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Has God returned to Europe? The effect of different types of religiosity on European identity²

SUMMARY

A thesis still present in Western civilization, primarily in Europe, is the thesis of secularization. Nevertheless, according to many studies, regardless of secularization processes, religion is an important factor in individual identities. This paper examines the relationship between European identity and religio-

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sity. The author used empirical data from the 2017 European Values Study to demonstrate the predictability of different types of religiosity on primordial-type European identity at the individual level. Regarding religiosity, the author tested three categories of religiosity types and their individual effect. For this purpose, multilevel modeling was used. The findings show that religiosity is a strong predictor of primordial-type European identity among individuals from across Europe. Significant differences exist between the predictability of different types of religiosity, with belief in God and very rare praying being the most significant.

KEYWORDS: European identity, religiosity, secularization, multilevel analysis, religion and politics.

INTRODUCTION

“It is not easy to be a Christian in Europe, to govern a Christian government in Europe”, said Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán during his visit to Georgia (Parulava 2023). With this statement, he supported the policy of his Georgian colleague Irakli Garibashvili, who advocates a conservative political option emphasizing the so-called Christian values. For Orbán and Garibashvili – one of them is the leader from the EU member state, and the other is coming from the country that has recently opted for EU membership – Christian values are an inseparable part of the European identity. It seems that they are not alone. According to the 2017 European Values Study (EVS), one in three Europeans say being a Christian is quite or very important to them (EVS 2022). However, it remained unclear whether religiosity impacts the European identity beyond the EU, as in the case of Orbán and Garibashvili.

Europe and religion capture the attention of researchers in the field of social sciences, as evidenced by the very significant edited volumes on this topic that have appeared continuously from the beginning of the 21st century to the present day (Appel et al. 2012–2023; Berger, Davie, and Fokas 2016; Byrnes and Katzenstein 2006; Davie and Leustean 2021; Haynes 2021; Leustean and Madeley 2010). As religion in Europe is increasingly entering the field of politics (Casanova 2010; Nexon 2006), a fruitful debate within political science on the relationship between religion and politics in Europe emerged. There are two main directions of research: on the one hand, there are studies of the position of religion, religious communities, and organizations in the European Union (EU) (Leustean 2013; Leustean and Haynes 2021), and on the other hand, studies on identity and attitudes on European integration and EU enlargement (Casanova 2006; Herbert and Fras 2009; Nelsen and Guth 2016; Nelsen, Guth, and Highsmith 2011; Taydas and Kentmen-Cin 2017). However,

this second branch of research is not reserved for the EU as an entity but is focused on a regional space extending to the Transcaucasian states.

Altogether, these studies are part of the debate on whether the secularization thesis is still valid in Europe. Therein, authors investigate “the direction of religious change” and the “shifts in the rate (...) of religious change and (...) the role of demography”, which are primary issues in the sociology of religion (Kaufmann, Goujon, and Skirbekk 2011, 70; see also Voas and Doebler 2011). On the other hand, the authors tackle whether and how these religious changes affect European politics (Pickel and Pickel 2023). That also includes identity issues that are increasingly prevalent in the European public space and have to do with religion. Hence, this paper tends to contribute to the (de)secularization debate by exploring the empirical relationship between religiosity and European identity on the individual level.

This paper is organized as follows. First, theoretical assumptions about European identity, religion, and secularism will be explained, and testable hypotheses will be formulated. Then, the research design, data, and methodology will be presented. Finally, the results will be discussed and concluded with some general lines of thought.

THEORETICAL AND HYPOTHETICAL FRAMEWORK

In the *House of European History*, which was opened in Brussels in 2017 under the auspices of the European Parliament, the history of Europe has passed through the filter of desirability. This led to “imperial amnesia”, i.e., the omission of the imperial history of European states (Ejduš 2022). In the same way, religion is largely left out of the museum display. The only artifact that can be found is a carved statue of Saint Martin of Tours taken from the church of the same name in Utrecht. This statue should represent an example of “the European values, traditions and culture [which] still reflect this long Christian heritage” (House of European History, cited in Davie and Leustean 2021a, 4). Nevertheless, it is exhibited next to Diderot’s and D’Alembert’s *Encyclopédie*, a typical example of the Enlightenment idea of “the value of reason and rational thinking” (Davie and Leustean 2021a, 4). “The subtext is clear: religion is of little significance in modern Europe, displaced in the last two centuries by the process of secularization and the emergence of the secular state” (Davie and Leustean 2021a, 4).

