Attitudes toward Human Rights and Religiosity among Adolescents in England and Wales

Replicating and Extending a Study in Turkey

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Introduction

The International Empirical Research Programme Religion and Human Rights 1.0 at Radboud University Nijmegen (the Netherlands), which commenced in 2005, had three solid and clearly stated aims. The second of these aims was expressed in the following way:

conducting empirical research into the effects of religious beliefs and practices as well as ethical values on attitudes toward human rights among senior secondary school and tertiary school students, both religious and non-religious, in various African, Asian, and European countries from a comparative, cross-cultural perspective.

Van der Ven & Ziebertz, 2013, 1

A major scientific strength of this programme concerns the way in which an extensive questionnaire was employed in eight languages within fifteen countries. The questionnaire comprised four groups of items on the family situation, values, religion, and human rights. Recent analyses of these extensive empirical data have generated a wide range of studies, including: employing data from the Netherlands exploring the connection between religion and attitudes toward religious freedom, and attitudes toward the separation of church and state (van der Ven, 2010); employing data from Germany exploring the connection between four areas of human rights (separation of state and church, freedom of life style, freedom of expression, and political rights) and three measures of religiosity (religious practice, inclusiveness/exclusiveness, and dialogue/pluralism) (Ziebertz & Reindl, 2011); employing data from Sweden to explore the impact of religion on attitude toward freedom of religion and on attitude toward freedom of speech (Sjöborg, 2012); employing data from Germany and Palestine to explore personal, societal, and cultural influences on attitudes toward generation one, generation two, and generation three human rights (Webb, Ziebertz, Curran, & Reindl, 2012); employing
data from Tanzania to explore the connection between religion and women’s socio-economic rights among Christians and Muslims (van der Tuin & Fumbo, 2012); employing data from Germany to explore religious socialisation and values as predictors of human rights attitudes (Ziebertz & Reindl, 2012); employing data from England and Wales exploring the connection between religion, personality, and human rights among Christians and Muslims, distinguishing between the influence of religious identity and textual authority (Francis & Robbins, 2013); employing data from Germany exploring the connection between religion and attitudes toward euthanasia and attitudes toward abortion among Christians and Muslims (Ziebertz & Reindl, 2013); employing data from Turkey exploring the connection between religion and civil rights, socio-economic rights, and attitudes toward abortion, and euthanasia among Turkish adolescents (Ok & Eren, 2013); employing data from six countries in North-West Europe (Belgium, England and Wales, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden) to explore the connection among religion and socio-economic rights among Christian, Muslim, and non-religious young people (van der Ven, 2013); employing data from Tamil Nada, India, to explore the connection between the public significance of religion and socio-economic rights in a multi-religious context (Anthony, 2013); and employing data from Norway to explore the connection between three types of religiosity (difference type, humanity type, and spirituality type) on attitudes toward the right to work, the right to social security, women’s rights, children’s rights, and refugees’ rights (Botvar, 2013).

The initial studies emerging from the International Research Programme Religion and Human Rights 1.0 illustrate the capacity of the data to address a range of issues, and the variety of theoretical and methodological perspectives from which the data can be interrogated. Such studies provide a rich platform on which the science of religion and human rights can build into the future. One of the recognised ways in which the science of religion and human rights can be moved into its next phase of scientific rigour is through the replication of the pioneering analyses on other comparable data sets. A key strength of the Programme is precisely that it was established with such capacity in mind.

The notion of testing one of the pioneering analyses on a different database was proposed by Francis and Robbins (2013) who set out to test and to build on the earlier analyses published by Webb et al. (2012). Drawing on data provided by a sample of 1,492 students from Germany and Palestine, Webb et al. (2012) developed three robust scales of human rights across three generations of human rights: Generation one human rights were assessed by a four-item scale focusing on political issues that generated an alpha coefficient of .66: