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Religion and prejudice: Micro-level evidence from Africa

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Abstract
While scholarship on religious tolerance has grown, little is known about how (non)religious identity shapes prejudice in highly religious societies, particularly in the Global South. This study addresses that gap by analyzing Afrobarometer data from 39 African countries (n = 147,351) to examine the relationship between religious affiliation and willingness to accept neighbors of different faiths. Contrary to expectations drawn from secularization and pluralism theories, I find that individuals without religious affiliation are significantly more likely to express religious prejudice than adherents of Islam, Christianity, traditional religions, and other faiths. I argue that in societies where religion is culturally hegemonic, non-religious individuals may experience symbolic exclusion or anticipate value imposition, fueling outgroup aversion. These findings extend theories of boundary-making and secular minority experience by illuminating how dominant religiosity can structure exclusionary attitudes even among those presumed to be more tolerant.

Keywords
Africa, Religion, Religiosity, Prejudice, Outgroup hostility

JEL Classifications
D74, J16, Z12

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1. Introduction

Africans are widely recognized as some of the most religious people globally (Johnson & Crossing 2020; Howard 2020; Pew Research Center 2018). Data pooled from Rounds 7, 8, and 9 of the Afrobarometer surveys, conducted across 39 African countries between 2016 and 2023, shows that 95% of Africans have a religious affiliation. Christianity and Islam are the dominant religions, representing 59% and 33% of the population, respectively. Meanwhile, 1.2% follow traditional religions, 1.3% adhere to other faiths, and 5.2% report no religious affiliation.[2] In many African societies, religion is deeply embedded in institutions and everyday life, making religious affiliation not just common, but normative. As a result, individuals without a religious affiliation are often seen as outliers and may face social exclusion or discrimination (Igwe 2023; Omer 2021; Campbell 2020; Human Rights Watch 2019; Reporters Sans Frontières; Oduah 2018). This dynamic aligns with the observation by Gez et al. (2022, p. 58) that "in many African countries, freedom of religion is better guarded than freedom from religion."

In several African countries, non-religious individuals face significant challenges due to prevailing religious norms. For instance, in Somalia, prominent academic Prof. Mahmoud Jama Ahmed was accused of blasphemy in 2019 and sentenced to two and a half years in prison for a Facebook post in which he questioned whether prayer was an appropriate response to the country's ongoing droughts (The New Arab 2020). Similarly, in Nigeria, Mubarak Bala, president of the Humanist Association of Nigeria, was imprisoned for five years on blasphemy charges (Adegoke 2025; United Nations Human Rights Office 2021; Akinkuotu 2020). When Bala publicly renounced religion in 2014, his family deemed him mentally unstable and forcibly committed him to a psychiatric hospital (Akinkuotu 2020). In Sudan, Mohamed Al-Dosogy was arrested after submitting a written request to the court to have his religious status changed to atheism. Although he was subsequently charged with apostasy—a charge carrying the death sentence—the judge

[2] The estimated proportion of non-religious individuals corresponds closely with the 2010 estimate of 3.2% reported by the Pew Research Center (2012).

dismissed the case on the grounds that Al-Dosogy was mentally unstable (Thabit 2017). These cases underscore the serious risks and societal pressures faced by non-religious individuals in deeply religious societies.

Despite growing global interest in the experiences of non-religious individuals, quantitative research on this population remains limited—particularly in the African context, where religious affiliation is often taken for granted (Gez et al. 2022). Existing studies have largely focused on the United States and Europe (e.g., Van Cappellen & LaBouff, 2022; Uzarevic et al. 2021; Adida et al. 2015; Gervais 2013; Ysseldyk 2012), leaving a critical gap in our understanding of how non-religious individuals navigate highly religious societies outside the Global North. This study addresses that gap by analyzing data from Rounds 7, 8, and 9 of the Afrobarometer survey, which includes responses from 147,351 individuals across 39 African countries. Specifically, it examines two key questions: (1) Are non-religious individuals more likely to express prejudice toward religious outgroups than religious individuals? and (2) How does outgroup prejudice vary among non-religious individuals, Muslims, Christians, adherents of traditional religions, and members of other faiths?

Regression analysis reveals that non-religious individuals are significantly more likely than their religious counterparts to express discomfort with having neighbors of a different religion. This pattern holds even when comparing the non-religious separately to Christians, Muslims, adherents of traditional religions, and followers of other faiths. These findings suggest that minority status in deeply religious contexts may foster defensive boundary-making. Drawing on data from the World Values Survey (2018–2022) (Haerpfer et al. 2022) and prior research, I show that religion remains deeply embedded in African public life, shaping institutions and, in some cases, contributing to interreligious violence (Tuki 2025; Østebø 2023; Human Rights Watch 2013). Such contexts may heighten the salience of religious identity and contribute to feelings of exclusion or threat among the non-religious, potentially explaining their elevated levels of outgroup prejudice.

By centering the experiences of non-religious individuals in Africa, this study expands the literature on religion and prejudice beyond its Global North focus and challenges the assumption that the non-religious are uniformly more tolerant (e.g., Speed & Brewster 2021; Galen et al. 2011). In doing so, it highlights how minority status and social context shape patterns of intergroup bias—offering new insight into the intersection of secularism, identity, and social boundaries. The sections that follow develop the theoretical framework and hypotheses, introduce the Afrobarometer and World Values Survey data, present the empirical findings, and conclude by discussing the implications for the sociology of religion and intergroup relations.

2. Theoretical considerations

Social Identity Theory (SIT) is essential for understanding prejudice and intergroup relations, as it explains how individuals derive their sense of self and perceptions of others from group memberships (Hogg et al. 1995; Hogg & Turner 1985; Tajfel et al. 1979; Turner et al. 1979; Billig & Tajfel 1973). According to the theory, people categorize themselves and others into groups based on characteristics such as ethnicity, religion, and nationality. Once individuals identify with a group, they adopt its norms, values, and behaviors as part of their self-concept. This process of social categorization makes distinctions between groups more pronounced, leading individuals to compare their own group (the in-group) with others (out-groups). Because self-esteem is closely tied to group identity, individuals are motivated to achieve positive distinctiveness—the perception that their in-group is superior to others. As a result, they may show favoritism toward their own group while displaying prejudice or discrimination toward out-groups.

In-group favoritism does not necessarily equate to discrimination against outgroup members. Allport (1954) highlighted this distinction, noting that individuals often prefer to form relationships with others who share similar characteristics—such as ethnicity, religion, or nationality. This preference, he argued, is not always rooted in prejudice, but may instead reflect the natural human tendency to seek comfort and ease in social interactions. As he succinctly put

it: "With plenty of people at hand to choose from, why create for ourselves the trouble of adjusting to new languages, new foods, new cultures, or to people of a different educational level?" (Allport, 1954, p. 17). He further observed that *separation* is not always imposed by the dominant majority; minority groups may also choose to maintain their distinct identity to avoid the discomfort of adapting to unfamiliar cultural norms: "It is not always the dominant majority that forces minority groups to remain separate. They often prefer to keep their identity, so that they need not strain to speak a foreign language or to watch their manners" (p. 18). This closely ties to the concept of homophily, which McPherson et al. (2001, p. 416) defined as "the principle that a contact between similar people occurs at a higher rate than among dissimilar people."

However, Allport (1954, p. 42) acknowledged that ingroup favoritism does not rule out the possibility of outgroup hostility. On the contrary, he emphasized that antagonism toward outgroup members can actually strengthen cohesion within the ingroup. Similarly, Brewer (1999) noted that ingroup preference can coexist with a wide spectrum of attitudes toward outgroups, ranging from mild positivity and indifference to disdain or even hatred. She further argued that ingroup love is especially likely to be accompanied by outgroup hostility when the groups in question are political entities—particularly when each perceives the other as a threat to its existence

Empirical research demonstrates that individuals tend to favor members of their religious ingroup over those from religious outgroups. A study in the United States found that Christians demonstrated strong ingroup favoritism and expressed notable dislike toward atheists. In contrast, atheists rated Christians just as favorably as they did members of their own group (Speed & Brewster 2021). In an experimental study conducted in France, Adida et al. (2015) found that this preference for associating with others who share the same religious background was evident not only among Muslims and Christians, but also among atheists. Supporting this pattern, Yilmaz and Bashirov (2022) carried out a qualitative study exploring the dynamics of religious homophily among Australian Muslim youths. Drawing on 64 semi-structured interviews, their findings revealed that the prevalent drinking culture within the Anglo-Australian majority acted as a social

barrier, discouraging close friendships between Muslim youth and their non-Muslim peers. Importantly, the study also showed that religious homophily often took precedence over ethnic differences, enabling young Muslims to build connections with fellow Muslims from various regions across the Muslim world. In a longitudinal study conducted in Germany, Leszczensky and Pink (2017) found that both Christian and Muslim youths showed a preference for friendships with individuals of the same religion. They also discovered that "Christian and non-religious youths…were more hesitant to befriend their Muslim peers than each other" (p. 80). In a study conducted among students in a Christian university in the United States, Johnson et al. (2012) found that religiosity was associated with negative attitudes toward Muslims and atheists compared to the Christian ingroup.

In much of Africa, religious boundaries remain deeply salient and have, at times, fueled episodes of interreligious conflict (Tuki 2025, 2024; Eke 2022; Basedau et al. 2022; Benjaminsen & Ba 2021; Haynes 2007). These divisions have contributed to residential segregation, social distrust, and political mobilization along religious lines (Eke 2022; Scacco & Warren 2021; Hoffmann 2017; Albert 1996). Although broader, unifying identities—such as national citizenship or a shared African identity—do exist, they have generally not been sufficient to prevent or mitigate interreligious hostilities.[3] Notably, most interreligious conflict on the continent occurs between Muslims and Christians, the two dominant theistic religious groups in Africa (e.g., Tuki 2025; Østebø 2023; United Nations 2022; Human Rights Watch 2013; Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life 2010).

Despite recurring tensions, both Islam and Christianity remain deeply embedded in African societies and are widely accepted across diverse cultural and national contexts. While doctrinal differences exist, adherents of both religions share core beliefs in a monotheistic God and an afterlife—foundations that reinforce shared moral frameworks and cultural legitimacy. In

[3] Although I focus mainly on interreligious hostilities, Many African countries have also experienced interethnic hostilities (e.g., Alcorta et al. 2018; Onwuzuruigbo 2010; Rubin 2006; Drake 1957).

contrast, non-religious individuals—who may reject belief in God altogether or simply lack formal religious affiliation—occupy a marginal position within this normative religious order. Their divergence from prevailing belief systems renders them vulnerable to social exclusion, ridicule, and, in some cases, overt hostility.