This displacement of religion was done due to its unique relations with Europe:

Both their lived and institutionalized forms, religion and religious ideas have shaped—and continue to shape—the idea of Europe, the lives of Europeans, the geographical boundaries of the European continent,

and the art and culture contained within them. The reverse is equally true: over two millennia, religions and religious life have been moulded by the entity known as Europe (Davie and Leustean 2021a, 1).

According to Marvin Perry (1993), Western civilization and its intellectual tradition are a fusion of Judeo-Christian and Greco-Roman traditions. The first tradition is focused on law and religion, and the second is on philosophy, politics, and the state. Therefore, Perry pointed out that the emergence of Western civilization and its intellectual traditions were determined by two milestones in the ancient world: the Greeks' development of rational thinking and the Jews' development of ethical monotheism (Perry 1993). Nevertheless, Geoffrey Barraclough pointed out that the modern "'Western European culture' has emerged as a dogmatic assertion precisely at the moment when ... the interpretation of history upon which it is based has been shattered by historical criticism and discarded by historical scholarship" (quoted from Federici 1995, ix). Barraclough added that "the weakening and undermining by professional historians of the historical premises underlying this theory has failed to detract from its effectiveness as a political dogma" (quoted from Federici 1995, ix). Regardless of whether we are talking about a politically or culturally unified Europe, both schools of thought agree that such unity arose in relation to religion, in an affirmative or a negative sense.

One political dogma displaces another, which is 'the Christian Europe' in this case. That is why the equal sign between secularization, modernization, and Europeanization was especially put in Europe as the cradle of Enlightenment. Historically, Europeanization is a long-term process that, among other things, entailed: "first, the extrusion of religious difference and, second, the management of religious schism within a broader Latin Christian community" (Nexon 2006, 260). The Peace of Westphalia in 1648 introduced a new principle that Steve Bruce called "[the] 'beginning of the end' of attempts to enforce religious homogeneity across Europe" (2011, 7). The destruction of Latin Christendom was supposed to lead to the cultural and political homogenization of Europe on a non-religious basis.

Moreover, in the moments of the emergence of the first European communities as the headstone of the process of Europeanization, the thesis of secularization prevailed in the social sciences. Peter L. Berger, in the article *A Bleak Outlook is Seen for Religion* in 1968 wrote: "By [the] 21st century, religious believers are likely to be found in small sects, huddled together to resist a worldwide secular culture" (quoted from Veković 2020, 2). Thereafter, seeing that the world has not become more secular but that the "God's century" was on the horizon (Toft, Shah, and Philpott 2011), in 1999, Berger edited the book *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent of Religion and World Politics*, where he noted that the secularization thesis is wrong and that the world became fiercely religious. However, Berger provides an exception to the desecularization of the

world, which is Western Europe. Even Berger's intellectual rival, Steve Bruce, agreed with this (Bruce 2011).

Nonetheless, there is a noticeable paradox in Western Europe: the penetration of religious issues into the secularized political sphere so that "religion is more rather than less present in public debate than it used to be" (Davie and Leustean 2021a, 4). The debate on religious issues is particularly present due to the large influx of immigrants from Muslim countries and the rise of right-wing parties and populists. Therein, questions arose about whether Muslim women can wear headscarves in school and hijab in public, whether mosques in Switzerland can have minarets, whether Poland, Ireland, and Portugal will liberalize their laws on abortion, whether the constitution of the EU will include the Christian heritage (Toft, Shah, and Philpott 2011). Even the president of the European Commission, Jacques Delors, proposed in 1992 "to revive the intellectual and spiritual debate on Europe" (Leustean 2013, 4). Hence, José Casanova noted that "the best confirmation of the validity of the 'de-privatization' of religion can be found in the heartland of secularization, that is, in Western European societies. It is here that the challenge of 'de-privatization' is most keenly felt" (Casanova 2010, 19–20).

On the other side, the resurgence of religion in Central and Eastern (post-communist) Europe is widely known in the field of religion and politics. With the EU enlargement in the 21st century across Central and Eastern Europe, including some of the Balkan countries, the 'borders' of the European identity have changed. The end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union brought not only the recovery of religion but also of nationalism, so religion and nationalism are often intertwined in multiple types (Aktürk 2022). Conversely, in post-communist countries, religion and religious actors have played a significant role in the democratization processes, both the Roman Catholic Church (Huntington 1991) and the Orthodox churches (Veković 2020). Although not all of them were suppressed in the same way by the communist regimes and, consequently, did not have the same role in the democratization processes, they had a similar intention regarding to the overthrow of the communist regimes that banned the activity of the churches, confiscated their property, closed church schools and monasteries and imprisoned or killed priests (Philpott 2004, 38). For many, however, democratization meant Europeanization and a EU foreign policy orientation. Although "an attempt was made to determine the basis of European unity in the idea of the Christian West", this had the effect of including issues unknown to the West in the political debate, mainly from the point of view of Orthodox tradition (Макридис 2014, 18).

