Дискурсы этики. 2022, 1(13): 53—68
ISSN 2311-570X (online)
*Постоянная ссылка:*
http://theoreticalappliedethics.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/DE2022_1_13_53-68.pdf

УДК 17

# РЕЛИГИОЗНАЯ ВЕРА И ГЕНЕРАЛИЗИРОВАННОЕ ДОВЕРИЕ: ПОЧЕМУ ВЕРУЮЩИЕ МЕНЬШЕ ДОВЕРЯЮТ БОЛЬШИНСТВУ ЛЮДЕЙ?

Артёмов Г. П., Перов В. Ю., Щукин Д. А.

статья:
поступила в редакцию 08.02.2022
принята к публикации 10.04.2022
опубликована (онлайн) 09.07.2022

© Артёмов Георгий Петрович
доктор философских наук, профессор
профессор каф.этики Института философии Санкт-Петербургского государственного университета, Санкт-Петербург, Россия
адрес для корреспонденции: g.artemov@spbu.ru
© Перов Вадим Юрьевич
кандидат философских наук, доцент
доцент каф.этики Института философии Санкт-Петербургского государственного университета, Санкт-Петербург, Россия
адрес для корреспонденции: v.perov@spbu.ru
© Щукин Денис Андреевич
кандидат философских наук
директор фонда "Креативные практики", Россия
адрес для корреспонденции: denishchukin@gmail.com
Эта статья доступна в соответствии с условиями лицензии Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC 4.0)

**Аннотация**. Генерализованное доверие – это положительное отношение индивида к большинству людей, в том числе и к тем, с которыми он лично не знаком. Этот термин широко используется в современной этике, хотя его взаимосвязь с некоторыми сопряженными понятиями, например, с религиозной верой, по-видимому, еще недостаточно изу-

чена. В статье ставится задача найти корреляцию между уровнем генерализированного доверия и долей верующих в европейских странах. Вопреки распространенному мнению, проведенный анализ приводит к выводу, что верующие меньше, чем неверующие, доверяют большинству людей. Они исходят из того, что большинство – это люди, склонные к различным аморальным поступкам, несовместимыми с основными правилами религиозного поведения, переступать которые греховно. Более того, чем строже требования той или иной религии, тем строже суждения ее последователей в отношении поведения других, не принадлежащих к этой религии или не являющихся ее строгими приверженцами.

**Ключевые слова**: социология морали, генерализованное доверие, религиозная вера, этическая теория

Статья подготовлена в рамках гранта РФФИ №16-03-00388а

Discourses of Ethics. 2022, 1(13): 53—68
ISSN 2311-570X (online)
*permanent link:*
http://theoreticalappliedethics.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/DE2022_1_13_53-68.pdf

# VALUE JUSTIFICATION OF MORAL NORMATIVETY IN PROFESSIONAL CODES OF ETHICS RELIGIOUS BELIEF AND GENERALIZED TRUST: WHY BELIEVERS PUT LESS TRUST IN MOST PEOPLE?

Artyomov Georgiy, Perov Vadim, Shchukin Denis

received 08.02.2022
accepted 10.04.2022
published (online) 09.07.2022

© Georgiy P. Artyomov
Doctor of Science in Philosophy, Professor
Department of Ethics, Institute os Philosophy, Saint Petersburg State University, St. Petersburg, Russia
Correspondence to: g.artemov@spbu.ru
© Vadim Yu. Perov
Candidate of Science in Philosophy, Docent
Department of Ethics, Institute of Philosophy, Saint Petersburg State University, St.Petersburg, Russia
Correspondence to: v.perov@spbu.ru.
© *Denis A. Shchukin*
Candidate of Science in Philosophy
Director, «Creative Practices» Foundation, Russia
Correspondence to: denishchukin@gmail.com
*This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC 4.0)*

**Abstract**: Generalized trust is a positive attitude of an individual to the majority of people, including those this individual does not personally know. This term is widely used within contemporary ethics, though it's interconnection with some types of relative concepts, e.g. religious belief, seems to

be still underexplored. The article aims at finding correlation between the level of generalized trust and the proportion of believers in European countries. Contrary to widespread opinion, our analysis brings us to the conclusion that believers less than non-believers trust most people because they assume that the majority of them are people prone to various amoral behaviors incompatible with the main rules of religious conduct which are sinful to overstep. What is more, the stricter the requirements of a certain religion, the stricter the judgements of its followers with regard to the behavior of others who are not adherents of this religion or are not its strict adherents.