Even non-religious individuals who do believe in a higher power may face discrimination, as it is not belief alone but public religious affiliation that constitutes the normative standard in many African contexts. In societies where religion plays a central role in shaping personal identity, community belonging, and moral worth, the absence of religious affiliation can mark individuals as socially deviant. From a sociological standpoint, such deviance constitutes a form of symbolic boundary violation (Lamont 2000; Lamont & Molnár 2002), where the non-religious challenge the shared worldview that underpins social cohesion. Moreover, non-religious individuals may be perceived by members of dominant religious groups as threatening or destabilizing to the moral order (Darrell & Pyszczynski 2016; Pyszczynski et al. 1997). This perceived threat can activate defensive boundary mechanisms, such as stigmatization or exclusion (Phelan et al. 2008; Goffman 1963). In this context, non-affiliation functions not merely as a personal identity, but as a stigmatized social status that diminishes one's perceived legitimacy and moral trustworthiness in the eyes of others (Goffman 1963).

As a numerically small and symbolically marginalized group in highly religious societies, non-religious individuals may respond to exclusion and moral judgment by constructing their own defensive social boundaries. In this sense, boundary-making may be reciprocal: just as religious groups define the non-religious as deviant or threatening, the non-religious may view dominant religious communities with suspicion—particularly when religion is seen as overreaching into public life or associated with political power and conflict. These lived experiences may foster aversive attitudes toward religious outgroups, not despite, but because of the religious salience of the broader social context.

Based on this reasoning, I expect that non-religious individuals will be more hesitant than their religious counterparts to accept neighbors from a different religious group. In contexts where both Muslims and Christians are socially dominant and politically powerful, non-religious individuals may feel doubly targeted—vulnerable to exclusion from multiple religious majorities. This sense of compounded marginalization may heighten their reluctance to engage with religious outgroups, especially in intimate social settings like neighborhoods.

It is important to note, however, a limitation in interpreting this dynamic symmetrically. The outcome variable in the Afrobarometer survey, upon which this study relies, asks respondents about their willingness to have neighbors of a different religion. Given the small population share of the non-religious in Africa, it is likely that religious respondents interpreted the question as referring to members of other major religious traditions—typically Muslims or Christians—rather than the non-religious. As a result, this measure may capture attitudes among the religious toward interreligious difference, but not necessarily their views of the non-religious.

In contrast, non-religious respondents may have interpreted the question more narrowly, as referring to Christians and Muslims—two groups that dominate African religious and political life. Practitioners of traditional religions and smaller faiths may not have figured prominently in their mental framing of "religious others." This asymmetry in interpretation limits the extent to which we can assess reciprocal prejudice, but it also underscores the salience of religious dominance and marginality in shaping how individuals perceive religious outgroups.

These dynamics lead to the expectation that non-religious individuals will be more hesitant to live near those affiliated with a religion, compared to their religious counterparts. Specifically, this reluctance is expected to exceed that expressed by Muslims, Christians, adherents of traditional religions, and followers of other faiths. This study tests the following hypotheses:

> **H1:** *Non-religious individuals are more hesitant than those with a religious affiliation to have neighbors of a different religion.*
>
> **H2:** *Non-religious individuals are more hesitant than Muslims, Christians, practitioners of traditional religions, and adherents of other faiths to have people of a different religion as neighbors.*

3. Data and Methodology

This study uses data from Rounds 7, 8, and 9 of the Afrobarometer surveys, covering 39 African countries (BenYishay et al. 2017).[4] Table A3 in the appendix lists these countries along with the number of observations collected from each. The surveys were conducted between 2016 and 2023. Round 7 includes 45,823 observations, Round 8 includes 48,084 observations, and Round 9 includes 53,444 observations, totaling 147,351 observations. All respondents were at least 18 years old, with a balanced gender ratio of 50:50. Because Afrobarometer employs probabilistic sampling techniques, the data are representative of the populations in the countries surveyed. However, a limitation of this dataset is that it excludes African countries affected by conflict, such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Central African Republic, and Libya. Section 3.1 discusses the variables used to estimate the regression models.

3.1. Dependent variable

The dependent variable—*Religious prejudice*—measures respondents' willingness to have people of a different religion as neighbors. Specifically, it was derived from the question, "For each of the following types of people, please tell me whether you would like having people from this group as neighbors, dislike it, or not care: people of a different religion?" The responses were measured on a scale with five ordinal categories ranging from "1 = strongly like" to "5 = strongly dislike."[5] I treated "don't know" and "refused to answer" responses as missing observations. I applied this rule to all the variables. Given that only a small percentage of Africans have no religious affiliation, it is likely that respondents with a religious affiliation did not consider non-religious individuals as part of the religious outgroup when answering this question. This makes it difficult to specifically determine religious individuals' attitudes toward non-religious individuals. In contrast, non-

[4] To access the Afrobarometer dataset and the questionnaire visit: https://www.afrobarometer.org/
[5] In the original dataset, "strongly dislike" was coded as 1 and "strongly like" was coded as 5. For easier interpretation of the regression results, I inverted the ordinal values assigned to the response categories by subtracting each of them from 6.

religious respondents are likely to have interpreted religious outgroups as those affiliated with the major religions on the continent—Islam and Christianity.

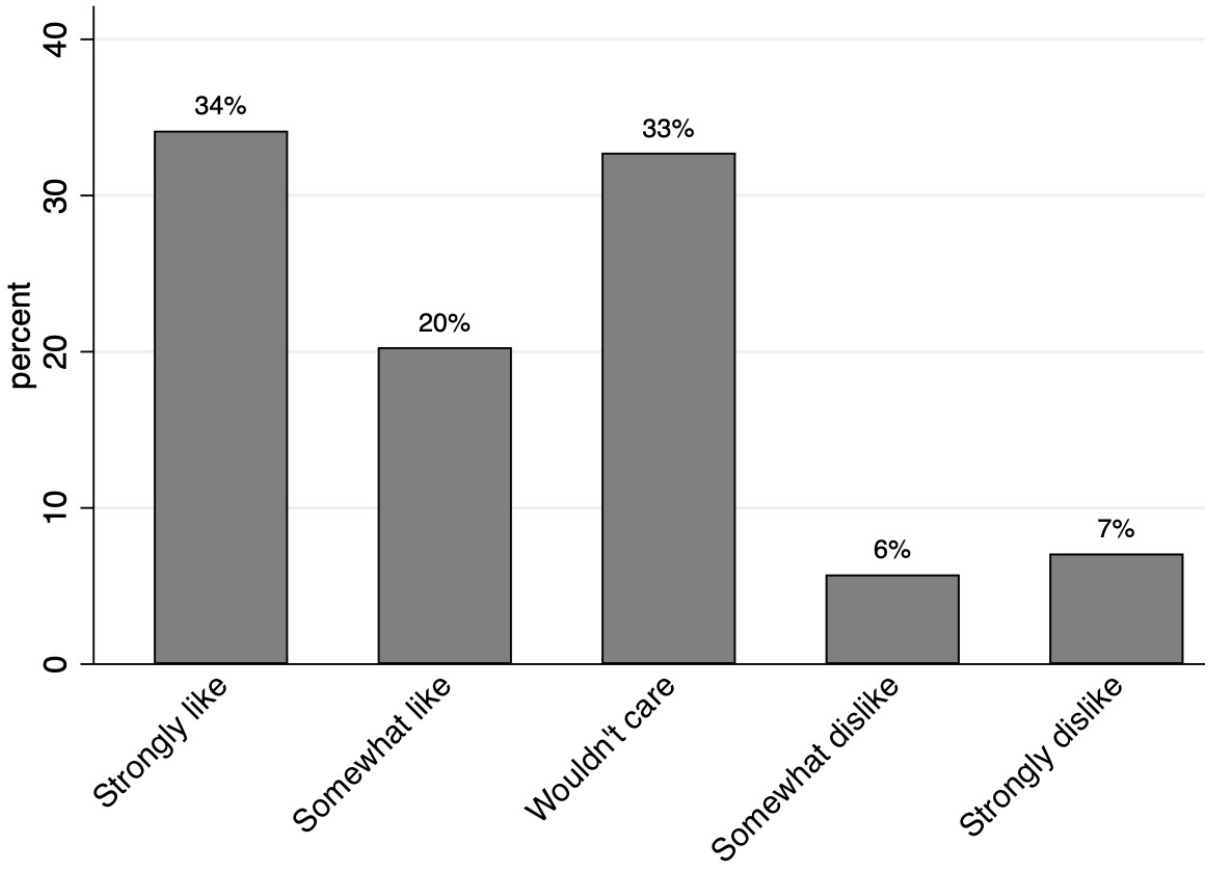


Figure 1: Prejudice towards religious outgroups in Africa

Note: The figure illustrates responses to a question asking Africans about their willingness to have people of a different religion as neighbors. The horizontal axis represents the different response categories, while the vertical axis shows the percentage of respondents corresponding to each category. The figure is based on pooled data from Rounds 7, 8, and 9 of the Afrobarometer surveys, conducted across 39 African countries between 2016 and 2023 (n =146,491).

Figure 1 shows that Africans are generally not prejudiced toward religious outgroups. 54% would either "strongly like" or "somewhat like" to have people of a different religion as neighbors, while 33% are indifferent. Only 13% would either "strongly dislike" or "somewhat dislike" having people of a different religion as neighbors. Because the responses were concentrated in the categories "strongly like," "somewhat like," and "wouldn't care," I created a binary version of the dependent variable. In this version, I coded those three responses as 0 and the remaining two—"somewhat dislike" and "strongly dislike"—as 1. The rationale for this coding is that, unlike the

first three options, the latter two explicitly reflect a reluctance to have members of religious outgroups as neighbors. I then used this binary variable to perform a robustness check.