Considering the above, I argue that individual religiosity is a significant predictor of individuals' attitudes toward primordial-type European identity. However, I assume there are significant differences between the predictability of different types of religiosity since the "return of God" and religion to the

public sphere and political debate did not necessarily imply the return of believers to churches and places of worship. However, I assume that beliefs (*doxa*) is likely oriented towards primordial-type European identity because religious (supra/non-denominational) beliefs are often intertwined with national/supranational identities. Therefore, I formulated the first hypothesis as follows:

H1: Religious beliefs are likely to be a significant predictor of primordial-type European identity at the individual level.

On the other hand, I presuppose that the practical manifestation of religion (*praxis*) is linked to the European identity because it implies placing religious identity above the national/supranational identity on the personal hierarchy of values. Thus, I posed the second hypothesis as follows:

H2: Practical religiosity (attendance of religious services and praying) is likely to be a significant predictor of primordial-type European identity at the individual level.

Finally, it can be noticed that the third aspect of religiosity “still dominates the European religious landscape” (Bešić and Veković 2023, 15). That is a perception of God, which can be summarized into two aspects: how God is essential in someone’s life and how someone understands God (as spirit/life force vs. as personal God). It was found that those who understand God as a spirit/life force would be more democratically oriented than those who see it as a personal God (Bešić and Veković 2023). I assume that perception of God is also important for personal inclination towards European identity. Thus, I introduced the third hypothesis as follows:

H3: Perception of God is likely to be a significant predictor of the primordial-type European identity at the individual level.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Source of Data and Descriptive Statistics

In this research, I have used data from the 2017 EVS, which covers 34 countries and 55,017 weighted cases, in order to prove the predictability of different types of religiosity on primordial-type European identity at the individual level, starting from the assumption that different types of religiosity have different effects.

Dependent Variable

As we saw in previous sections, the relationship between religion and politics is deeply woven into European identity narrative(s). However, there dominates a question: Is there a unique European identity? Most authors associate the term 'European identity' with the EU. This is understandable due to the very intention of the founding fathers of European communities to create a European identity which would not replace national identities but "should become strong enough, and be perceived as 'inclusive' enough by European citizens, for Europe to develop as a genuine political entity" (Duchesne and Frogner 1998, 193).

Nevertheless, the notion of European identity is boundless. For some, it is adherence to the values stated in the founding treaties of the EU or intellectual liberal tradition; for others, it is adherence to the tradition of Europe as a continent of nation-states and conservative national thought, while for some, it is adherence to the historical consciousness of Latin Christendom or Orthodox Byzantium. Politically, there were ideas like Charles de Gaulle's "Europe from Atlantic to the Urals" and Mikhail Gorbachev's "Common European Home". An innovative measurement of European identity is offered by Brent F. Nelsen and James L. Guth, taking into account "two questions that best gauge the core of European identity: whether respondents personally 'identify' with the EU flag and whether they think it should always be flown next to their national flag on public buildings" (Nelsen and Guth 2016, 82). However, it is evident that this kind of conceptualization is related exclusively to the EU, so it is not helpful for this case.

In this paper, I deal with attitudes at the individual level, and therefore, by European identity, I mean the importance of the European place of birth, origin, and culture for individuals from all over Europe. Hence, the dependent variable, European identity, was taken as the primordial type of identity in order to explore the connection between identity that does not refer to belonging exclusively to the EU but to Europe as a broader region. Thus, three items from the EVS were used:

- How important is it to you that you were born in Europe?
- How important is it to you to have European ancestry?
- How important is it to you to share European culture?

All items in the EVS have values from 1 (very important) to 4 (not at all important). In order to make the scale more intuitive in terms of values, a transformation was made so that lower values represent less importance. In comparison, higher values on the scale represent more importance. The value of Cronbach's Alpha is .749, which means that from the point of view of reliability, we have enough grounds to merge the three items into one that measures primordial-type European identity. Item-total statistics of our scale are provided in Table 1. Thus, our dependent variable became a scale that measures the

importance of primordial-type European identity on an individual level on a scale from 1 to 10.

Table 1. Item-total statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Important to be born in Europe	3.67	1.989	.676	.570	.541
Important to have European ancestry	3.76	1.977	.705	.582	.504
Important to share European culture	3.28	2.940	.382	.148	.859

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

The main predictor is religiosity. There are many measures and scales of religiosity in the religion studies (see Hill and Hood Jr. 1990). I chose the items that measure personal beliefs, practical religiosity, and perception of God.