**Keywords:** sociology of morality, generalized trust, religious belief, ethical theory

Funded by Russian Foundation for Basic Research (№16-03-00388a)

This article aims at finding correlation between the level of trust in most people (generalized trust) and the proportion of believers in European countries. Generalized trust is viewed in accordance with the concept suggested by Eric Uslaner. This concept stipulates generalized trust as a positive attitude of an individual to the majority of people, including those this individual does not personally know. It is this trust in strangers that is of moral value, since it is founded on "the acceptance of them by our moral community" [5, 1-1]. Generalized trust is a "moralistic" trust because it is linked to the idea that postulates prevalence of good people in the world around us [5, 1-5]. Trust as a type of social attitude presupposes the individual's confidence in the fact that others share his fundamental moral values [4, 4] and will behave in accordance with the generally accepted norms [2, 22]. Uslaner points out that the investigation of generalized trust can be performed with a standardized test of inter-personal trust suggested by Rosenberg. "Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with other people?" [5, 3-2].

At first glance, it is hard to question the idea of the positive influence of religion on public morals. This proposition looks particularly convincing in the context of reasoning that the project of liberal enlightenment in the 20th century has failed. Liberal paradigm suggested universality of the sphere which embraces values and norms; it also suggested a search for the rational basis of ethical norms. Unlike secular norm, religious one is determined by the tradition and does not require any additional logical argumentation. Secular thinking has failed to completely replace the normative system dictated by religion and in many situations turned out to be less effective from the practical standpoint.

In this connection, the post-secular world [3; 1] is not just a consequential restoration of the pre-secular order, but a new stage at which point the achievements of secularization (rationalism, human rights and tolerance) have to be aligned with traditional positive religious paradigms providing unification of society.

Common sense suggests that religious believers tend to trust most people to a greater extent than non-believers. The relation of a non-religious person to others has a rational basis and in many respects depends on his or her positive or negative life experience. Positive attitude of a believer toward others is initially formed by the religious commandments: “Love thy neighbor as thyself” and even “Love your enemies.”

To test this assumption, the materials of Wave 8 (2016) of European Social Survey (ESS) have been used in this research.[1] The character of correlation between belief and generalized trust was performed by different statistical methods, such as regression analysis,[2] z-values,[3] and micro-analysis of cross-tables.[4] To perform regression analysis and z-values analysis, a database of mean values was built for a number of variables: a percentage of respondents who positively assessed their health; a percentage of respondents with higher education; a percentage of believers per the population of a given country; a percentage of respondents who trust most people. The first three variables were considered to be

[1] European Social Survey (ESS) is a social scientific endeavor to map the attitudes, beliefs and behavior patterns of the various populations in Europe. The survey was started in 2002. Free access database on the website of the Norwegian Social Science Data Services. URL: http://ess.nsd.uib.no/ess/

[2] Regression analysis is a statistical process for estimating the relationships among variables. Description: Bühl, Achim; Zöfel, Peter. SPSS. Version 10. Einführung in die moderne Datenanalyse unter Windows. München: Pearson Education Deutschland GmbH, 2000.

[3] Z-values are a part of statistical measurement of a score's relationship to the mean in a group of scores.