3.2. Explanatory variables

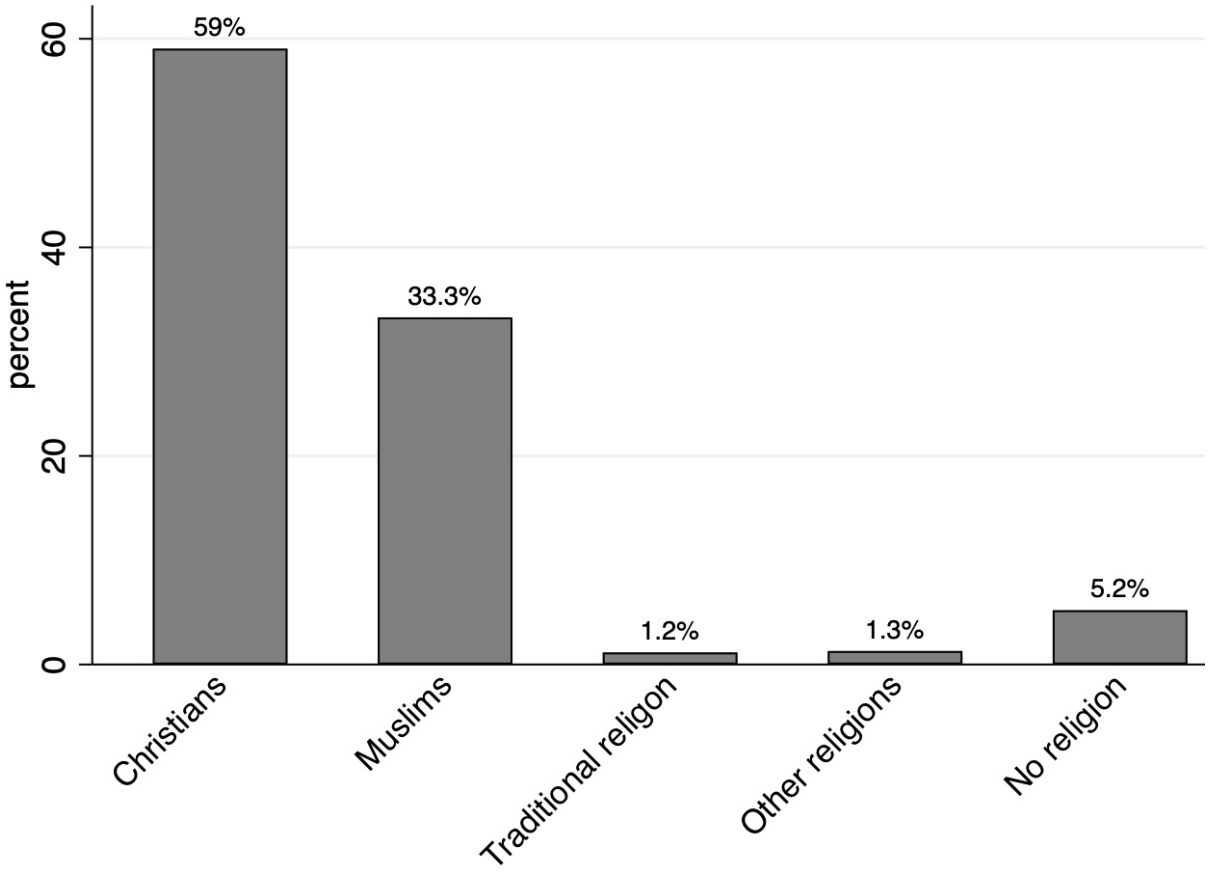


Figure 2: Religious affiliation among Africans

Note: The figure illustrates responses to a question asking Africans about their religious affiliation. The horizontal axis represents the different religious categories, while the vertical axis shows the percentage of respondents corresponding to each category. The figure is based on pooled data from Rounds 7, 8, and 9 of the Afrobarometer surveys, conducted across 39 African countries between 2016 and 2023 (n =147,288).

To measure (non)religious affiliation, I consider five sets of dummy variables that account for all the respondents' religious affiliations, as well as those who have no religion. *No religion* is a dummy variable that is coded as 1 if a respondent explicitly states that they do not have a religious affiliation, or identify as agnostic or atheist, and 0 otherwise. *Christian* is coded as 1 if a respondent belongs to any Christian denomination and 0 otherwise. *Muslim* is coded as 1 if a respondent belongs to any Muslim denomination and 0 otherwise. *Traditional religion* is coded as 1 if a respondent practices traditional/ethnic religion and 0 otherwise. *Other religion* is coded as 1 if a

respondent practices any other religion besides Christianity, Islam, and traditional religion, and 0 otherwise. The other religions include Buddhism, Judaism, Hinduism, and Bahai etc.[6] It is important to note that in the Round 9 survey, the question on religious affiliation was not asked in Mauritania. However, I classified all respondents from the country as Muslims, given that Islam is Mauritania's official religion, practiced by nearly 100% of the population (CIA World Fact Book 2025).

Figure 2 shows that 95% of Africans have a religious affiliation, with Christianity being the dominant religion at 59%, followed by Islam at 33%. Only 1.2% of Africans practice traditional or ethnic religions, while the remaining 1.3% follow other religions.

3.3. Control variables

Lived poverty index: Following Mattes et al. (2002), I assessed respondents' socioeconomic well-being using an additive index that measures how often they and their household members have lacked basic necessities over the past year. This index was derived from the following question:

> "Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or anyone in your family: (a) Gone without food to eat? (b) Gone without enough clean water for home use? (c) Gone without medicines or medical treatment? (d) Gone without enough fuel to cook your food? (e) Gone without cash income?"

The responses were measured on a scale with five ordinal categories, ranging from "0 = never" to "4 = always." To create the additive index, I summed the ordinal values assigned to the respective response categories across the five items. These five items had a Cronbach's Alpha statistic of 0.77, indicating strong internal reliability. Research has shown that poverty can contribute to increased hostility toward outgroups. For example, members of the majority group who experience or anticipate economic hardship may develop resentment toward outgroup members, such as religious minorities or immigrants (Mitra & Ray 2014; Filindra & Pearson-Merkowitz 2013). This

[6] The sample of respondents who practiced other religions besides Islam, Christianity, and traditional religion was very small, which led me to collapse them into a single category.

dynamic can be exacerbated when political elites exploit economic downturns by scapegoating outgroups—assigning them blame.

Educational level. This variable measures the highest level of education attained by respondents, using a scale with ten ordinal categories ranging from "0 = no formal education" to "9 = postgraduate." I controlled for education level, as it may influence attitudes toward religious outgroups. For example, educated individuals might exhibit greater tolerance than their less-educated counterparts, as education provides opportunities to engage with diverse ideas and worldviews. Additionally, education promotes critical thinking, enabling individuals to question assumptions and consider multiple perspectives (Hanif et al. 2020; Wang & Froese 2019; Wang & Uecker 2017; Moore & Ovadia 2006).

Demographic covariates. This includes respondents' age and gender. Age is measured in years, while gender is coded as 1 for male and 0 for female. I controlled for demographic attributes because both the explanatory and control variables are measured at the individual level.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Total observations	Mean	Standard deviation.	Minimum	Maximum
Religious prejudice$^{\sigma}$	146491	2.313	1.199	1	5
Religious prejudice (Binary)	146491	0.128	0.334	0	1
No religion	147288	0.052	0.222	0	1
Christian	147288	0.591	0.492	0	1
Muslim	147288	0.333	0.471	0	1
Traditional religion	147288	0.012	0.107	0	1
Other religions	147288	0.013	0.113	0	1
Educational level	146756	3.515	2.273	0	9
Lived poverty index	145995	6.622	4.693	0	20
Male (Reference: Female)	147344	0.5	0.5	0	1
Age	147233	37.442	14.926	18	120

Note: σ denotes the dependent variable.

Table 1 presents the summary statistics of the variables used to estimate the regression models.

3.4. Analytical technique

I analyze the data in two steps: first, through a brief descriptive analysis, followed by a regression analysis. To examine the correlation between (non)religious affiliation and prejudice towards religious outgroups, I consider a model of the following general form:

$$\gamma_i = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 Religious\ affiliation_i + \alpha_2 \Lambda'_i + \mu_i \quad (1)$$

In this equation, γ_i is the dependent variable measuring Respondent $i's$ willingness to have people of a different religion as neighbors, while Λ'_i is a vector of control variables discussed earlier. The term α_0 denotes the intercept, and α_1 and α_2 represent the coefficients of the explanatory and control variables, respectively. Lastly, μ_i is the error term. Because the dependent variable is measured on an ordinal scale, I estimated the model using ordered logit (Ologit) regression. A strength of this approach is that it respects the dependent variable's ordered nature, allowing me to determine the magnitude of the association between the explanatory variable and each category of the dependent variable. Nevertheless, I conducted a robustness check where I treated the dependent variable as continuous and re-estimated the model using ordinary least squares (OLS) regression.

To allow for the possibility of correlation between observations within the same country, I clustered the standard errors at the country level. In some of the models, I included fixed effects for the year in which the surveys were conducted, the country where respondents reside, and the survey round. The year fixed effects capture time-specific trends like policy and institutional changes that may affect all observations in the dataset within a given year, but may vary across the years. The country fixed effects control for time-invariant factors that differ across countries but remain constant over time, e.g., geographic, climatic, and cultural factors. The survey round fixed effects account for systematic differences across different rounds of survey, e.g., changes in interviewer training or data collection procedures.

It is important to note that this study is correlational and does not seek to establish causality. While omitted variable bias cannot be completely ruled out—since it is impossible to control for all potential variables that could confound the relationship between religious affiliation and religious prejudice—the study still offers valuable insights into this relationship. This is particularly significant in the African context, where research on this topic remains limited.

