religion*, *17*, 223-234. doi.org/10.1558/imre.v17i2.223

Astley, J., & Francis, L. J. (2016). Introducing the Astley-Francis Theology of Religions Index (AFTRI): Construct validity among 13- to 15-year-old students. *Journal of Beliefs and Values*, *37*, 29-39. doi.org/10.1080/13617672.2016.1141527

Bailey, E. I. (1997). *Implicit religion in contemporary society*. G A Kampen, The Netherlands: Kok Pharos.

Bailey, E. I. (1998). *Implicit religion: An introduction*. London: Middlesex University Press.

Bailey, E. I. (Ed.). (2002). *The secular quest for meaning in life: Denton papers in implicit religion*. New York: Edwin Mellen Press Ltd.

Carrasco, O. (2022). Restive spirits seeking release: The implicit religion of the Grateful Dead. *Journal of Beliefs and Values*, *43*, 29-39. doi.org/10.1080/13617672.2022.2005711

Corulla, W. J. (1990). A revised version of the psychoticism scale for children. *Personality and Individual Differences, 11*, 65-76. doi.org/10.1016/0191-8869(90)90169-R

Cronbach, L. J. (1951). Coefficient alpha and the internal structure of tests. *Psychometrika, 16*, 297-334. doi.org/10.1007/BF02310555

Damiano, R. F., de Andrade Ribeiro, L. M., Guedes dos Santos, A., Almeida da Silva, B., & Lucchetti, G. (2017). Empathy is associated with meaning of life and mental health treatment but not religiosity among Brazilian medical students. *Journal of Religion and Health*, *56*, 1003-1017. doi.org/10.1007/s10943-016-0321-9

Davis, M. H. (1983). Measuring individual differences in empathy: Evidence for a multidimensional approach. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *44*, 113-126. doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.44.1.113

DeVellis, R. F. (2003). *Scale development: Theory and applications.* London: Sage.

Duriez, B. (2004a). Are religious people nicer people? Taking a closer look at the religion-empathy relationship. *Mental Health, Religion and Culture, 7*, 249-254. doi.org/10.1080/13674670310001606450

Duriez, B. (2004b). A research note on the relation between religiosity and racism: The importance of the way in which religious contents are being processed. *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion, 14*, 177-191. doi.org/10.1207/s15327582ijpr1403_3

Eysenck, H. J., & Eysenck, S. B. G. (1975). *Manual of the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (adult and junior).* London: Hodder and Stoughton. doi.org/10.1037/t05462-000

Eysenck, S . B. G., Easting, G., & Pearson, P. R. (1984). Age norms for impulsiveness in children. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *5*, 315-321. doi.org/10.1016/0191-8869(84)90070-9

Eysenck, S. B. G., Eysenck, H. J., & Barrett, P. (1985). A revised version of the psychoticism scale. *Personality and Individual Differences, 6*, 21-29. doi.org/10.1016/0191-8869(85)90026-1

Fawcett, B., Francis, L. J., Linkletter, J., & Robbins, M. (2012). Religiosity and alcohol avoidance: A study among Canadian Baptist youth. *The Journal of Youth Ministry, 11*, 45-62.

Féron, H. (2014). Human rights and faith: a 'world-wide secular religion?, *Ethics & Global Politics, 7 (*4), 181-200. doi.org/10.3402/egp.v7.26262

Fife, W. (2017). Fly fishing as religion: Literature as a form of public consciousness. *Anthropology of Consciousness*, *28* (1), 7-30. doi.org/10.1111/anoc.12064

Fisk, A. (2017). 'So that you've got something for yourself'. Knitting as implicit spirituality. In L. Doggett & A. Arat (Eds.) *Foundations and futures in the sociology of religion* (1st ed.) (pp. 133-148). London: Routledge. doi.org/10.4324/9781315107547-10

Francis, L. J. (1992). Is psychoticism really a dimension of personality fundamental to religiosity? *Personality and Individual Differences, 13*, 645-652. doi.org/10.1016/0191-8869(92)90235-H

Francis, L. J. (1997). The psychology of gender differences in religion: A review of empirical research. *Religion, 27*, 81-96. doi.org/10.1006/reli.1996.0066

Francis, L. J. (2007). God images and empathy: A study among secondary school pupils in England. In P. Heggy (Ed.) *What do we imagine God to be? The function of 'God images' in our lives* (pp. 67-88). Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press.

