CHAPTER 2

Religiosity, Market Economics, Civil Society
Comparisons of 60 Societies

Introduction

This part presents some of the empirical findings of the research in four chapters. It compares 60 societies around the world through preliminary statistical analyses and shows the differences between societies with regard to religiosity, non-religiosity, atheism, as well as attitudes towards favorable factors with free market economics such as private ownership of business, responsibility of people to provide for themselves, income equality, and competition, as well as confidence in traditional, modern, and post-modern civil society organizations. Descriptive statistics of religious denominations, education, sex, age, and income will also be added as control variables. After that country-level comparisons will present a comparative global perspective of three types of religious societies, namely predominantly Islamic societies, predominantly Christian societies, and predominantly Buddhist, Hindu, and folk-religion societies. Lastly, multilevel descriptive data will summarize the most important statistics of both macro-level and micro-level variables for all 60 compared societies.

Religiosity in Cross-National Perspective

Religiosity as the individual-level independent variable of the research was measured by the following question text: “Independently of whether you go to church or not, would you say you are: a religious person, not a religious person, a convinced atheist.” Table A.2.1 (in Appendix 2) presents descriptive statistics of religiosity. Descriptive statistics here include the size of the overall data set (N), frequency distribution, minimum, maximum, mode, and variation ratio (V). Since religiosity was a nominal variable, we used mode to measure the central tendency of the answers.

Figure 2.1 Religiosity, Non-religiosity, and Atheism in All Compared Societies.

As can be seen in Figure 2.1 it is striking that 72.3 per cent of respondents overall described themselves as a religious person, 22.7 per cent as not a religious person, and 4.9 per cent as a convinced atheist. The variation ratio (V) of 0.318 shows that religiosity among all the respondents from the 60 compared
Religiosity, Market Economics, Civil Society

Societies were not very differentiated or dispersed. To achieve more details about religiosity, the data of 60 societies in three parts was compared according to the three items of the question.

Religiosity

Table 2.1 compares the frequency distribution of the variable between 60 societies according to the preference of religiosity.

It is apparent from the table that in 43 of the 60 societies in question, namely in about three-quarters of them, more than 60 per cent of the respondents were religious. Eighteen of these 43 societies were predominantly Islamic societies, 24 cases were predominantly Christian and 1 country belonged to the category of predominantly Buddhist, Hindu, and folk-religion societies.

The top three religious countries were all predominantly Islamic. Egypt with 98.7 per cent was the most religious country. Mali was just 1.1 per cent behind (97.6 per cent) and Bangladesh with 96.9 per cent was the third. From the 12 countries at the top of the table in which more than 90 per cent of their respondents said they are a religious person, eight countries were Muslim. These were Egypt (98.7 per cent), Mali (97.6 per cent), Bangladesh (96.9 per cent), Nigeria (94.2 per cent), Morocco (91.8 per cent), Burkina Faso (91.6 per cent), Jordan (91.2 per cent), and Pakistan (90.7 per cent). Four remaining countries, namely Tanzania (94.3 per cent), Poland (94.1 per cent), Romania (93.4 per cent) and Ghana (91.5 per cent) were predominantly Christian. Among these 12 strongly religious countries, there was no country with more