4. Results and discussion

4.1. Religion and prejudice

4.1.1. Descriptive analysis

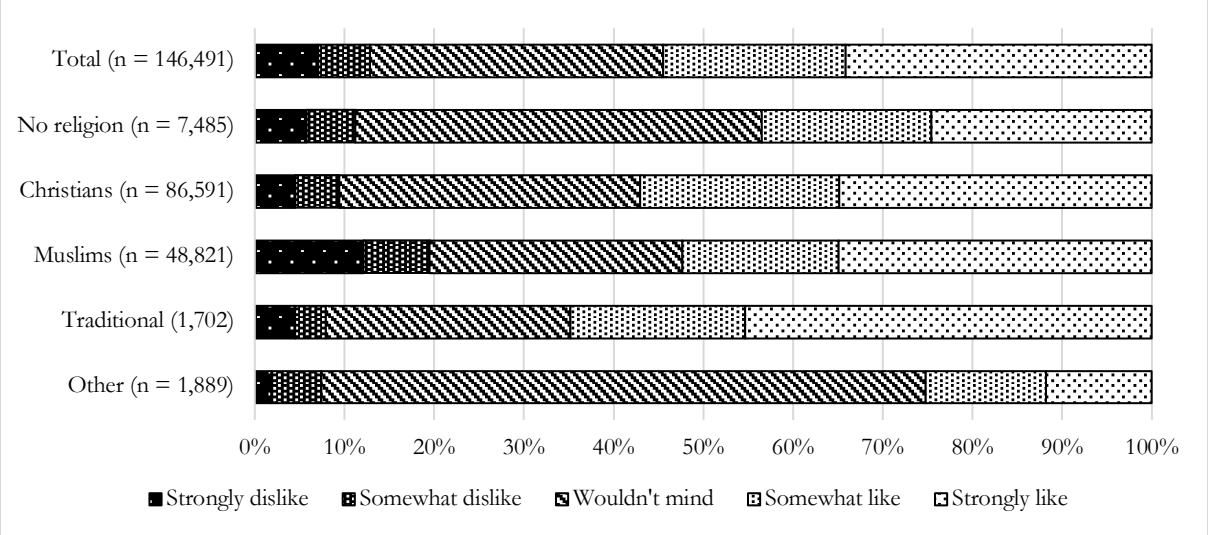


Figure 3: Religious distribution of prejudice towards religious outgroups

Note: This figure illustrates Africans' willingness to have neighbors from a different religious group. The vertical axis represents the various religious groups along with the number of respondents in each group, while the horizontal axis displays the percentage of respondents in each category of religious prejudice.

Figure 3 displays the religious distribution of prejudice toward religious outgroups among the various religious categories using a stacked bar chart. The figure shows that Muslims report the highest levels of discomfort with religiously different neighbors, with 20% indicating that they "strongly dislike" or "somewhat dislike" having such neighbors. By contrast, the corresponding proportions are lower among the non-religious (11%), Christians (9%), practitioners of traditional religions (8%), and followers of other religions (7%).

At the other end of the spectrum, 65% of individuals practicing traditional religions report that they "strongly like" or "somewhat like" having neighbors of a different religion. This figure exceeds the proportions for Christians (57%), Muslims (52%), non-religious individuals (44%), and adherents of other religions (25%). These patterns suggest that acceptance of religious diversity varies considerably by religious affiliation, with traditional religion practitioners exhibiting the most positive attitudes and Muslims the most negative.

While these descriptive results offer useful initial insights, they do not account for potential confounders—such as education, age, or poverty—that may shape both religious identity and intergroup attitudes. To address these limitations and assess the independent association between religious affiliation and attitudes toward religious outgroups, I turn next to regression analysis.

4.1.2. Regression analysis

Table 2: Ordered logit models regressing religious prejudice on (non)religious affiliation I

Religious prejudice$^{\sigma}$	**(1)**	**(2)**	**(3)**
No religion	0.333***	0.355***	0.171***
	(0.108)	(0.104)	(0.031)
Educational level		0.02	-0.046***
		(0.021)	(0.012)
Lived poverty index		-0.013	-0.001
		(0.012)	(0.003)
Male (Reference: Female)		-0.145***	-0.101***
		(0.018)	(0.019)
Age		0.004*	-0.002***
		(0.002)	(0.001)
Intercept 1	-0.64***	-0.591***	-0.201***
	(0.137)	(0.179)	(0.067)
Intercept 2	0.196	0.251	0.793***
	(0.143)	(0.181)	(0.075)
Intercept 3	1.938***	1.995***	2.782***
	(0.139)	(0.208)	(0.185)
Intercept 4	2.595***	2.651***	3.476***
	(0.166)	(0.239)	(0.218)
Country FE	No	No	Yes
Survey year FE	No	No	Yes
Survey round FE	No	No	Yes
Observations	146488	144659	144659
Number of clusters	39	39	39
Pseudo R^2	0.001	0.002	0.072
Log pseudolikelihood	-206062.67	-203146.18	-188981.16
AIC statistic	412135.3	406310.4	377990.3
BIC statistic	412184.8	406399.3	378128.7

Note: Clustered robust standard errors are in parentheses, σ denotes the dependent variable. "Ref" denotes "Reference category." *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.10. All models are estimated using ordered logit (Ologit) regression. "FE" denotes

fixed effects. The regression models are based on pooled data from Rounds 7, 8, and 9 covering 39 African countries. The data were collected between 2016 and 2023. AIC = Akaike information criterion; BIC = Bayesian information criterion.

Table 2 presents regression estimates examining the association between religious affiliation and willingness to have neighbors of a different religion. In the baseline model—which includes only an indicator for non-religious identification—respondents without a religious affiliation are significantly less willing than religious individuals (i.e., Christians, Muslims, practitioners of traditional religions, and members of other religious groups) to accept religious outgroup members as neighbors. This result is statistically significant at the 1% level and is consistent with Hypothesis 1.[7]

This pattern runs counter to common assumptions that non-religious individuals are more open or tolerant (e.g., Speed & Brewster 2021; Galen et al. 2011), and it raises important questions about the role of social context and minority status in shaping intergroup attitudes. In highly religious societies like those across much of Africa, the non-religious may experience moral marginalization or perceive themselves as excluded from dominant cultural norms. As prior research suggests, secular individuals may come to view religion not only as a system of belief but also as a source of social and political power—particularly when religious values influence lawmaking (Gez et al. 2022). Moreover, the non-religious may associate religion with conflict or social instability. In countries such as Nigeria, Mali, and Sudan, religion has been implicated in episodes of intercommunal violence (Tuki 2025, 2024a; Basedau et al. 2022; Basedau & Schaefer-Kehnert 2020, Basedau & Koos 2015; Haynes 2007), which could heighten suspicion or aversion among those who reject religious identity (Oduah 2018). Rather than ideological hostility *per se*, these attitudes may reflect lived experiences of exclusion or concern about the societal consequences of religious authority. These findings underscore the need to rethink how non-

[7]Although I use the term *prejudice* to describe this behavior, it is employed in a loose and non-traditional sense. One could argue that non-religious individuals are not necessarily prejudiced in the conventional meaning of the word. Rather, their reluctance to have religious individuals as neighbors may stem from a sense of caution, shaped by experiences of discrimination—both from religious individuals and from laws in religious societies that marginalize them.

religiosity operates as a social identity—particularly in contexts where it is both numerically rare and symbolically contested.

Model 2 indicates that the main association remains robust after adjusting for relevant sociodemographic controls. Model 3, which incorporates fixed effects for country of residence, survey year, and survey round, yields the best model fit, as indicated by the lowest AIC value. In this specification, all control variables are statistically significant except for the lived poverty index. The negative association between educational attainment and religious outgroup prejudice suggests that individuals with more years of schooling are less likely to endorse exclusionary attitudes. This may reflect the role of formal education in promoting cognitive complexity, exposure to diverse worldviews, and the internalization of egalitarian norms (Tuki 2024b; Wang & Froese 2019; Wang & Uecker 2017; Newcomb 1943).

Gender emerges as a significant predictor of religious prejudice, with men reporting significantly lower levels than women. This pattern invites further examination into the role of gendered socialization in shaping intergroup attitudes. For instance, women may be more strongly embedded in religious networks or moral communities, which could influence their views of religious difference in ways distinct from men. Age is negatively associated with religious prejudice, indicating that older individuals in the African context express greater tolerance toward religious outgroups. This finding contrasts with prior research in European settings, where older cohorts often report higher levels of prejudice (e.g., Strabac & Listhaug 2008; Quillian 1995). One possible explanation is that, in African societies, aging is accompanied by increased social maturity, broader interpersonal exposure, or greater internalization of pluralistic norms. Alternatively, this association may reflect a life-course effect, whereby accumulated experience contributes to more tolerant outlooks in later life. Notably, the results are robust to alternative specifications, including ordinary least squares (OLS), a binary operationalization of the dependent variable, and a linear probability model (LPM) (see Tables A1 and A3 in the appendix).

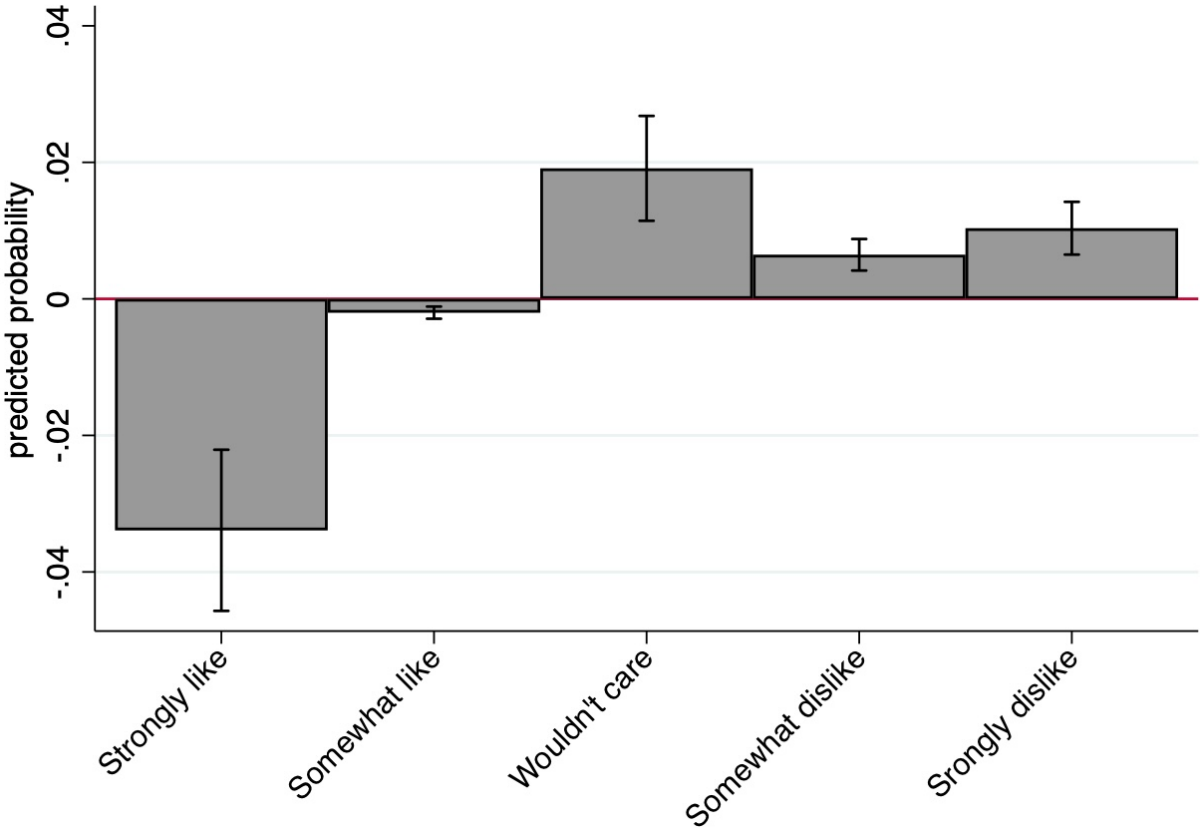


Figure 4: Predicted probabilities showing the magnitude of the association between (non)religious affiliation and religious prejudice

Note: This figure, which is based on the full model (i.e., Model 3 in Table 2), illustrates the association between the indicator for having no religious affiliation and the five categories of the dependent variable that assesses respondents' willingness to have people of a different religion as neighbors. Confidence intervals are set at the 95% level.

