

RELIGIOSITY, REGIONAL SUB-CULTURE, AND SOCIAL BEHAVIOR¹

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INTRODUCTION

THE religious upsurge and increased identification with religion in the United States since World War II is of great interest to social scientists.

Religious identification involves a number of factors. Social scientists studying the religious culture are attempting to redefine religiousness in terms of degrees and categories of religiosity. Religiosity can be conceptualized as having several dimensions. It can be conceptualized in terms of doctrine and belief, in terms of behavior and practice (church attendance, participation, leadership in the religious community), in terms of feeling and emotion. Two fruitful and provocative conceptualizations of religiosity are included in recent studies by Glock² and by Fukuyama.³

Both Glock and Fukuyama are in essential agreement on a belief dimension which they term respectively, the *ideological* or *creedal*; a behavior dimension, the *ritualistic* or *cultic*; a feeling-emotional dimension, the *experiential* or

devotional.

Social scientists would like to know the factors that predispose individuals towards a particular dimension of religiosity; i.e., the extent to which religiosity is influenced by such a variable as regional sub-culture.

The following study examines some aspects of contemporary religiosity with particular attention to the belief-doctrinal dimension. The term Orthodox will be used to identify the belief-doctrinal dimension. The study proposes to isolate the Orthodox dimension and investigate its relationship to the religious behavior dimension and the emotional-feeling dimension, to relate the Orthodox to various types of non-religious social behavior, and to measure the degree to which social behavior (both religious and non-religious) may be modified by the regional variable.

METHODOLOGY

The instrument employed was a modification of the Allport schedule.⁴ Twenty-one hundred schedules composed the universe from which the sample was drawn. The Orthodox are those who took the orthodox position on each of the following points of Christian belief: The Deity, the Person of Christ, Immortality, and the nature of the Bible. The Unorthodox are those from the remaining schedules

¹ This study was supported by a grant from the Research Foundation of the State University of New York.

² Glock, Charles Y., "The Religious Revival in America" in Jane Zahn, ed., *Religion and the Face of America*, University Extension, University of California, 1959.

³ Fukuyama, Yoshio, "The Major Dimensions of Church Membership," *Review of Religious Research*, Spring, 1961.

⁴ Allport, Gordon W., and James Gillespie, *Youth's Outlook on the Future*, Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1955.

who failed to take the orthodox position on any one of the above points of belief.

One thousand-eight were secured from the students in a State college located in the Deep South. The 12 Catholic, one Jewish, the No Preference and the schedules marked 'Other' were eliminated. The Orthodox and the Unorthodox were derived from the remaining schedules that stated a preference for or an affiliation with one of the established Protestant denominations. The great proportion reported a Southern Baptist or a Methodist preference. Eight per cent of the schedules met the Orthodox test, 24.3 percent of the schedules met the Unorthodox test.

One thousand-ninety four schedules were secured from persons residing in the Northeast. About half were under-graduates of a State Teachers College, and the other half were teachers-in-service. These schedules were divided into three groups: Catholic, Protestant and Other. The Catholic and the Other groups were eliminated from further analysis. In the Protestant group, 15.3 per cent met the Orthodox test and 19.3 per cent the Unorthodox test.

The majority of students from both the Northern and the Southern colleges came from a family occupational background that generally reflects a social position ranging from the upper middle to the lower middle social classes within their respective regional subcultures. The experimental subjects are either teaching or preparing to teach and presumably typically share the conventional and conforming attitudes of the public school teacher. Thus we have a Northern sample and a Southern sample, all of whom identify themselves with an established Protestant denomination, and are essentially similar in terms of education, middle-class background, and occupational orientation.

The schedules record attitudes and experience. In three areas religious ex-

perience is positively correlated with belief. The consistent relationship between belief and experience in these areas is the basis for the assumption that the attitudes expressed in the schedules would give rise to the suggested behavior whenever an appropriate behavior situation was presented to the experimental subject.⁵

FINDINGS

Attention will be directed first to a determination of the difference it makes for religious behavior to be Orthodox in belief. Since both samples (Orthodox and Unorthodox) are Protestant by identification, the findings will also be a measure of the variation in experience and behavior which can exist within what is inclusively termed Protestantism.

RELIGIOUS BEHAVIOR

The Orthodox "behave" religiously as well as "believe" religiously. They are differentiated by religious behavior that is both more extensive and more intense than that of the Unorthodox.