Francis, L. J. (2013a). Implicit religion, explicit religion and purpose in life: An empirical enquiry among 13- to 15-year-old adolescents. *Mental Health, Religion and Culture, 16,* 909-921. doi.org/10.1080/13674676.2012.756615

Francis, L. J. (2013b). The association between suicidal ideation, explicit religion and implicit religion: An empirical enquiry among 13- to 15-year-old adolescents. *Implicit Religion, 16*, 93-109. doi.org/10.1558/imre.v16i1.93

Francis, L. J., Astley, J., & McKenna, U. (2018). Belief in God, belief in science: Exploring the psychological correlates of fundamentalism as implicit religion. *Implicit Religion, 21*, 383-412. doi.org/10.1558/imre.36862

Francis, L. J., Brown, L. B., & Philipchalk, R. (1992). The development of an abbreviated form of the Revised Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQR-A): Its use among students in England, Canada, the USA and Australia. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *13*, 443-449. doi.org/10.1016/0191-8869(92)90073-X

Francis, L. J., Croft, J., & Pyke, A. (2012). Religious diversity, empathy and God images: Perspectives from the psychology of religion and empirical theology shaping a study among adolescents in the UK. *Journal of Beliefs and Values, 33*, 293-307. doi.org/10.1080/13617672.2012.732810

Francis, L. J., Flere, S., Klanjšek, R., Williams, E., & Robbins, M. (2013). Attitude toward Christianity and New Age beliefs among undergraduate students in Slovenia: A study in implicit religion. *Mental Health, Religion and Culture, 9,* 953-963. doi.org/10.1080/13674676.2012.759721

Francis, L. J., & Hermans, C. A. M. (2009). Psychological health and attitude toward Christianity: a study among pupils attending Catholic schools in the Netherlands. *Journal of Religious Education, 57* (2), 47-58.

Francis, L. J., Lewis, C. A., & McKenna, U. (2017). Spirituality and empathy: A study among religiously unaffiliated adolescents within the UK. *Spirituality of a Personality*, *3* (78), 325-345.

Francis, L. J., Lewis, J. M., Philipchalk, R., Brown, L. B., & Lester, D. (1995). The internal consistency reliability and construct validity of the Francis Scale of Attitude toward Christianity (adult) among undergraduate students in the UK, USA, Australia and Canada. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *19*, 949-953. doi.org/10.1016/S0191-8869(95)00131-X

Francis, L. J., McKenna, U., & Sahin, A. (2020). Religion and socio-economic human rights: An empirical enquiry among adolescents in England and Wales. In H.-G. Ziebertz (Ed.), *International empirical studies on religion and socio-economic human rights* (pp. 169-191). Cham, Switzerland: Springer Nature. doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-30934-3_7

Francis, L. J., & Pearson, P. R. (1987). Empathic development during adolescence: Religiosity the missing link? *Personality and Individual Differences, 8*, 145-148. doi.org/10.1016/0191-8869(87)90024-9

Francis, L. J., & Penny, G. (2014). Gender differences in religion. In V. Saroglou (Ed.). *Religion, personality and social behaviour* (pp. 313-337). New York. Psychology Press.

Francis, L. J., & Penny, G. (2016). Implicit religion and psychological wellbeing: A study among adolescents without formal religious affiliation or practice. *Implicit Religion*, *19*, 61-78. doi.org/10.1558/imre.v19i1.30009

Francis, L. J., & Robbins, M. (2009). Prayer, purpose in life, and attitude toward substances: A study among 13- to 15-year-olds in England and Wales. *Counselling and Spirituality*, *28*, 83-104.