To aid interpretation of the ordered logit regression results presented in Table 2, Figure 4 plots predicted probabilities based on the full model (Model 3). The figure shows that the association between having no religious affiliation and attitudes toward religious outgroup members is most pronounced in the "strongly like" response category. Specifically, individuals without a religious affiliation are 3.4 percentage points less likely than those with a religious affiliation to report that they would "strongly like" having someone of a different religion as a neighbor. In contrast, they are 1 percentage point more likely to select the "strongly dislike" category, and 1.9 percentage points more likely to select the neutral "wouldn't care" category. These findings suggest that the non-religious are more likely to express ambivalence and mild disapproval toward religious outgroup members.

Table 3: Ordered logit models regressing religious prejudice on (non)religious affiliation II

Religious prejudice$^{\sigma}$	**(1)**	**(2)**	**(3)**
Christians	-0.423***	-0.456***	-0.174***
	(0.072)	(0.07)	(0.03)
Muslims	-0.177	-0.179	-0.149**
	(0.243)	(0.236)	(0.072)
Traditional religion	-0.779***	-0.731***	-0.225***
	(0.128)	(0.12)	(0.074)
Other religions	0.382***	0.257*	-0.18***
	(0.126)	(0.146)	(0.04)
Intercept 1	-0.977***	-0.9***	-0.169**
	(0.151)	(0.176)	(0.081)
Intercept 2	-0.138	-0.055	0.824***
	(0.148)	(0.17)	(0.085)
Intercept 3	1.612***	1.698***	2.811***
	(0.118)	(0.177)	(0.187)
Intercept 4	2.272***	2.357***	3.505***
	(0.14)	(0.204)	(0.223)
Control variables	No	Yes	Yes
Country FE	No	No	Yes
Survey year FE	No	No	Yes
Survey round FE	No	No	Yes
Observations	146488	144659	144659
Number of clusters	39	39	39
Pseudo R^2	0.003	0.004	0.071
Log pseudolikelihood	-205559.28	-202647.13	-189093.7
AIC statistic	411134.6	405318.3	378219.4
BIC statistic	411213.7	405436.8	378377.5

Note: Clustered robust standard errors are in parentheses, σ denotes the dependent variable. "Ref" denotes "Reference category." *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.10. All models are estimated using ordered logit (Ologit) regression. "FE" denotes fixed effects. Control variables include educational level, poverty, gender, and age. The regression models are based on pooled data from Rounds 7, 8, and 9 covering 39 African countries. The data were collected between 2016 and 2023. AIC = Akaike information criterion; BIC = Bayesian information criterion.

While Table 2 offers a broad comparison between individuals with and without religious affiliation, it masks heterogeneity among the religiously affiliated. To address this, I re-estimated the model using individuals with no religious affiliation as the reference category and included dummy variables for Christian, Muslim, Traditional religion, and other religious affiliations. The results are presented in Table 3.

In Model 1, which includes only these religious affiliation variables, the coefficients for Christianity, Traditional religion, and Other religions are statistically significant. The negative coefficients for Christian and Traditional religion affiliations indicate that, compared to non-religious individuals, members of these groups are less likely to express prejudice toward religious outgroup members. The positive coefficient for Other religions, if interpreted substantively, suggests a greater likelihood of religious outgroup prejudice relative to non-religious respondents.

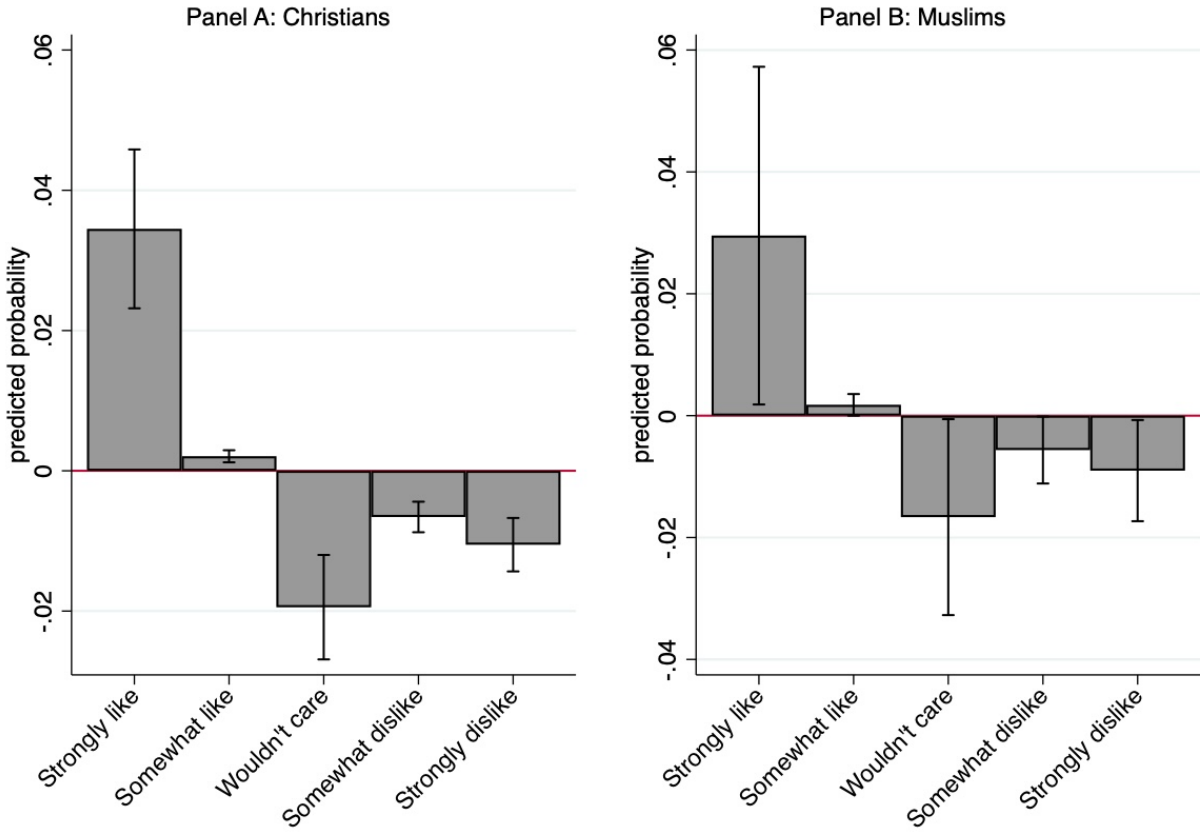
The coefficient for Muslim affiliation is not statistically significant, implying no meaningful difference between Muslims and the non-religious in this baseline model. It is important to emphasize that these estimates are preliminary and do not account for potential confounding factors. Subsequent models introduce sociodemographic controls and fixed effects to assess whether these patterns persist when adjusting for other influences.

In Model 2, which includes standard sociodemographic controls, the results remain broadly consistent with those in the baseline model. However, Model 3, which incorporates fixed effects for survey year, country of residence, and survey wave, yields several notable changes. The AIC statistic for Model 3 (378,219) is substantially lower than those for previous models, indicating improved model fit. All religious affiliation variables are statistically significant in Model 3. The coefficients for Christian affiliation and Traditional religion remain negative, indicating that individuals in these groups are less likely than non-religious respondents to express prejudice toward religious outgroups. The coefficient for Muslim affiliation, previously insignificant, becomes negative and reaches statistical significance at the 5% level, suggesting that Muslims are also less likely than non-religious individuals to exhibit religious outgroup prejudice. Likewise, the coefficient for Other religions, initially positive, becomes negative and is significant at the 1% level, indicating lower levels of prejudice among adherents of these smaller religious traditions (e.g., Jews, Buddhists, Hindus).

Overall, the results from Model 3 support Hypothesis 2, which posits that non-religious individuals are more likely than Muslims, Christians, practitioners of traditional religions, and adherents of other faiths to express prejudice toward religious outgroups. These findings are robust to alternative model specifications, including ordinary least squares (OLS) regression, a binary operationalization of the dependent variable, and linear probability models (see Tables A2 and A4 in the appendix).

Although I have emphasized defensive boundary-making among the non-religious as an explanation for this result, the binary nature of the explanatory variables could also be interpreted

to imply that individuals belonging to various religious groups are more tolerant of religious outgroup members than the non-religious. This creates room for an alternative explanation, especially among members of the dominant religions: both Islam and Christianity emphasize moral teachings such as fairness, compassion, and the principle of treating others as one would wish to be treated. Regular exposure to these normative frameworks may socialize adherents toward greater interpersonal tolerance, including a higher willingness to accept members of religious outgroups as neighbors.