1. The Orthodox (males and females in both the North and the South) attend church services at a significantly higher rate than do the Unorthodox, (table 1). Their religiosity does therefore include the *cultic* dimension.

2. The Orthodox (with the exception of Northern females) experience a crisis type of religious awakening at a significantly higher rate than do the Unorthodox, (table 2). Their religiosity does therefore include the *experiential* or *devotional* dimension.

3. The Orthodox give religion and religious activities the key and pivotal role at a higher rate than do the Unorthodox, (table 3).

⁵ This is the same assumption that Lenski made in his study of religious interest. See Gerhard E. Lenski, "Social Correlates of Religious Interest," *American Sociological Review*, 18 (October 1953), pp. 533-543.

SOCIAL BEHAVIOR

The social behavior of the Orthodox differs from that of the Unorthodox in several important areas:

1. The Orthodox are significantly more concerned with marrying within their faith than the Unorthodox (sig. at .01).

2. The Orthodox are significantly more opposed to trial marriage than the Unorthodox, (table 5).

3. The Orthodox are significantly less willing to send their children to an inter-faith school than the Unorthodox, (sig. at .05).

4. The Orthodox (South) are significantly more determined to send their children to a segregated school than are the Unorthodox, (table 6).

5. The Orthodox are significantly less willing to permit women to enjoy full pastoral responsibilities and privileges than the Unorthodox, (table 7).

6. The Orthodox find significantly less conflict between religion and science than do the Unorthodox, (sig. at .01).

The Orthodox personality ranks high in each of the conventional dimensions of religiosity. He not only believes religiously, but he behaves religiously. Religion ranks high in his hierarchy of values, for he expects religion and religious activities to be central and pivotal in his life. There is consistency and continuity in his religiosity.

The non-religious social behavior of the Orthodox personality does not, however, fall into any comparable pattern of consistency and continuity.

The Orthodox personality prefers more to marry within his own faith, clings more to the parochial school philosophy, and is more segregationist than his Unorthodox counterpart.

Although sending one's child to a parochial school and limiting one's marital choice to one's faith are not arbitrary violations of the Christian ethic, they do tend to inhibit the full implementation

of the brotherly love principle. School segregation is a clear violation of the Christian ethic. The internalization of Christian values such as those embodied in the Golden Rule and my-brother's keeper concept is, in the light of our findings, less reflected in the behavior of the Orthodox Protestant than in the Unorthodox Protestant.

This study has provided considerable data shedding light on the personality structure of the individual who ranks high on the belief dimension of religiosity. The behavior is sufficiently patterned to suggest that specific traits are characteristically associated with the Orthodox personality. The Orthodox personality is typically ethnocentric and ingroupish. He tends to be conservative and conventional. He clings to the traditional and resists innovation. Even the Orthodox affiliated with the Protestant denominations that have admitted women to full pastoral rites and status hesitate to accept the official policy of their own denomination.

The Orthodox personality is inclined to compartmentalize religion. The key pivotal role which religion plays in his life is more within a personal than a social context. He pursues a truly "separated Christian life." He is self oriented more within an intra-group than in inter-group environment. The science-religion conflict is less of a problem to him because he finds it possible to reject "unacceptable" science from his frame of reference.

THE REGIONAL VARIABLE

The regional variable is determined in each case by comparing the Orthodox Northern Protestant with the Orthodox Southern Protestant.

1. Southern Protestants attend church more faithfully than Northern Protestants, (table 1).

2. Southern Protestant females are more subject to the crisis type of religious awakening than Northern Protestant females, (table 2, sig. at .01).

3. Southern Protestant males find religious activities more central and pivotal than Northern Protestant males, (table 3, sig. at .01).

4. Southern Protestants are more opposed to interracial marriages than are Northern Protestants, (table 4; males, sig. at .01; females, sig. at .05).

5. Southern Protestants desire segregated schools at a higher rate than Northern Protestants, (table 6, sig. at .01).

6. Southern Protestants are more reluctant to extend full pastoral rights to women than are Northern Protestants, (table 7, sig. at .01).

7. Southern Protestants are more willing to find some good to result from war than are Northern Protestants, (sig. at .01).

There is no significant difference between Northern Protestants and Southern Protestants regarding the question of interfaith vs. parochial schools, interfaith marriage, trial marriage, careers for married women, whether religion and science are in conflict.