First, the level of personal beliefs is measured by items regarding beliefs in God, heaven, hell, and life after death. All variables are dummies (1= believing in, 0 = not believing in).

Second, the level of practical expression of religiosity is examined by two common types of religious practices: church attendance and personal prayer. The EVS has a 7-point scale that measures the degree of church attendance, from once a week to never attending religious services. There is also a 7-point scale that measures the degree of prayerfulness, from every day to never praying. Both scales were reorganized into four dummy variables. Regarding church attendance, it was created dummies as follows: attending services once a week or more often; attending services once a month, attending services once a year (or less than that), and never attending, while the last one is used as a referent category in multilevel analysis. Regarding praying practices, there are dummies: praying once a week or more often, praying once monthly, praying occasionally yearly, and never praying, which was used as a referent category.

Finally, the item that measures the level of importance of God in personal life is a 10-point scale coming from the explicit question in the EVS: "How important is God in your life?" Finally, the type of understanding of God comes from Miloš Bešić and Marko Veković's research. They introduced two distinct understandings of God – as a personal God and as a spirit/life force – and found that these understandings of God are significantly related to democrat-

ic orientations among Europeans (Bešić and Veković 2023). This research used the understanding of God as a dummy variable, with the personal God as the referent category.

CONTROLLING VARIABLES

Controlling variables are used in multilevel models. The gender dummy variable was coded 1 for men and 0 for women. Age was used in authentic numerical values. All other control variables were performed as in the authoritative research by Bešić and Veković (2023). Thus, the ES-ISCED coding variable of seven education levels was used for the education variable. Education is divided into three categories:

- Those without formal education and those with primary and lower secondary education are coded as ‘lower education’.
- Upper secondary education and those with and without access to higher education are coded as ‘medium education’.
- Upper secondary education, bachelor and master’s (and further) are coded as ‘higher education’.

Hence, three dummy variables for education were formed while using the lowest education as a referent category. The income variable is organized according to the same principle. This variable is constructed from an interval scale whose distribution was improved by the natural logarithm function and divided by 33% of the variance to obtain the three income levels. As in the case of education, the lowest income is the referent category. Finally, I have used the country’s GDP as a controlling variable because multilevel modelling analysis calculates the effect on both country and individual levels.

In previous research on religion and European integration, “religious influences persisted or became even stronger under rigorous statistical controls for other determinants of support for integration emphasized by most scholars (e.g., nationality, party identification, ideology, political engagement, postmaterial values, economic situation, gender, class, and education)” (Nelsen and Guth 2016, 81). Even though “those strongly attached to their nations or who see the EU as a threat to national identity demonstrate weaker support for the Union” (Nelsen, Guth, and Highsmith 2011, 7–8), this cannot be replicated to the relations between national and primordial-type European identity. On the contrary, it can be assumed that those strongly inclined towards a national identity likely inclined a primordial-type European identity.

In that sense, Jeffrey T. Checkel and Peter J. Katzenstein distinguished between cosmopolitan and national-populist European identity:

One was an outward-looking and cosmopolitan European identity project captured by the spirit and text of the EU’s then constitutional treaty. (...) A second was an inward-looking, national-populist European identity project that

focussed on the economic and cultural threats posed by the infamous Polish plumbers and Islamic headscarves (Checkel and Katzenstein 2009, 11).

In order to control for the effect of national identity, I used the so-called 'national identity' controlling variable. This controlling variable was created from the following 4-scale items that measure the degree of acceptance of the primordial and constitutional national identity:

- Important to have been born in (country);
- Important to respect (country nationality) political institutions and laws;
- Important to have (country nationality) ancestry;
- Important to be able to speak (national language);
- Important to share (national) culture.

All items in the 2017 EVS have values from 1 (very important) to 4 (not at all important). In order to make the scale more intuitive in terms of values, a transformation was made so that lower values represent less importance. In comparison, higher values on the scale represent higher importance. The Cronbach's Alpha .722 value confirmed the reliability of merging these items into one measuring national identity. Item-total statistics of our scale are provided in Table 2. The controlling variable is a scale that measures the importance of national identity on an individual level on a scale from 1 to 16.

Table 2. Item-total statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Important to have been born in [country]	9.15	4.525	.567	.455	.639
Important to respect [country nationality] political institutions and laws	8.49	6.394	.288	.176	.738
Important to have [country nationality] ancestry	9.26	4.484	.563	.486	.642
Important to be able to speak [national language]	8.47	5.862	.481	.309	.680
Important to share [national] culture	8.62	5.531	.554	.354	.653

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

The mean value of European identity, percentages of different types of religiosity (as explained above), and mean value for the importance of God for each country in the sample were provided in Table 3.