Francis, L. J., Robbins, M., & Gibson, H. M. (2006). A revised semantic differential scale distinguishing between negative and positive God images. *Journal of Beliefs and Values, 27*, 237-240. doi.org/10.1080/13617670600850083

Francis, L. J., Robbins, M., Louden, S. H., & Haley, J. M. (2001). A revised psychoticism scale for the Revised Eysenck Personality Questionnaire: A study among clergy. *Psychological Report, 88*, 1131-1134. doi.org/10.2466/pr0.2001.88.3c.1131

Francis, L. J., Robbins, M., & Williams, E. (2006). Believing and implicit religion beyond the churches: Religion, superstition, luck and fear among 13- to 15-year-old girls in Wales. *Implicit Religion, 9*, 74-89. doi.org/10.1558/imre.2006.9.1.74

Francis, L. J., Williams, E., & Robbins, M. (2006). The unconventional beliefs of conventional churchgoers: The matter of luck. *Implicit Religion, 9*, 305-314. doi.org/10.1558/imre.v9i3.305

Francis, L. J., Williams, E., & Robbins, M. (2008). Church attendance, implicit religion and belief in luck: The relationship between conventional religiosity and alternative spirituality among adolescents. *Implicit Religion, 11,* 239-254. doi.org/10.1558/imre.v11i3.239

French, H. W. (2002). Religion and football: The cult of the fighting game-cock. In E. I. Bailey (Ed.), *The secular quest for meaning in life* (pp. 319-336). New York: Edwin Mellon Press Ltd.

Furrow, L. J., King, P. E., & White, K. (2004). Religion and positive youth development: Identity, meaning, and prosocial concerns. *Applied Developmental Sciences, 8*, 17-26. doi.org/10.1207/S1532480XADS0801_3

Glaz, S. (2015). The importance of terminal values and religious experience of God's presence and God's absence in the lives of university students with various levels of empathy. *Journal of Religion and Health*, *54*, 1052-1067. doi.org/10.1007/s10943-014-9884-5

Gudjonsson, G. H., Einarsson, E., Bragason, Ó. Ö., & Sigurdsson, J. E., (2006). Personality predictors of self-reported offending in Islamic students. *Psychology, Crime and Law*, *12*, 383-393. doi.org/10.1080/10683160500056929

Haliday, F. (1995). Relativism and universalism in human rights: The curse of the Islamic middle east. *Political Studies, 43*, 152-167. doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9248.1995.tb01741.x

Hardy, S. A., Walker, L. J., Rackham, D. D., & Olsen, J. A. (2012). Religiosity and adolescent empathy and aggression: The mediating role of moral identity. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, *4*, 237-248. doi.org/10.1037/a0027566

Huber II, J. T., & MacDonald, D.A. (2012). An investigation of the relations between altruism, empathy, and spirituality. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, *52*, 206-221. doi.org/10.1177/0022167811399442

Hughes, P. (2013). Spirituality and religious tolerance. *Implicit Religion*, *16*, 65-91. doi.org/10.1558/imre.v16i1.65

Kemp, D. (2001). Christaquarianism: A new socio-religious movement of post-modern society? *Implicit Religion, 4*, 27-140. doi.org/10.1558/imre.v4i1.27

Khan, Z. H., Watson, P. J., & Habib, F. (2005). Muslim attitudes toward religion, religious orientation and empathy among Pakistanis. *Mental Health, Religion & Culture, 8,* 49-61. doi.org/10.1080/13674670410001666606

Kraus, R. (2009). The many faces of spirituality: A conceptual framework considering belly dance. *Implicit Religion, 12*, 51-72. doi.org/10.1558/imre.v12i1.051

Kurenlahti, M., & Salonen, A. O. (2018). Rethinking consumerism from the perspective of religion. *Sustainability*, *10*(7), article 2454, 1-18. doi.org/10.3390/su10072454