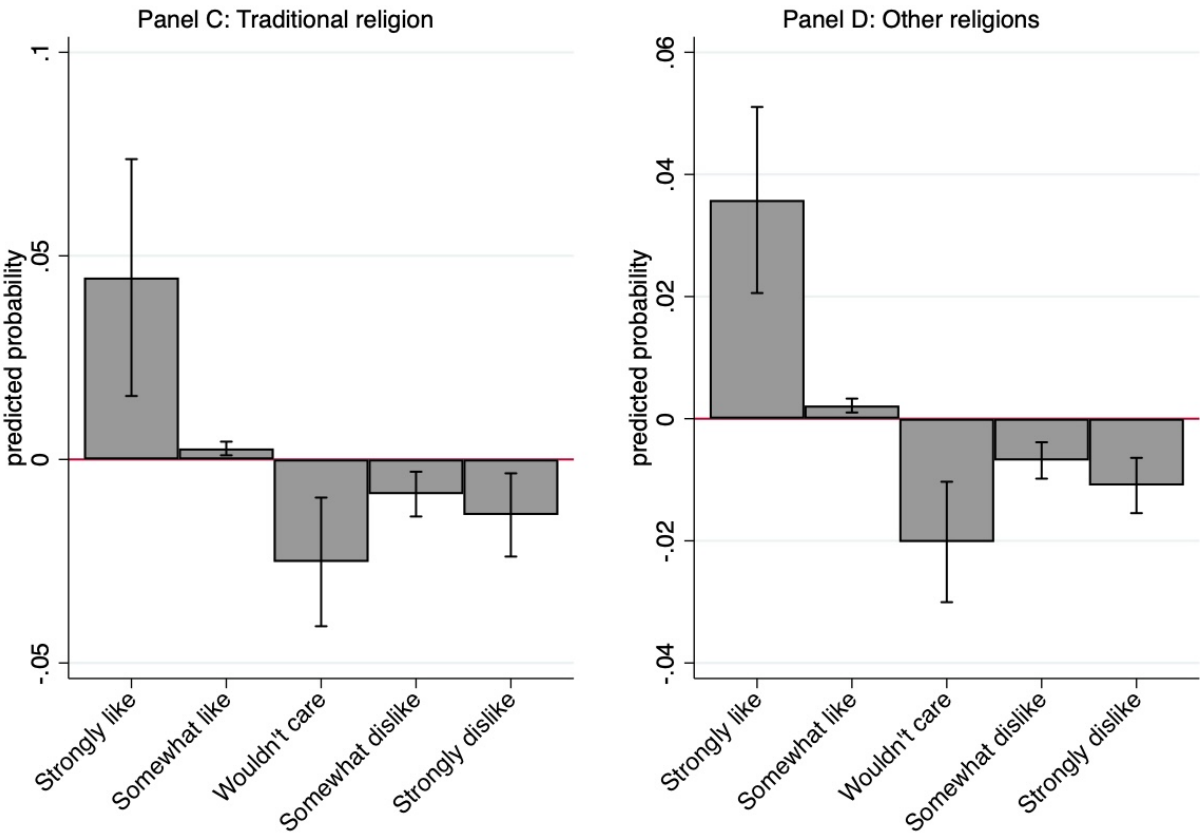


Figure 5: Predicted probabilities showing the magnitude of the association between the major religious affiliations and religious prejudice

Note: This figure, based on the full model (i.e., Model 3 in Table 3), illustrates the association between religious affiliation (Christian, Muslim, Traditional religion, and other religions) and the five categories of the dependent variable, which assesses respondents' willingness to have people of a different religion as neighbors. Confidence intervals are set at the 95% level.

To aid interpretation of the ordered logit regression results in Table 3, Figure 5 plots predicted probabilities from the full model (Model 3) across four religious affiliation categories. The figure reveals that the association between religious affiliation and attitudes toward religious outgroups is most pronounced in the "Strongly like" response category. Across all religious groups, individuals are more likely than their non-religious counterparts to express strong approval of having neighbors of a different religion and less likely to express strong disapproval. Consistent with the patterns observed in Figure 4, religious individuals are also less likely than the non-religious to report indifference, suggesting that the non-religious tend to adopt more neutral or detached stances toward religious diversity in their neighborhoods.

Panel A shows that Christians are 3.4 percentage points more likely than the non-religious to select the "strongly like" response and 1.1 percentage points less likely to select "strongly dislike." Muslims (Panel B) follow a similar pattern, with a 3 percentage point increase in "strongly like" and a 1 point decrease in "strongly dislike." Panel C shows that practitioners of traditional religions exhibit the strongest positive orientation, with a 4.5 percentage point increase in "strongly like" and a 1.4 point decrease in "strongly dislike." Panel D shows that adherents of other religions (e.g., Jews, Hindus, Buddhists) are 3.6 percentage points more likely to report "strongly like" and 1.1 percentage points less likely to report "strongly dislike."

4.2. Descriptive analysis of religion's role in African society

A central argument of this study is that religion is deeply embedded in everyday life across many African societies. Such pervasive religiosity may shape experiences of marginalization among non-religious individuals, particularly in settings where religious affiliation is strongly normative. However, measuring the degree to which religion is woven into daily life poses empirical challenges, as the Afrobarometer survey lacks items that allow for such analysis. To address this limitation, I draw on data from Wave 7 of the World Values Survey (WVS) (Haerpfer et al. 2022), which includes several questions capturing the societal role of religion.[8]

This wave was fielded between 2018 and 2022 in eight African countries—Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, Morocco, Nigeria, Tunisia, and Zimbabwe—representing four major regions: North, East, West, and Southern Africa. The sample includes 9,752 respondents, of whom 35% identify as Christian and 62% as Muslim. Other religious groups (n = 100) and non-religious individuals (n = 205) make up 1% and 2% of the sample, respectively. Given the overwhelming predominance of Muslims and Christians—and the limited societal influence of other religious groups—the descriptive analysis focuses mainly on these two dominant affiliations.

[8] To access the World Values Survey (WVS) dataset and questionnaire visit: https://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs.jsp

The analysis begins by examining individual religiosity among African respondents. The WVS asks participants to rate the importance of God in their lives on a 10-point scale, from "1 = not at all important" to "10 = very important." Notably, 85% of respondents selected the highest value of 10, and 95% chose a score of at least 5. Furthermore, 99% affirmed belief in God, 87% in life after death, 96% in heaven, and 87% in hell. These findings underscore the pervasive salience of religion in the private lives of most Africans.

The analysis then turns to attitudes concerning religion's role in broader societal domains. Three items from the WVS are especially pertinent: (1) agreement with the statement that religion is superior to science in cases of conflict; (2) the belief that one's religion is the only acceptable one; and (3) support for a political system based entirely on religious law, with no political parties. Descriptive statistics for these items reveal prevailing normative orientations toward religion in public life.

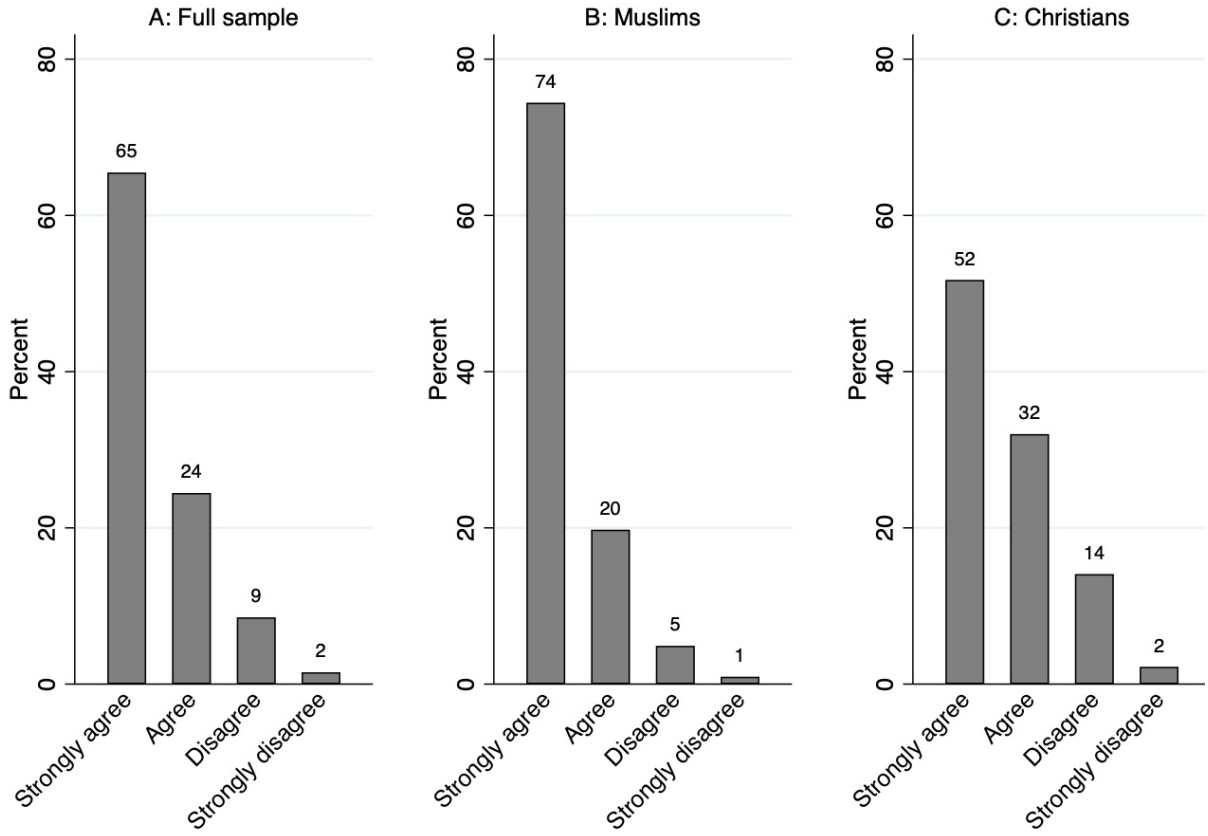


Figure 6: Africans' agreement with the statement, "Whenever science and religion conflict, religion is always right."

Note: The horizontal axis represents the different degrees of agreement with the statement that religion is superior to science, while the vertical axis displays the percentage of respondents corresponding to each response category.

Figure 6 displays agreement with the statement, "*Whenever science and religion conflict, religion is always right.*" In the full sample (Panel A), 89% of respondents either agree or strongly agree, while only 11% express disagreement. Disaggregating by religious affiliation (Panels B and C) reveals a modest divergence: 16% of Christian respondents either disagree or strongly disagree with the statement, compared to just 6% of Muslims. Despite this difference, both groups overwhelmingly affirm the primacy of religion over science, with 94% of Muslims and 84% of Christians endorsing the statement. These findings suggest that across religious affiliations, deference to religious authority remains a dominant epistemological orientation in the region.