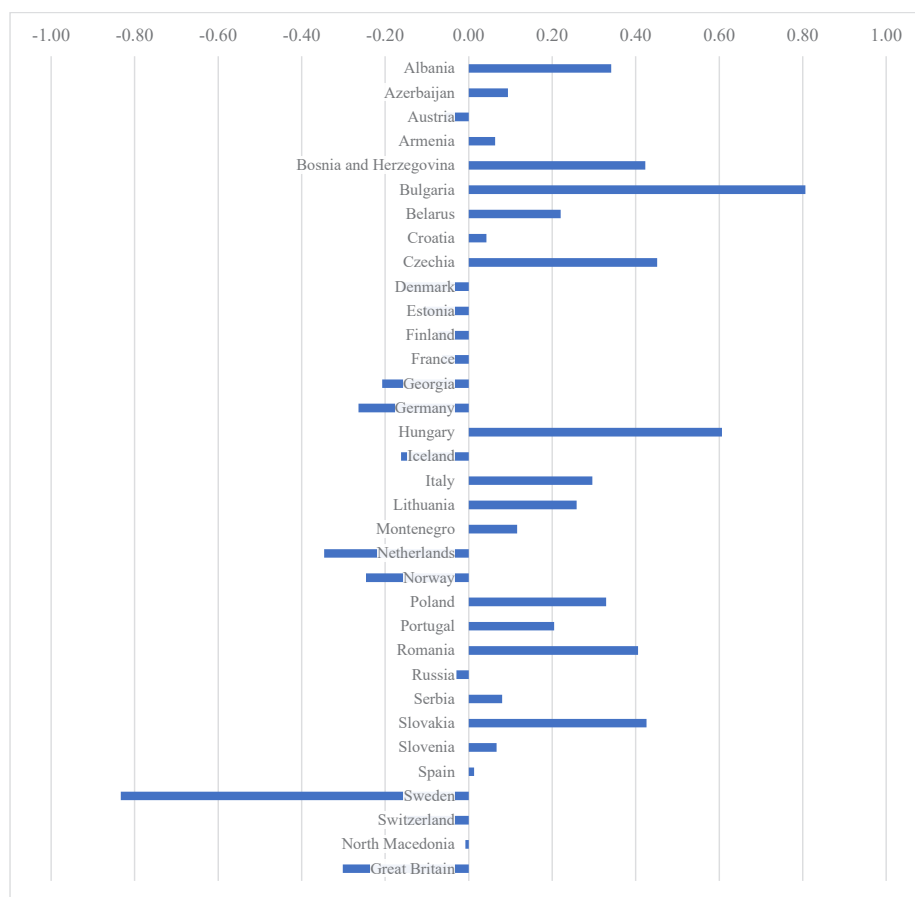
Table 3. European identity and types of religiosity

