

Comments: Religion and Democratic Accountability in Contemporary Democracies

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Research Question

How religion influence people's attitudes towards democratic governance? Controversies in past empirical findings:

- Religion leads people being satisfied with the functioning of democracy.
- Religion leads people prefer democracy in principle less.

This paper focuses on democratic accountability.

Major findings

Theory: "The world is just!"

- Strong religiosity is related to weak accountability.
- Strong believers are more satisfied with government than non-believers.
- Religion plays a role that moderates (weakens) linkage between economic evaluations and government satisfaction.

Methodological Concerns

- Religiosity/Attendance of Religious Services for non-believers
- Large N approach: significant but small effect?
- Use of multi-level modeling to adjust government performance

Theoretical Concerns

While "just" as a theory explains both seemingly contradicted phenomena...

- Are all religions equal?
 - Differentiate various religious group
- What kind of people tend to become religious?
 - control personality measures if possible?
- Normative implication: Is religion bad to democracy?
 - explore other dimensions of democracy