Lewis, C. A. (2013). Mental health, implicit religion and culture. *Mental Health, Religion and Culture*, *16*, 879-882. doi.org/10.1080/13674676.2013.847229

Lewis, C. A., & Francis, L. J. (2014). Personality and religion among female university students in France. *Psychology, Society and Education, 6* (2), 68-81. doi.org/10.25115/psye.v6i2.509

Lombaard, C. (2019). Weighing Schmitt's political theology anew: Implicit religion in politics. *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies*, *75*(3), article 5511, 1-6. doi.org/10.4102/hts.v75i3.5511

Lowicki, P., & Zajenkowski, M. (2017). No empathy for people nor for God: The relationship between the Dark Triad, religiosity and empathy. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *115*, 169-173. doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2016.02.012

Markstrom, C. A., Huey, E., Stilos, B. M., & Krause, A. L. (2010). Framework of caring and helping in adolescence: Are empathy, religiosity, and spirituality related constructs? *Youth and Society, 42,* 59-80. doi.org/10.1177/0044118X09333644

McCalman, C. (2019). *Nuclear heresy: Environmentalism as implicit religion*. PhD Thesis. Sheffield: University of Sheffield.

Mehrabian, A., & Epstein, N. (1972). A measure of emotional empathy. *Journal of Personality*, *40*, 525-543. doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6494.1972.tb00078.x

Nelson, R. H. (2015). The secularization myth revisited: Secularism as Christianity in disguise. *Journal of Markets and Morality*, *18* (2), 279-308. doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2721324

Neumann, D. L., Chan, R., C. K., Wang, Y., & Boyle, G. J. (2016). Cognitive and affective components of empathy and their relationship with personality dimensions in a Chinese sample. *Asian Journal of Social Psychology*, *19*, 244-253. doi.org/10.1111/ajsp.12138

Paek, E. (2006). Religiosity and perceived emotional intelligence among Christians. *Personality and Individual Differences, 41,* 479-490. doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2006.01.016

Palmisano, S., & Pannofino, N. (2013). It isn't just about money: The implicit religion of Amway Corporation. *Implicit Religion*, *16*, 27-46. doi.org/10.1558/imre.v16i1.27

Penny, G., & Francis, L. J. (2015). Implicit religion, explicit religion and attitude toward substances: An empirical enquiry among 13- to 15-year-old adolescents. *Implicit Religion, 18*, 373-397. doi.org/10.1558/imre.v18i3.28054

Persson, B. N., & Kajonius, P. J. (2016). Empathy and universal values explicated by the empathy-altruism hypothesis. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, *156*, 610-619. doi.org/10.1080/00224545.2016.1152212

Rashidi, M., Mousavi, F. S., & Esmaeili, K. (2016). The relationship between styles of attachment to God and forgiveness and empathy among female students in the city of Qom. *Health, Spirituality and Medical Ethics*, *3* (1), 18-24.

Reader, J. (2003). The discourse of human rights: A secular religion? *Implicit Religion, 6*, 41-51. doi.org/10.1558/imre.v6i1.41

Robbins, M., & Francis, L. J. (2009). The spiritual revolution and suicidal ideation: An empirical enquiry among 13- to 15-year-old adolescents in England and Wales. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality, 14*, 261-272. doi.org/10.1080/13644360903086539

Rogobete, S. E., Francis, L. J., McKenna, U. (2021). Examining the connection between religion and attitude toward socio-economic human rights and attitude toward euthanasia and abortion among Romanian adolescents: Contrasting the effects of intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 18* (20): 10837.

doi.org/10.3390/ijerph182010837

Rogobete, S., & Vitelar, L. (2020). Religion and existential security: An empirical study of religion and socioeconomic rights amongst high-school learners in post-atheist, post-totalitarian Romania. In H-G. Ziebertz (Ed.), *International empirical studies on religion and socioeconomic human rights* (pp. 101-128). Cham, Switzerland: Springer Nature. doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-30934-3_5