	European identity (mean)	Believe in God (%)	Believe in heaven (%)	Believe in hell (%)	Believe in life after death (%)	Importance of God (mean)	God as spirit/life force (%)	Never praying (%)	Never attending religious services (%)
Albania	6.99	97.06%	33.63%	28.16%	28.15%	9.22	10.39%	11.74%	41.57%
Azerbaijan	6.44	98.54%	80.33%	80.27%	72.24%	8.69	3.85%	10.07%	41.01%
Austria	6.09	73.69%	42.47%	25.64%	57.51%	5.48	45.82%	33.77%	32.00%
Armenia	6.37	91.95%	51.28%	46.58%	47.66%	8.21	1.15%	6.12%	8.55%
BiH	7.17	95.98%	81.01%	78.93%	73.27%	8.38	12.93%	9.30%	12.44%
Bulgaria	8.03	79.41%	35.45%	32.30%	34.26%	6.19	41.27%	26.49%	20.83%
Belarus	6.72	80.57%	48.79%	46.55%	46.11%	5.82	49.98%	31.89%	23.94%
Croatia	6.32	85.27%	55.75%	46.90%	60.07%	7.13	39.44%	18.70%	21.13%
Czechia	7.24	38.35%	27.14%	19.70%	38.65%	3.81	38.67%	67.32%	61.77%
Denmark	5.87	50.82%	18.23%	9.55%	40.83%	3.50	37.24%	51.76%	36.33%
Estonia	5.98	45.70%	30.90%	19.43%	46.00%	4.06	53.36%	61.67%	54.14%
Finland	6.06	56.71%	36.30%	15.61%	38.61%	4.65	36.03%	32.60%	29.60%
France	6.08	53.67%	38.11%	25.19%	46.40%	4.42	32.27%	56.16%	63.08%
Georgia	5.76	98.67%	76.39%	61.59%	59.44%	9.31	4.84%	6.23%	15.34%
Germany	5.64	61.43%	34.30%	16.80%	46.08%	4.80	41.47%	43.35%	41.85%
Hungary	7.58	71.04%	44.36%	29.66%	46.10%	5.61	30.39%	35.50%	41.38%
Iceland	5.86	61.20%	41.99%	13.56%	63.27%	4.97	39.42%	32.60%	47.69%
Italy	6.89	84.36%	56.46%	48.93%	62.47%	6.72	48.16%	24.95%	22.63%
Lithuania	6.81	84.76%	61.77%	57.89%	70.69%	6.28	27.11%	32.35%	15.72%
Montenegro	6.49	96.12%	67.17%	61.23%	42.03%	7.88	13.90%	6.50%	8.37%
Netherlands	5.45	43.66%	32.81%	15.28%	43.32%	4.10	34.69%	55.16%	57.09%
Norway	5.68	47.31%	35.20%	14.58%	41.99%	3.81	33.85%	47.61%	40.40%
Poland	6.96	93.37%	73.68%	61.20%	72.90%	7.66	17.82%	11.10%	9.79%
Portugal	6.68	84.92%	42.36%	31.05%	40.12%	6.95	18.87%	30.35%	31.33%
Romania	7.13	97.19%	75.47%	70.04%	69.96%	8.75	51.55%	2.81%	5.33%
Russia	6.16	77.25%	46.99%	45.88%	45.68%	6.13	20.52%	39.01%	40.13%
Serbia	6.41	84.08%	43.76%	37.75%	40.35%	6.88	38.49%	21.65%	18.95%
Slovakia	7.18	72.77%	51.10%	43.78%	54.37%	6.09	36.00%	29.15%	28.00%
Slovenia	6.38	60.88%	32.67%	23.75%	39.78%	5.00	51.65%	46.93%	35.15%
Spain	6.25	68.01%	36.76%	27.58%	43.61%	5.41	29.49%	39.88%	46.87%
Sweden	4.36	36.13%	30.10%	12.71%	41.37%	3.48	42.96%	60.52%	51.48%
Switzerland	5.89	67.20%	39.13%	16.95%	53.19%	5.10	58.11%	31.50%	47.37%

North Macedonia	6.21	92.52%	60.20%	55.45%	60.68%	8.28	14.10%	11.19%	8.23%
United Kingdom	5.55	48.44%	35.62%	24.19%	42.22%	4.40	39.81%	53.18%	60.16%

Based on the average representation of the dependent variable, we see no grouping according to specific regional characteristics (post-communist and Western countries) (Chart 1). Significant differences between countries are noticeable in terms of European identity and types of religiosity (Table 3).

Chart 1. Average presence of primordial-type European identity in countries (Z-score values)



HYPOTHESIS TESTING AND DISCUSSION

In this paper, the main hypothesis is that individual religiosity is a significant predictor of individuals' attitudes towards primordial-type European identity but that there are significant differences between the predictability of different types of religiosity. Hence, following the hypothetical framework, the independent variables are classified into three categories: religious belief, religious practices, and perception of God. Since there are 34 countries in the 2017 EVS data file, multilevel modeling (fixed effect estimate) was used as a type of regression that calculates the effect of grouping factors (nested structure). In all predictor models, national identity was used as a control. The stable values of national identity in all models indicate that it is not affected by religiosity, which confirms the importance of this control.

The first category is religious belief, where four dummy variables were used: belief in God, belief in life after death, belief in hell, and belief in heaven. These four variables are an established way of measuring religiosity in the literature on religion and politics. As all variables are dummy, it should be noted that those who stated that they believe (in God/life after death/hell/heaven) have a value of 1, and those who said the opposite have a value of 0. Therefore, the positive direction of the regression coefficient refers to the belief in God/life after death/hell/heaven. The results confirm H1 that religious beliefs are a significant positive predictors of primordial-type European identity at the individual level, except belief in hell. Those who believe in God, as opposed to those who do not, are more likely to have a primordial-type European identity by .115. Those who believe in life after death, as opposed to those who do not, are more likely to have a primordial-type European identity by .065. Those who believe in hell, as opposed to those who do not, are more likely to have a primordial-type European identity by .002. Finally, Those who believe in heaven, as opposed to those who do not, are more likely to have a primordial-type European identity by .051. Belief in God and belief in life after death are very strong statistically significant positive predictors ($p < .001$), and belief in heaven is a strong statistically significant positive predictor of primordial-type European identity ($p < .01$).