The data suggests a rather different type of Protestantism flourishes in the South. An informal sort of attendance imperative seems to operate among both Orthodox and Unorthodox Southern Protestants. Southern Protestants show twice as great a rate of the emotional experience type of religious awakening as is found among Northern Protestants.

Southern Protestantism makes a more comprehensive and thorough going impact upon the male personality than upon the female personality. Twice as many males as females give religion the pivotal role in their life activities. This is just the reverse of Northern Protestantism. Here twice as many females as males rate religion as central and pivotal in their lives.

Educational segregation is primarily regional in nature. The Southern Protestant differs significantly from the Northern Protestant. The more Orthodox the

individual the more segregationist he tends to be. As the individual moves along the Orthodox-Unorthodox continuum the less he seems to be influenced by the mores of segregation. We have no evidence, either demonstrative or illustrative, indicating the Unorthodox are more liberal because of any positive stand of their church affiliation. Rather we assume they are more liberal because they are not as closely bound to the orthodox pattern of belief and behavior.

RELATED RESEARCH

Our findings are in general agreement with several studies that have found a close relationship between religion and ethnocentrism. Sanford⁶ reports that those who reject religion have less prejudice, less ethnocentrism than those who accept it in one way or another. Frenkel-Brunswick⁷ maintains that the more religious subjects are usually the more ethnocentric. Keedy⁸ found religious orthodoxy to be an independent correlate of ethnocentrism.

Sanford⁹ maintains, also, that the religious personality is marked by authoritarian submissiveness. Our religious personality is ethnocentric, but we have no evidence to show that he is, or is not, characterized by authoritarian submissiveness.

Our findings are in general agreement with Tumin's research on the readiness of Southerners to desegregate. In both studies the religious affiliation was primarily

⁶ Sanford, R. Nevitt in T.W. Adorno et al., *The Authoritarian Personality*, New York: Harpers, 1950, pp. 209-220.

⁷ Frenkel-Brunswick, R., D. L. Levinson, and R.N. Sanford, "The Antidemocratic Personality," in T.M. Newcomb and E.L. Hartley (eds.) *Readings in Social Psychology*, New York: Henry Holt and Sons, 1947, pp. 531-541.

⁸ Keedy, T.C., "Anomie and Religious Orthodoxy," *Sociology and Social Research*, 43, (September-October 1958) pp. 34-37.

⁹ Sanford, *op. cit.*, p. 213

in the Baptist and Methodist denominations: 75.5 per cent in our Southern sample as compared to 63.4 per cent in the Tumin sample. Tumin found there was no significant difference in the church affiliation of those most ready and those least ready to desegregate. Both groups belonged to the same churches (primarily Baptist and Methodist) and attended church about as frequently.¹⁰

In our Southern group there was no significant difference between the per cent of Baptists and the per cent of Methodists found in the highly religious group and in the nominally religious group. In our sample, however, the conventionally religious showed a higher incidence of segregation than the nominally religious.

SUGGESTED RESEARCH

Ethnocentrism and the religious personality. A certain amount of ethnocentric behavior among religious personalities does apparently arise out of authoritarian submissiveness. It is the type of authoritarianism that identifies with the privileged group and rejects the out-group. This personality type tends to impose the values of his group upon others. Often the structure and values imposed are more secular than religious. This type of ethnocentrism is widely recognized and has been identified and verified by several substantial studies.

There is another type of religious ethnocentrism that is, we believe, represented in our sample. As far as we know this type has not been identified or distinguished from the authoritarian type of ethnocentrism. It is the ethnocentrism of those highly religious Christians who choose to "live

a separated Christian life," and who delight in "fellowshipping" with their like-minded religious peers. It is not, we believe, the ethnocentrism of authoritarian submission.

In short religiously identified personalities are ethnocentric for reasons that are constructive and functional, and for reasons that are negative and dysfunctional. To round out our understanding of the religious personality some studies are in order which involve those who are religiously ethnocentric for reasons that are socially constructive and personally integrative.

SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS

1. The desirability of conceiving of religion in a multi rather than uni-dimensional way is emphasized.

2. The importance of variables for religious behavior is emphasized. Religiosity makes a difference but the difference it makes is determined upon how it is defined. According to this study individuals may subscribe to identical doctrines but what one does and how one behaves varies whether one is a Northern Protestant or a Southern Protestant.