To contextualize these findings, it is instructive to compare them with data from non-African countries. In Germany and China, for instance, only 10% and 6% of respondents, respectively, either agree or strongly agree that religion is always right when in conflict with science—figures that contrast sharply with the 89% agreement observed in the African sample. This stark difference suggests that in many African societies, religious epistemologies hold significant normative authority. As a result, non-religious individuals may experience their views as culturally marginal or even deviant. In contexts where religious interpretations are dominant, expressions of secular or scientific reasoning may be met with skepticism, potentially leading to feelings of social alienation or reluctance to engage in open dialogue.

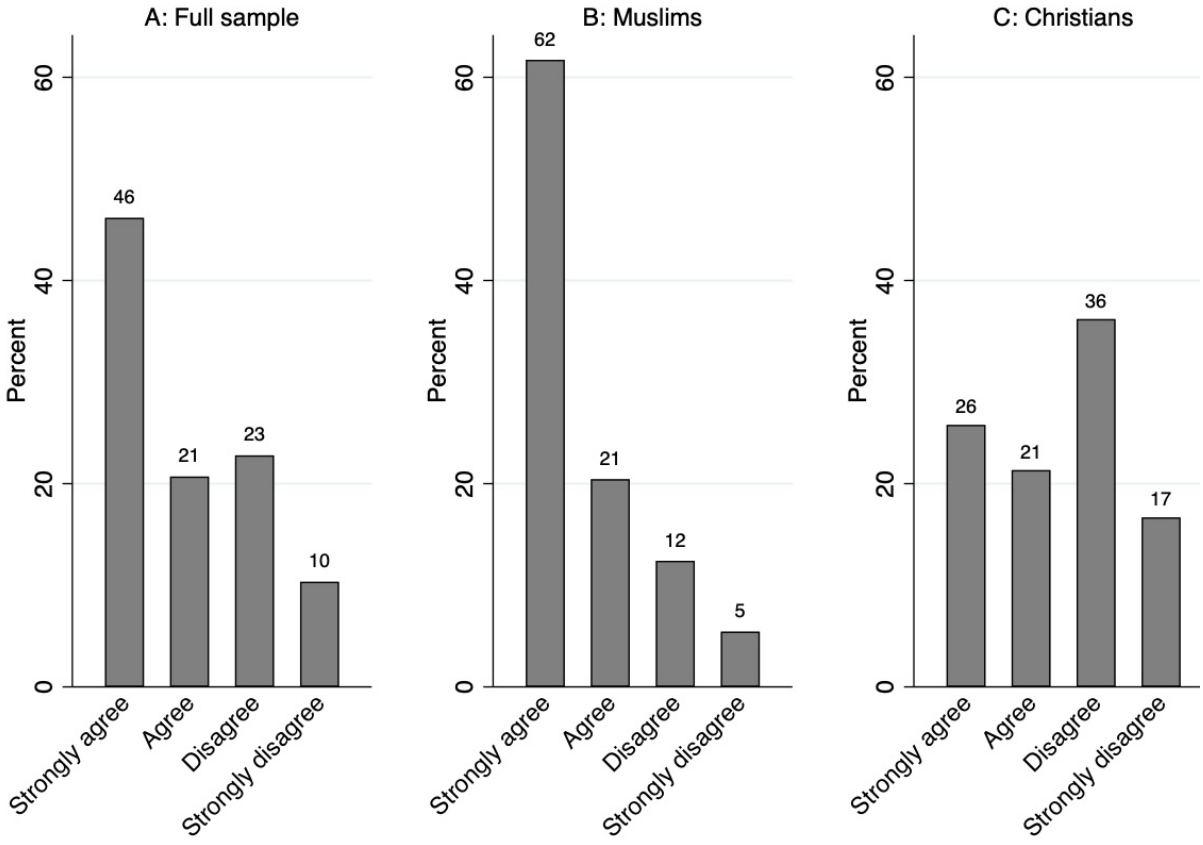


Figure 7: Africans' agreement with the statement, "The only acceptable religion is my religion"

Note: The horizontal axis represents the different degrees of agreement with the statement that the respondents' religions are the only acceptable ones, while the vertical axis displays the percentage of respondents corresponding to each response category.

Figure 7 presents agreement with the statement, "*The only acceptable religion is my religion.*" Panel A shows that 67% of respondents across eight African countries either agree or strongly agree, while 33% either disagree or strongly disagree. Disaggregated data (Panels B and C) reveal a marked difference by religious affiliation: 83% of Muslims express agreement, compared to 47% of Christians. Conversely, 17% of Muslims and 53% of Christians express disagreement with the statement. These results suggest a substantial degree of religious exclusivism, particularly among Muslim respondents. Religious exclusivist attitudes have been linked to intergroup conflict in several African contexts, including Nigeria (Tuki 2025, 2024, 2024a), the Central African Republic (Center for Preventive Action 2024; Human Rights Watch 2013), and Ethiopia (Østebø 2023; United Nations 2022). Such attitudes may contribute to symbolic boundary-making and social distancing, especially from individuals or groups perceived as religiously deviant or unaffiliated. In

this context, non-religious individuals may experience heightened marginalization or alienation, particularly in settings where dominant religious groups reject pluralism or alternative belief systems (Oduah 2018).

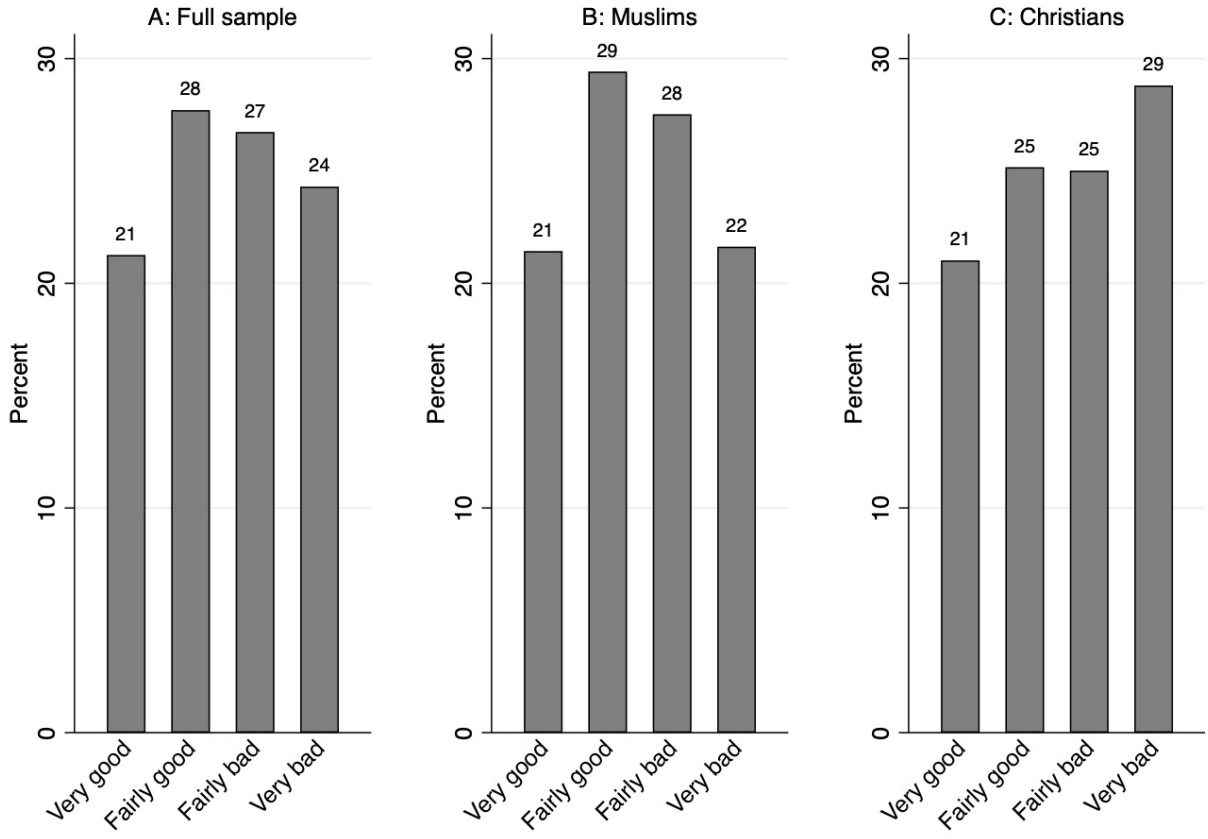


Figure 8: Africans' perspectives on the acceptability of a governance system based solely on religious law

Note: The horizontal axis represents respondents' evaluations of the suitability of a governance system based solely on religious law, excluding political parties and elections. The vertical axis displays the percentage of respondents corresponding to each response category.

Figure 8 displays responses to a question assessing support for a theocratic political system—defined as one governed solely by religious law, without political parties or elections. In the full sample (Panel A), 49% of respondents rate such a system as "very good" or "fairly good," while 51% consider it "fairly bad" or "very bad." Disaggregated results by religious affiliation (Panels B and C) show modest differences: 50% of Muslim respondents express support, compared to 46% of Christians. Conversely, 50% of Muslims and 54% of Christians view theocratic rule as a poor mode of governance. These findings indicate that support for democratic

institutions is contested, with substantial minorities in both groups open to alternatives grounded in religious authority.

The implementation of religious law often generates tension in religiously diverse societies. Nigeria offers a salient example: in several northern states with Muslim majorities, the adoption of Shariah law in the early 2000s provoked unrest, as many Christians perceived it as an assertion of Muslim dominance. These perceptions fueled intercommunal grievances and contributed to violent clashes resulting in significant loss of life (Suberu 2013; Angerbrandt 2011; Human Rights Watch 2003). In such contexts, high levels of support for religious law—even across religious groups—can reinforce the marginalization of non-religious individuals. Because religious legal systems are typically grounded in particular theological frameworks, individuals who do not adhere to the dominant faith may encounter symbolic exclusion or institutional constraints. Moreover, religious legal codes often extend into personal domains—such as gender roles, dress, and lifestyle—potentially clashing with secular ideals of individual autonomy and freedom of expression.

5. Conclusion

This study used data from Rounds 7, 8, and 9, of the Afrobarometer survey covering 39 African countries, to examine how religious affiliation—or its absence—relates to attitudes toward religious outgroups. Contrary to assumptions that the non-religious are inherently more tolerant, the analysis found that non-religious individuals were significantly more likely than Christians, Muslims, traditionalists, and adherents of other religions to express discomfort with having neighbors of a different religion. These findings contribute to a growing body of research that complicates the secular–religious divide by showing that non-religiosity, particularly in highly religious societies, may not translate into liberal or tolerant attitudes. In the African context, where religion is deeply embedded in political, cultural, and social life, non-religious individuals may experience marginalization or moral exclusion. This marginal status may foster defensive

boundary-making or ideological distancing from religious groups perceived as dominant or exclusionary.