[4] Micro analysis of cross tables is calculating and comparing the standardized residual, i.e. values that characterize the extent and direction of differences between observed frequencies and expected frequencies.

independent, while the latter one was regarded as a dependent variable. Nations were regarded as observations in this database. For all these variables for each country, z-values were determined which characterize the extent and differences of indices of each country from the mean indices of all countries. After that, correlation coefficients between all chosen variables were determined (Table 1). This table demonstrates relevant correlation coefficients between dependent variables and the independent variable that characterize an average degree of dependence. At the same time, some irrelevant values of correlation coefficients were noted. This conclusion can be made by estimating correlation coefficient error (*m*) and Student's *t*-test. The analysis of the designed database with the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test enabled to determine that the distribution of values for the observed variables is close to the normal distribution.

Following this preliminary testing of the database by Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, Version 23), regression analysis was performed, its results presented in Table 2. While evaluating the results one should be the observed value of the Fisher F-test must be bigger than that in the table, while its value is no lower than 0,005. Table 2 demonstrates that the obtained data correspond to the first and second points of these requirements. With df1 = 3 and df2 = 19, the value of F-test is 5,19. The observed value of this criterion (10,379) is bigger than the tabular, which means that the obtained results are in line with the second condition.

The next stage of the regression analysis studies values and meanings of regression coefficients with reference to each three independent variables (Table 3). The analysis shows that Beta-coefficients in all independent variables are bigger than standard errors, while significance points are not lower than 0,05. The obtained data enables to build a regression formula (with due consideration of Beta sign): trust level in most people is 10,219—0,331·(the proportion of believers) + 0,393·(the proportion of respondents with higher education) + 0,591·(the proportion of those who rate their health positively). This regression equation accounts for nearly 62 percent of changes in the dependent variable (the proportion

of respondents trusting most people), since correlation coefficient squared is 0,621.

Our analysis brings us to the conclusion that a higher level of trust in most people in the analyzed countries is determined by the proportion of respondents with higher education and those who positively rate their health. In most cases the prevalence of these indices over the mean index is accompanied by the prevalence above the mean value and by the prevalence of trust indices in most people (Table 4). There is a reverse dependence between the proportion of believers per country's population and the proportion of respondents who trust in most people: for most countries with the proportion of believers higher than the mean level, the proportion of those who trust in most people is below the mean value. This correlation can be observed in 62 percent of all cases. In other instances its character is different.

For a more detailed analysis of correlation between the proportion of believers per country's population and the proportion of respondents who trust in most people in the country, one can build a diagram of z-values of these variables for all countries in question (Figure 2). It can help distinguish four groups of countries with regard to the relation in them of values and signs of z-values of both variables under study. The first group includes countries where the proportion of believers is above the mean level, while the proportion of those who trust most of people is below the average mean (Spain, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia). The second group includes the countries with the proportion of believers below average and the proportion of those who trust most people above the mean value (Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden). The third group includes countries where the proportion of believers and the proportion of those who trust most people is below the mean values (Belgium, Czech Republic, Germany, France, Great Britain, Hungary, Russia). The fourth group includes the countries where the proportion of believers and those who trust most people is above the European mean (Austria Switzerland, Ireland, Israel, Lithuania). The correlation thus established between the proportion of believers and the level of trust in most people in the country is

noted in 14 out of 23 analyzed countries, i.e. in 60 percent of cases. This data in general is in line with the results of regression analysis.

In most countries, we have identified the dependence: the level of trust of the majority of people in the country is inversely proportional to the level of religiosity of its population (Table 4). The definite signs of this pattern are varied in certain countries with regard to the correlation between the proportion of believers, people who positively rate their health, and people with higher education.

Let us consider random correlation between religious belief and trust in most people. The results of correlation analysis (Table 5) suggest that these variables are inversely dependent: an increase in the values of one of them is accompanied by the decline in the values of the other, and vice versa.