Schnell, T., Francis, L. J., Lewis, C. A. (2011). Psychological perspectives on implicit religion. *Implicit Religion, 14,* 385-386. doi.org/10.1558/imre.v14i4.385

Schnell, T., & Pali, S. (2013). Pilgrimage today: The meaning-making potential of ritual. *Mental Health, Religion and Culture*, *16*, 887-902. doi.org/10.1080/13674676.2013.766449

Schuurmans-Stekhoven (2014). Measuring spirituality as personal belief in supernatural forces: Is the Character Strength Inventory spirituality subscale a brief, reliable and valid measure? *Implicit Religion*, *17*, 211-222. doi.org/10.1558/imre.v17i2.211

Spoliar, L. (2022). Learning from laughter: Implicit religion, satire, and power in two British TV situation comedies. *Journal of Beliefs and Values*, *43,* 68-79. doi.org/10.1080/13617672.2022.2005722

Sterkens, C., & Ziebertz, H.-G. (Eds.) (2018). *Political and judicial rights through the prism of religious belief*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer. doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-77353-7

Stewart, C., Lawrence, S., & Burg, M. A. (2019). Exploring the relationship of personality characteristics and spirituality to empathy: Does spirituality add to our understanding? *Journal of Religion and Spirituality in Social Work: Social Thought*, *38*, 3-20. doi.org/10.1080/15426432.2018.1548953

Stewart, F. (2017). *Punk rock is my religion: Straight Edge Punk and 'religious' identity*. London: Routledge. doi.org/10.4324/9781315182568

Stewart, F. (2022). Changing voices: the changing discourse of 'religion' and 'implicit religious' language. *Journal of Beliefs and Values*, *43*, 15-28. doi.org/10.1080/13617672.2022.2005710

Till, R. (2010). The personality cult of Prince: Purple Rain, sex and the sacred, and the implicit religion surrounding a popular icon. *Implicit Religion, 13*, 141-159. doi.org/10.1558/imre.v13i2.141

Tomalin, E. (2006). Religion and a rights-based approach to development. *Progress in Development Studies, 6*, 93-108. doi.org/10.1191/1464993406ps130oa

Walker, D. (2013). You don't have to go to church to be a good Christian: The implicit religion of the cathedral carol service congregation. *Mental Health, Religion and Culture*, *16*, 903-908. doi.org/10.1080/13674676.2012.758401

Walker, D. S., Francis, L. J., & Robbins, M. (2010). You don't have to go to church to be a good Christian: The implicit religion of rural Anglican churchgoers celebrating harvest. *Implicit Religion, 13*, 319-325. doi.org/10.1558/imre.v13i3.319

Walters, B. R., & Perez, S. (2016). Cultural commitments and gender parity: Human rights as implicit religion. *Implicit Religion, 19*, 481-505. doi.org/10.1558/imre.28273

Ward, S. J., & King, L. A. (2018). Religion and moral self-image: The contributions of prosocial behaviour, socially desirable responding, and personality. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *131*, 222-231. doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2018.04.028

Watson, P. J., Hood, R. W., & Morris, R. J. (1985). Dimensions of religiosity and empathy. *Journal of Psychology and Christianity, 4*(3)*,* 73-85.

Watson, P. J., Hood, R.W., Morris, R. J., & Hall, J. R. (1984). Empathy, religious orientation and social desirability. *Journal of Psychology, 117*, 211-216. doi.org/10.1080/00223980.1984.9923679

Williams, E., Francis, L. J., & Robbins, M. (2011). Implicit religion and the quest for meaning: Purpose in life and transcendental beliefs. *Implicit Religion*, 14, 45-65. doi.org/10.1558/imre.v14i1.45

Ziebertz, H.-G., & Sterkens, C. (Eds.) (2018). *Religion and civil human rights in empirical perspective*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer. doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-59285-5

Ziebertz, H.-G., & Zaccaria, F. (Eds.) (2019). *Euthanasia, abortion, death penalty and religion: The right to life and its limitations*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer. doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-98773-6

Table 1

Scale of Human Rights Activism

	r	Would never %	Don't know %	Might do %	Have done %
Signing a petition	.35	4	9	45	42
Joining in boycotts	.53	20	27	45	8
Attending approved demonstrations	.54	14	26	53	7
Attending non-approved demonstrations	.59	31	31	35	2
Occupying buildings or factories	.36	34	37	27	2

Note: *r* = correlation between individual item and the sum of the other four items.