The second category is religious practice, where I used two variables: attendance of religious services and praying. Both variables are separated into four levels. Thus, we got four dummy variables per category: those who attend religious services/pray once a week or more often, those who attend religious services/pray once a month, and those who attend religious services/pray once a year. Those who never attend religious services/pray are left as referent categories in the multivariate models. The results confirm H2 that practical religiosity (attendance of religious services and praying) is a significant predictor of primordial-type European identity at the individual level. Those who attend religious services weekly, as opposed to those who never attend, are more like-

ly to have a primordial-type European identity by .011. Those who attend religious services monthly, as opposed to those who never attend, are more likely to have a primordial-type European identity by .069. Those who attend religious services yearly, as opposed to those who never attend, are more likely to have a primordial-type European identity by .099. Attending religious services monthly and yearly are very strong statistically significant positive predictors of our dependent variable ($p < .001$). The same logic of interpretation applies to praying. Concretely, those who pray weekly or more frequently, as opposed to those who never pray, are more likely to have a primordial-type European identity by .043; those who pray monthly, as opposed to those who never pray, are more likely to have a primordial-type European identity by .068; and those who pray yearly, as opposed to those who never pray, are more likely to have a primordial-type European identity by .134. All three predictors are statistically significant, with praying yearly being a very strong statistically significant predictor of the dependent variable ($p < .001$).

The third category is the perception of God, with two variables defined as the importance of God and the understanding of God as a spirit/life force (vs. personal God). The first variable is a 10-point scale of the importance of God, and the second variable is a dummy variable in which the referent category is 'Personal God'. The results confirm that the understanding of God as a spirit/life force (as opposed to the understanding of personal God) is a significant predictor of the primordial-type European identity. However, they do not confirm that the importance of God is a significant predictor. Namely, with each increase in the degree of importance of God, the probability that an individual will have a European identity increases by .003, but this predictor is not statistically significant. On the other hand, those who perceive God as a spirit/life force, as opposed to those who perceive him as a personal God, are more likely to have primordial-type European identity by .054, which is a strong statistically significant predictor ($p < .01$).

Table 4. Predictors of European identity (primordial-type): Fixed effect estimates

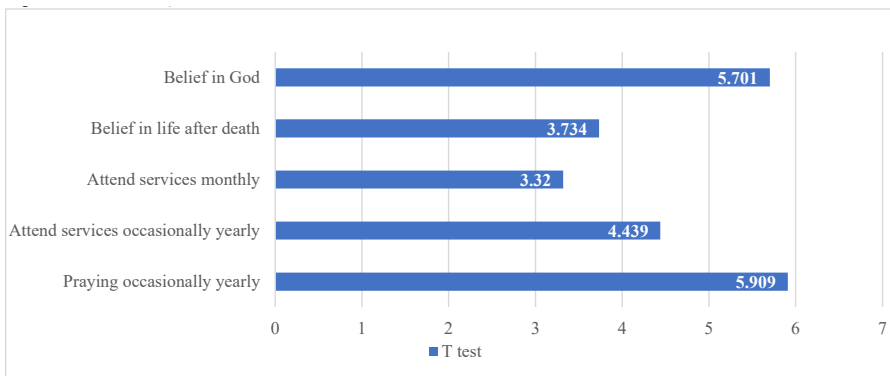
	European identity (primordial-type)										
	Model 0	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8	Model 9	Model 10
Intercept	6.376*** (.122)	6.440*** (.159)	1.324*** (.134)	1.236*** (.136)	1.250*** (.135)	1.275*** (.136)	1.247*** (.137)	1.281*** (.135)	1.262*** (.134)	1.300*** (.135)	1.284*** (.134)
<i>Individual level demographic controls</i>											
Gender (male)	-.058** (.019)	-.057*** (.016)	-.047** (.016)	-.055*** (.017)	-.063*** (.017)	-.058*** (.017)	-.059*** (.016)	-.049** (.016)	-.054*** (.016)	-.054*** (.016)	-.054*** (.016)
Age	.010*** (.001)	.001 (.000)	.001 (.000)	.001 (.001)	.001 (.001)	.001 (.001)	.001 (.000)	.001 (.000)	.001 (.000)	.001 (.000)	.001 (.000)
Education medium	-.011 (.025)	.068*** (.021)	.066** (.021)	.079*** (.022)	.073*** (.022)	.080*** (.022)	.067*** (.021)	.065** (.021)	.062** (.021)	.062** (.021)	.063** (.021)
Education high	-.191*** (.028)	.075** (.024)	.077** (.025)	.072** (.025)	.079** (.025)	.088*** (.025)	.075** (.024)	.074** (.024)	.072** (.024)	.072** (.024)	.069** (.024)
Income medium	.097*** (.023)	.102*** (.019)	.114*** (.020)	.101*** (.021)	.106*** (.021)	.107*** (.021)	.101*** (.020)	.101*** (.020)	.096*** (.020)	.093*** (.020)	.102*** (.020)
Income high	.066** (.025)	.096*** (.021)	.104*** (.021)	.094*** (.022)	.096*** (.022)	.099*** (.022)	.096*** (.021)	.096*** (.021)	.092*** (.021)	.096*** (.021)	.098*** (.021)
<i>Country level control</i>											
GDP	-.000*** (.000)	-.000* (.000)	-.000* (.000)	-.000* (.000)	-.000* (.000)	-.000* (.000)	-.000* (.000)	-.000* (.000)	-.000* (.000)	-.000* (.000)	-.000* (.000)
<i>National identity control</i>											
National identity		.430*** (.003)	.428*** (.003)	.433*** (.003)	.434*** (.003)	.433*** (.003)	.429*** (.003)	.429*** (.003)	.430*** (.003)	.431*** (.003)	.433*** (.003)