What are the causes of prevalence of believers' mistrust over trust in most people? One can suggest that one of the principal factors which determine this trend is the denomination of respondents, and their belonging to Catholicism, Orthodoxy, Protestantism, Islam, Judaism and others. Among all respondents who consider themselves to be believers (59,5%), there are 52,8 percent of Catholics, 20,8 percent are Orthodox, 16 percent are Protestants, 5,7 percent are Moslem, and 1,8 percent are Judaic. This belonging to a denomination suggests bigger or smaller inclusion of people into the life of its religious community along with a different level of identity with the norms and values of this community. The adherence to the norms and values of one religious community leads to the distancing from the norms and values of other communities. This denominational dissociation becomes particular important in Europe with the growing influx of people with religious beliefs which are different from traditional religious belief of the indigenous population. This prompts a change in the traditional denomination pattern in the recipient countries and brings about numerous norms of behavior different from one another.

One of the causes of decline in the generalized trust is the modernization of European countries which, in its turn, brings about a division of values and norms of behavior into religious and secular. This explains deviant

moral assessment (indictment or deprecation) by believers and non-believers of different types of behavior. According to the WVS Wave 6 (2010-2014)[1] of assessing different norms of behavior (homosexuality, abortion, divorce, euthanasia, suicide) a significant number of believers and non-believers adhered to opposite positions (Figure 2). It shows that in all analyzed types of behavior the option "deserves indictment" produced negative standardized residual in believers, while non-believers demonstrated positive standardized residual. It means that non-believers to a greater extent than believers tend to approve of the above-mentioned behavior.

It is important to take into account the fact that commonly "most people", who are divided into believers and non-believers and subsequently believers belong to different denominations, inevitably include representatives of social communities different from one another. Our analysis brings us to the conclusion that believers less than non-believers trust most people because they assume that the majority of them are people prone to various amoral behaviors incompatible with the main rules of conduct which are sinful to overstep. Non-believers more than believers trust most people because they ground their assessment not on compliance of morally arguable behavior with the dogmas of a certain religion but rather harm or benefit for others. Many non-believers justify their behaviors which are questionable from believers' standpoint, because they think that this kind of behavior is harmful only to those who practise this behavior and, hence, is a personal matter which does not affect public morals. The stricter the requirements of a certain religion, the stricter the judgements of its followers with regard to the behavior of others who are not adherents of this religion or are not its strict adherents.

[1] The World Values Survey (WVS) is a global research project that explores people's values and beliefs and has been carried out since 1981. Free access database on the website: http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org

## Tables and graphs

Table 1. The relationship of independent and dependent variables

| Variables | Value | The level of the generalized trust | The share of believers | The share of respondents with higher education | The share of respondents with positive assessment of their health |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The level of the generalized trust | Pearson's correlation coefficient | 1 | -,354 | ,606 | ,596 |
| | Significance | | ,049 | ,001 | ,001 |
| | Number of observation | 23 | 23 | 23 | 23 |
| The share of believers | Pearson's correlation coefficient | -,354 | 1 | -,231 | -,009 |
| | Significance | ,049 | | ,144 | ,483 |
| | Number of observation | 23 | 23 | 23 | 23 |
| The share of respondents with higher education | Pearson's correlation coefficient | ,606 | -,231 | 1 | ,367 |
| | Significance | ,001 | ,144 | | ,042 |
| | Number of observation | 23 | 23 | 23 | 23 |
| The share of respondents with positive assessment of their health | Pearson's correlation coefficient | ,596 | -,009 | ,367 | 1 |
| | Significance | ,001 | ,483 | ,042 | |
| | Number of observation | 23 | 23 | 23 | 23 |

**Independent variables:** The share of respondents with positive assessment of their health, The share of respondents with higher education, The share of believers.
**Dependent Variable**: The shave of the generalized trust

**Source:** Norwegian Social Science Data Services. European Social Survey. Round 8. 2016. Base: ESS8e02 URL: http://ess.nsd.uib.no/ess/

## Table 2. Final Regression Analysis Model

| R | R-squared | Standard evaluation error | Statistics | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | F | df1 | df2 | Significance |
| ,788[a] | ,621 | 10,04022 | 10,379 | 3 | 19 | ,000 |

**Dependent Variable**: The shave of the generalized trust
**Independent variables:** The share of respondents with positive assessment of their health, The share of respondents with higher education, The share of believers.
**Legend:** R – total correlation coefficient between the dependent and independent variables; F – Fisher's Exact Test; df – Degrees of Freedom.