Table 2

Scale of Attitude toward Socio-economic Human Rights (SASHR): Scale properties

	r	Yes %
State's obligation regarding the right to work		
The government should provide a job for everybody who wants one	.42	61
The government should provide a decent standard of living for the unemployed	.43	44
State's obligation regarding the right to social security		
The government should provide health care for the sick	.71	83
The government should provide a decent standard of living for the elderly	.68	83
State's obligation regarding living wages		
Everyone should have the right to equal pay for equal work	.69	80
Everyone should have the right to a fair wage for their work	.74	83
State's obligation regarding rest and leisure		
Everyone should have the right to a reasonable limitation on working hours	.66	74
Employment without paid holiday leave should be forbidden	.35	43
State's obligation to the rights of children		
The state should protect children from forced labour	.68	81
The state should protect children's right to play and recreation	.67	78
State's obligation to protect women from discrimination		
The state should protect women's rights to adequate job opportunities	.63	82
Women should have the right to equal pay for equal work	.65	86
State's obligation to protect homosexuals from discrimination		
Homosexuals should have the right to hold any public office	.45	76
The state should prosecute discrimination against homosexuals	.47	70

Note: *r* = correlation between individual item and sum of other thirteen items

% = sum of agree strongly and agree responses

Table 3

Scale of Empathy

	r	Yes %	? %	No %
I often feel sorry for people less fortunate than myself	.52	75	14	12
When I see someone being taken advantage of I feel protective toward them	.51	70	22	8
Other people's misfortunes do not usually disturb me a great deal*	.41	17	25	58
I am often quite moved by things I see happening	.48	61	25	14

Note: * item reverse coded to compute *r*.

Table 4

Scale properties

	N items	alpha	Mean	SD
Socio-economic rights	14	.89	57.05	8.72
Human rights activism	5	.71	12.25	2.85
Empathy	4	.69	14.87	2.90
Extraversion	6	.79	3.96	1.98
Neuroticism	6	.71	3.87	1.76
Psychoticism	6	.49	1.03	1.19

Table 5

Correlation matrix

	Sex	Age	PSY	NEU	EXT	ERP	ERB	IRP	IRB
Empathy	.35***	.05	-.27***	.20***	.08**	.14***	.21***	.16***	.33
IR belief (IRB)	.25***	.13***	-.26***	.21***	-.02	.06	.11**	.19***	
IR practice (IRP)	-.06	.15***	.11**	.07*	.06	.04	.08*		
ER belief (ERB)	.18***	.10**	-.13***	.08*	.03	.48***			
ER practice (ERP)	.05	.00	-.10**	.01	.01				
Extraversion (EXT)	.13***	.03	-.12***	-.20***					
Neuroticism (NEU)	.28***	.04	-.15***						
Psychoticism (PSY)	-.21***	-.21***							
Age	.05								

Note: * = $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 6

Regression models on empathy with beta weights for each variable and total explained variance

	r	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Personal factors					
Sex	.354***	.352***	.280***	.264***	.250***
Age	.054	.035	.022	.015	-.026
Psychological factors					
Extraversion	.083**		.044	.044	.036
Neuroticism	.195***		.095**	.094**	.054
Psychoticism	-.271***		-.192***	-.178***	-.163***
Explicit religion					
Belief	.206***			.095**	.078*
Practice	.143***			.067*	.061*
Implicit religion					
Belief	.329***				.178***
Practice	.164***				.152***
R^2		.126	.175	.194	.253
Δ		.126***	.049***	.019***	.059***

Note: * = $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$