3. Religious values are discrete rather than interrelated. Region is an important factor, but may function as a supporting value or as a competing value.

4. The Orthodox are more conventional and ethnocentric than the Unorthodox but the relation between belief and ethnocentrism is not clear.

5. The Orthodox personality finds it possible to select or to reject individual values from within the value pattern that characterizes Christian belief and ethic. He can be, and sometimes is, more guided by the secular value than the sacred value. In general, however, he tends to select social roles that are traditional and in-groupish.

¹⁰ Tumin, Melvin M., "Readiness and Resistance to Desegregation: Social Portrait of the Hard Core," *Social Forces*, 36 (March 1958), pp. 256-263.

Table 1

Church Attendance During Last Six Months

	ORTHODOX			No.	UNORTHODOX	
	No.	Each Week	Less		Each Week	Less
Male:						
North	27	48 %	52 %	69	13 %	87 % ⁽¹⁾
South	46	69 %	31 %	211	16 %	84 % ⁽²⁾
Females:						
North	53	74 %	26 %	33	30 %	70 % ⁽³⁾
South	32	84 %	16 %	49	61 %	39 % ⁽⁴⁾

(1) $Z = 3.5$, significant at .01 level(2) $Z = 7.4$, significant at .01 level(3) $Z = 4.4$, significant at .01 level(4) $Z = 2.4$, significant at .05 level

Table 2

Religious Awakening Experience

	ORTHODOX			No.	UNORTHODOX	
	No.	Crisis Experience	No Crisis Experience		Crisis Experience	No Crisis Experience
Male:						
North	26	27 %	73 %	65	2 %	98 % ⁽¹⁾
South	46	41 %	59 %	198	4 %	96 % ⁽²⁾
Female:						
North	49	8 %	92 %	32	12 %	88 % ⁽³⁾
South	32	37 %	63 %	50	6 %	94 % ⁽⁴⁾

1) $t = 3.8$, significant at .01 level2) $t = 7.3$, significant at .01 level3) $t = .74$, no significant difference4) $t = 3.5$, significant at .01 level

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Table 3
Activities Giving Life Satisfaction
(most important)

	ORTHODOX			UNORTHODOX		
	No.	Other (Career, Family, Leisure, etc.)	Religion	No.	Other	Religion
Male:						
North	27	85 %	15 %	69	98 %	2 % ⁽¹⁾
South	48	54 %	46 %	213	99 %	1 % ⁽²⁾
Female:						
North	53	72 %	28 %	32	100 %	0 % ⁽³⁾
South	32	78 %	22 %	51	92 %	8 % ⁽⁴⁾

- (1) $t = 2.7$, significant at .05 level
(2) $t = 9.6$, significant at .01 level
(3) $t = 3.2$, significant at .01 level
(4) $t = 1.9$, no significant difference

Table 4
Interracial Marriage

	NORTH			SOUTH		
	No.	Yes	No	No.	Yes	No
Male	27	31 %	69 %	46	3 %	97 % ⁽¹⁾
Female	53	17 %	83 %	32	0 %	100 % ⁽²⁾

- (1) $t = 4.1$, significant at .01 level
(2) $t = 2.6$, significant at .05 level

Table 5
Trial Marriage

	ORTHODOX			UNORTHODOX		
	No.	Support	Against	No.	Support	Against
Male:						
North & South	58	15 %	85 %	230	56 %	44 % ⁽¹⁾
Female						
North & South	62	3 %	97 %	59	18 %	82 % ⁽²⁾

- (1) $Z = 8.2$, significant at the .01 level
(2) $t = 3.3$, significant at the .01 level

Table 6
School and Race

	ORTHODOX				UNORTHODOX	
	No.	Segregate	Integrate	No.	Segregate	Integrate
North	80	15%	85%	100	8%	92% ⁽¹⁾
South	78	86%	14%	262	61%	39% ⁽²⁾

(1) $Z = 1.5$, no significant difference

(2) $Z = 5.1$, significant at .01 level

Table 7
Women as Pastors

	ORTHODOX				UNORTHODOX	
	No.	Pastoral Duties	None	No.	Pastoral Duties	None
North:						
Male						
&	80	82%	18%	97	94%	6% ⁽¹⁾
Female						
South:						
Male						
&	78	60%	40%	256	83%	17% ⁽²⁾
Female						

(1) $t = 2.5$, significant at .05 level

(2) $Z = 3.8$, significant at .01 level

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