## Table 3. Regression Coefficients*

| Variables | B | Standard Error | Beta | t | Significance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | -10,219 | 16,094 | | -,635 | ,533 |
| The share of believers | -,250 | ,107 | -,331 | -2,347 | ,030 |
| The share of respondents with higher education | ,813 | ,292 | ,393 | 2,786 | ,012 |
| The share of respondents with positive assessment of their health | ,802 | ,192 | ,591 | 4,183 | ,001 |

* **Dependent Variable**: The shave of the generalized trust
**Legend:** B – constant (coefficient of the regression equation) 9,460; Beta – standardized coefficient that demonstrates which of the independent variables have a greater effect on the dependent variable
**Source:** Norwegian Social Science Data Services. European Social Survey. Round 8. 2016. Base: ESS8e02 URL: http://ess.nsd.uib.no/ess/

Table 4. The values of variables by country (in % of respondents)

| Country | The share of respondents with higher education | The share of respondents with positive assessment of their health | The share of believers | The shave of the generalized trust |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Austria | 13,1 | 74,4 | 73,1 | 50,9 |
| Belgium | 34,6 | 76,0 | 45,5 | 48,3 |
| Switzerland | 20,5 | 84,1 | 61,5 | 60,2 |
| Czech Republic | 13,0 | 65,6 | 19,4 | 46,4 |
| Germany | 25,7 | 61,0 | 54,8 | 46,7 |
| Estonia | 27,9 | 50,9 | 28,2 | 53,6 |
| Spain | 22,2 | 62,4 | 67,3 | 42,1 |
| Finland | 30,0 | 68,9 | 55,3 | 77,3 |
| France | 17,3 | 60,0 | 53,2 | 30,7 |
| United Kingdom | 27,3 | 71,9 | 46,8 | 47,6 |
| Hungary | 12,9 | 63,0 | 51,3 | 34,3 |
| Ireland | 25,9 | 79,8 | 74,2 | 54,7 |
| Israel | 32,0 | 77,5 | 98,9 | 50,6 |
| Iceland | 24,6 | 76,9 | 46,2 | 66,7 |
| Italy | 11,7 | 70,2 | 74,5 | 37,0 |
| Lithuania | 27,4 | 54,1 | 88,9 | 49,0 |
| Netherlands | 29,3 | 71,4 | 33,1 | 67,0 |
| Norway | 38,8 | 77,6 | 53,4 | 75,8 |
| Poland | 22,3 | 64,0 | 91,4 | 26,9 |
| Portugal | 22,3 | 50,2 | 73,9 | 26,4 |
| Russian Federation | 33,0 | 38,2 | 58,3 | 30,6 |
| Sweden | 26,4 | 76,3 | 36,4 | 66,5 |
| Slovenia | 28,8 | 62,6 | 61,7 | 31,3 |
| Mean | 24,5 | 59,7 | 59,5 | 40,0 |

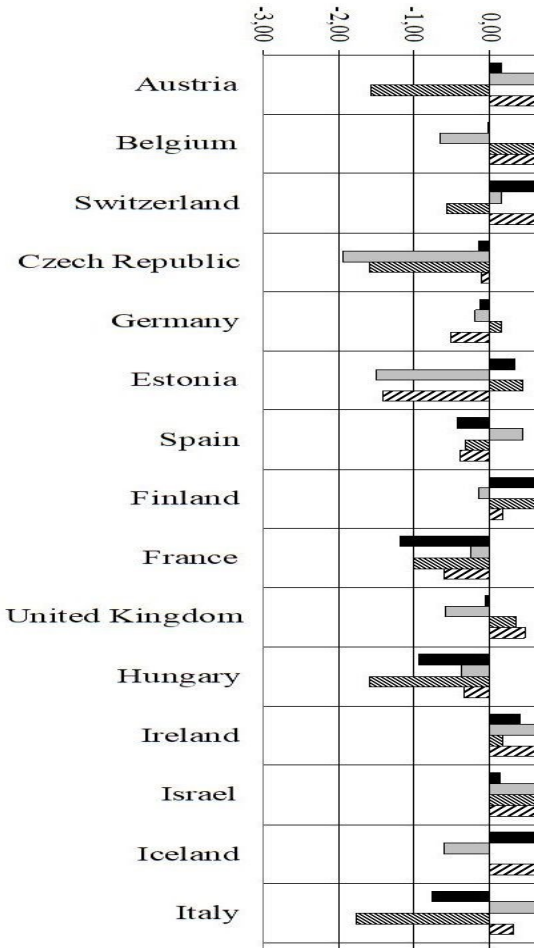
**Source:** Norwegian Social Science Data Services. European Social Survey. Round 8. 2016. Base: ESS8e02 URL: http://ess.nsd.uib.no/ess/