While it is tempting to interpret these findings through the lens of rationalist ideology—assuming that non-religious individuals view religious worldviews as incompatible with science or freedom—this explanation risks flattening a complex social reality. Non-religious identity in Africa may stem not from philosophical commitments to secularism, but from estrangement from dominant religious norms. Individuals who identify as non-religious may do so because of personal experiences of judgment, exclusion, or moral condemnation (e.g., divorcees and those with children outside marriage). In such cases, negative attitudes toward religious neighbors may reflect not abstract ideological conflict, but lived experiences of social marginalization.

This study also acknowledges several limitations. First, social desirability bias may have led some respondents—particularly the religious—to overreport their tolerance of outgroups. Second, the outcome variable captures attitudes toward religious outgroups in general, without specifying non-religious individuals as a possible group. It is therefore unclear how religious individuals feel specifically about the non-religious. Finally, the relatively small number of self-identified non-religious respondents raises questions about representativeness and possible underreporting due to social stigma. As prior research suggests, many individuals may conceal their non-religiosity in settings where it invites ridicule or discrimination (Gez et al. 2022, p. 57). Nevertheless, it is also important to note that the estimated proportion of non-religious individuals in this study (5%) aligns reasonably well with the 2010 estimate of 3.2% reported by the Pew Research Center (2012), suggesting a degree of consistency over time.

Despite these limitations, this study makes a significant empirical and theoretical contribution. It is among the first to use large-scale, cross-national survey data to investigate how non-religious individuals in Africa relate to religious diversity. By bringing non-religiosity into focus in a region where religion is often taken as a given, the study challenges both secularist assumptions about tolerance and the invisibility of religious minorities in African sociological

research. Future research should explore these dynamics more deeply. Qualitative interviews with non-religious individuals could illuminate the social meanings of non-affiliation in different African contexts and the lived experiences that shape their intergroup attitudes. Large-scale surveys that explicitly include attitudes toward the non-religious as a reference category are also needed to assess whether prejudice is symmetrical or asymmetrical across the religious–non-religious divide.

In sum, the findings underscore the importance of context in shaping intergroup attitudes. Non-religiosity in highly religious societies may entail not only philosophical dissent but also social vulnerability—and this vulnerability may produce its own forms of boundary-making and prejudice. Understanding these dynamics can deepen sociological theories of tolerance, identity, and religious pluralism.

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Appendix

Table A1: Replicating the results in Table 2 using OLS regression

Religious hostility$^{\sigma}$	**(1)**	**(2)**	**(3)**
No religion	0.185***	0.197***	0.105***
	(0.068)	(0.067)	(0.018)
Educational level		-0.002	-0.034***
		(0.015)	(0.008)
Lived poverty index		-0.005	0.001
		(0.007)	(0.002)
Male (Reference: female)		-0.091***	-0.062***
		(0.013)	(0.013)
Age		0.002	-0.002***
		(0.001)	(0.00)
Constant	2.304***	2.325***	2.04***
	(0.08)	(0.114)	(0.036)
Country FE	No	No	Yes
Survey year FE	No	No	Yes
Survey round FE	No	No	Yes
Observations	146488	144659	144659
Number of clusters	39	39	39
R-squared	0.001	0.003	0.169
AIC statistic	468710.8	462525.1	436158.3
BIC statistic	468730.6	462584.4	436267

Note: Clustered robust standard errors are in parentheses, σ denotes the dependent variable, *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.10. All models are estimated using ordinary least squares (OLS) regression. "FE" denotes fixed effects. Control variables include educational level, poverty, gender, and age. The regression models are based on pooled data from Rounds 7, 8, and 9 covering 39 African countries. The data were collected between 2016 and 2023. AIC = Akaike information criterion; BIC = Bayesian information criterion.

Table A2: Replicating the results in Table 3 using OLS regression

Religious hostility$^{\sigma}$	**(1)**	**(2)**	**(3)**
Christians	-0.268***	-0.284***	-0.106***
	(0.045)	(0.045)	(0.018)
Muslims	-0.045	-0.05	-0.098**
	(0.146)	(0.145)	(0.045)
Traditional religion	-0.466***	-0.453***	-0.143***
	(0.072)	(0.069)	(0.047)
Other religions	0.234***	0.182*	-0.103***
	(0.085)	(0.101)	(0.023)
Educational level		0.007	-0.034***
		(0.014)	(0.008)
Lived poverty index		-0.003	0.001
		(0.006)	(0.002)
Male (Reference: Female)		-0.098***	-0.062***
		(0.013)	(0.013)
Age		0.002	-0.002***
		(0.001)	(0.00)
Constant	2.489***	2.478***	2.021***
	(0.081)	(0.102)	(0.046)
Country FE	No	No	Yes
Survey year FE	No	No	Yes
Survey round FE	No	No	Yes
Observations	146488	144659	144659
Number of clusters	39	39	39
R-squared	0.011	0.013	0.168
AIC statistic	467303.5	461121.5	436391.7
BIC statistic	467353	461210.4	436520.1

Note: Clustered robust standard errors are in parentheses, σ denotes the dependent variable, *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.10. All models are estimated using ordinary least squares (OLS) regression. "FE" denotes fixed effects. Control variables include educational level, poverty, gender, and age. The regression models are based on pooled data from Rounds 7, 8, and 9 covering 39 African countries. The data were collected between 2016 and 2023. AIC = Akaike information criterion; BIC = Bayesian information criterion.

Table A3: Replicating the results in Table 2 using LPM and a binary dependent variable

Religious hostility (binary)$^{\sigma}$	**(1)**	**(2)**	**(3)**
No religion	-0.017	-0.017	0.014***
	(0.016)	(0.015)	(0.005)
Educational level		-0.015***	-0.015***
		(0.004)	(0.002)
Lived poverty index		0.002*	0.002***
		(0.001)	(0.00)
Male (Reference: female)		-0.011***	-0.012***
		(0.003)	(0.004)
Age		-0.001**	-0.001***
		(0.00)	(0.00)
Constant	0.129***	0.193***	0.109***
	(0.015)	(0.027)	(0.011)
Country FE	No	No	Yes
Survey year FE	No	No	Yes
Survey round FE	No	No	Yes
Observations	146488	144659	144659
Number of clusters	39	39	39
R-squared	0.00	0.013	0.092
AIC statistic	94661.51	91316.51	79315.33
BIC statistic	94681.3	91375.8	79424.03

Note: Clustered robust standard errors are in parentheses, σ denotes the dependent variable, *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.10. The dependent variable is measured on a binary scale. All regressions are estimated using linear probability model (LPM). "FE" denotes fixed effects. Control variables include educational level, poverty, gender, and age. The regression models are based on pooled data from Rounds 7, 8, and 9 covering 39 African countries. The data were collected between 2016 and 2023. AIC = Akaike information criterion; BIC = Bayesian information criterion.

Table A4: Replicating the results in Table 3 using LPM and a binary dependent variable

Religious hostility (binary)$^{\sigma}$	**(1)**	**(2)**	**(3)**
Christians	-0.018	-0.015	-0.013**
	(0.011)	(0.011)	(0.005)
Muslims	0.083***	0.076**	-0.017 (p = 0.15)
	(0.029)	(0.028)	(0.011)
Traditional religion	-0.033*	-0.05***	-0.031***
	(0.017)	(0.016)	(0.009)
Other religions	-0.038***	-0.011	0.006 (p = 0.37)
	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.007)
Educational level		-0.011***	-0.015***
		(0.003)	(0.002)
Lived poverty index		0.002**	0.002***
		(0.001)	(0.00)
Male (Reference: Female)		-0.015***	-0.012***
		(0.004)	(0.004)
Age		-0.00*	-0.001***
		(0.00)	(0.00)
Constant	0.112***	0.158***	0.112***
	(0.013)	(0.021)	(0.013)
Country FE	No	No	Yes
Survey year FE	No	No	Yes
Survey round FE	No	No	Yes
Observations	146488	144659	144659
Number of clusters	39	39	39
R-squared	0.02	0.029	0.091
AIC statistic	94661.51	79315.33	79340.88
BIC statistic	94681.3	79424.03	79469.35

Note: Clustered robust standard errors are in parentheses, σ denotes the dependent variable, *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.10. The dependent variable is measured on a binary scale. All regressions are estimated using linear probability model (LPM). "FE" denotes fixed effects. The control variables include educational level, poverty, gender, and age. The regression models are based on pooled data from Rounds 7, 8, and 9 covering 39 African countries. The data were collected between 2016 and 2023. AIC = Akaike information criterion; BIC = Bayesian information criterion.

Table A5: List of 39 African countries in the sample

Country	Frequency	Percentage
Benin	3600	2.44
Botswana	3598	2.44
Burkina Faso	3600	2.44
Cabo Verde	3599	2.44
Cameroon	3602	2.44
Côte d'Ivoire	3600	2.44
ESwatini	3600	2.44
Gabon	3599	2.44
Gambia	3600	2.44
Ghana	7169	4.87
Guinea	3594	2.44
Kenya	6399	4.34
Lesotho	3600	2.44
Liberia	3600	2.44
Madagascar	2400	1.63
Malawi	3600	2.44
Mali	3600	2.44
Mauritius	3600	2.44
Morocco	3600	2.44
Mozambique	4622	3.14
Namibia	3600	2.44
Niger	3599	2.44
Nigeria	4799	3.26
São Tomé and Príncipe	2400	1.63
Senegal	3600	2.44
Sierra Leone	3600	2.44
South Africa	5020	3.41
Sudan	4200	2.85
Tanzania	7198	4.88
Togo	3600	2.44
Tunisia	3599	2.44
Uganda	4800	3.26
Zambia	3600	2.44
Zimbabwe	3600	2.44
Angola	3600	2.44
Ethiopia	4778	3.24
Mauritania	1200	0.81
Seychelles	1176	0.80
Congo-Brazzaville	1200	0.81
Total	**147,351**	**100.00**

Note: The table lists the 39 African countries used in the analysis and the total number of observations collected from each of them. The number of observations is based on pooled data from Rounds 7, 8 and 9 of the Afrobarometer surveys conducted between 2016 and 2023.