<i>Individual level religious belief</i>	
Belief in God	.115*** (.020)
Belief in life after death	.065*** (.017)
Belief in hell	.002 (.020)
Belief in heaven	.051** (.018)
<i>Individual level religious practices</i>	
Attend services weekly	.011 (.028)
Attend services monthly	.069*** (.021)
Attend services occasionally yearly	.099*** (.023)
Praying weekly	.043* (.022)
Praying monthly	.068* (.034)
Praying occasionally yearly	.134*** (.023)
<i>Individual level perception of God</i>	
Importance of God	.003 (.003)
God as spirit or life force (vs. Personal God)	.054** (.018)

<i>Goodness-of-fit criteria</i>											
-2 log likelihood	238507.893	200984.649	181646.522	173063.087	159927.603	162282.792	162293.216	180501.615	178752.947	178683.714	177263.539
AIC	238511.893	200988.649	181650.522	173067.087	159931.603	162286.792	162297.216	180505.615	178756.947	178687.714	177267.539
BIC	238529.751	201006.172	181668.019	173084.484	159948.846	162304.065	162314.489	180523.100	178774.412	178705.179	177284.988
<i>Variance component</i>											
ICC	.107	.070	.066	.066	.066	.067	.068	.067	.066	.066	.066
Adjusted R ²	.050	.050	.335	.332	.339	.339	.338	.336	.337	.336	.339
* p < .05											
** p < .01											
*** p < .001											

Finally, Graph 2 provides the strength of the effect of the most strong statistically significant predictors ($p < .001$) measured by T-test comparison (controlled by variables as reported in Table 4). By comparing the values of the T-test, we see that the predictors of belief in God and very rare (occasionally yearly) personal prayers have the most significant effect on individual acceptance of primordial-type European identity. Thus, the main hypothesis that different types of religiosity have a different effect on primordial-type European identity was confirmed once again.

Graph 2. Strength of the effect measured by T test comparison
(based on fixed effect estimates as reported in Table 4)



CONCLUSION

The central idea of this paper is that religiosity is not an obstacle to European identity (more comprehensive than the EU identity), which was confirmed by empirical statistical analysis based on EVS data. The main hypothesis also implied significant differences in predictor effects. The most important finding is that different types of religiosity – classified into three categories: religious belief, religious practices, and perception of God – are positive predictors of primordial-type European identity. However, there are differences between them in terms of statistical significance. The most statistically significant predictors of the primordial-type European identity are belief in God and infrequent prayer, but occasional attendance at religious services and belief in life after death are also highly statistically significant.

The theoretical framework of this research is the debate about Europe as the main exception to the desecularization of the world or as a secularized region. This research tended to contribute to this debate by examination of the relationship between individual religiosity and identity. Although all predictors have a positive sign of the regression coefficient, religious beliefs are inversely

proportional to the practical religiosity. Complemented with the perception of God as a spirit/life force (and not as a personal God), it can be concluded that belief (*doxa*) without religious practice (*praxis*) is more likely connected to the primordial-type European identity. God may have returned to the European political arena, but churches across Europe remain empty.

However, we cannot confidently claim that “God’s century” (Toft, Shah, and Philpott 2011) has arrived in Europe because the processes of secularization and religionization comprise many complex factors. It is important to note that the European identity, which is not tied exclusively to the EU, can be partially explained by religiosity. As it certainly has political consequences, we have made a step forward in understanding the political behavior of the leaders and citizens of European countries who, like Orbán and Garibashvili, appeal to the religious roots of Europe.

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