Table 5. Share of Believers and Level of Generalized Trust (correlation)

| | | The shave of the generalized trust | The share of believers |
|---|---|---|---|
| The shave of the generalized trust | Pearson R | 1 | -,337 |
| | Significance | | ,058 |
| | N | 23 | 23 |
| The share of believers | Pearson R | -,337 | 1 |
| | Significance | ,058 | |
| | N | 23 | 23 |

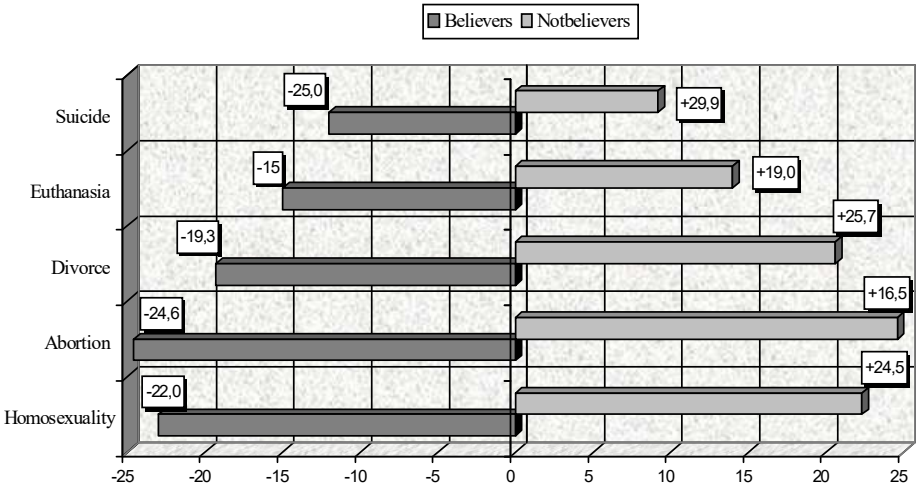
**Source:** Norwegian Social Science Data Services. European Social Survey. Round 8. 2016. Base: ESS8e02 URL: http://ess.nsd.uib.no/ess/

**Graph.1. Feedback variables in different countries (z-value)**




**Source:** Norwegian Social Science Data Services. European Social Survey. Round 8. 2016. ESS8e02 URL: http://ess.nsd.uib.no/ess/

**Graph 2. Attitude of believers and nonbelievers to different types of behavior** (standardized residuals)




*ρ=0,000*
**Source:** World Values Survey. Round 6. 2010-2014. Combined database based on WorldValuesSurvey-Wave6-2010-2014_v2014-11-07 URL: http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org

## References

1. Bauman, Zygmunt. Europe: An Unfinished Adventure. Cambridge: Polity, 2004
2. Fukuyama, Francis. Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity. New York: Free Press, 1995.
3. Habermas, Jürgen; Ratzinger, Joseph. The Dialectics of Secularization. On Reason and Religion. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2006.
4. Uslaner Eric M. Trust as a moral value // Dario Castiglione, Jan W. van Deth, and Guglielmo Wolleb, eds., Handbook of Social Capital, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
5. Uslaner Eric M. The Moral Foundations of Trust. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.