

# Measuring Religiosity and Harmonizing Religious Measures in Cross-National Surveys

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# Definition, Dimensions and Data

Substantive Definition (e.g. Spiro 1966):  
Belief in supernatural entity

Dimensions (e.g. Glock 1962):

- Association with Religious Group
- Religious Behavior
- Religious Belief
- Religious Experience
- Religious Knowledge

International Social Survey Program, Europe 1998  
European Social Survey 2002

# Measuring Affiliation with Religious Group

## Identification vs Membership

|                       |     | Member of group  |                        |
|-----------------------|-----|------------------|------------------------|
|                       |     | Yes              | No                     |
| Identifies with group | No  | Nominal member   | Irreligious non-member |
|                       | Yes | Religious member | Religious non-member   |

# Measuring Identification with Religious Group

ESS 2002, Master Questionnaire:

Do you consider yourself as belonging to any particular religion or denomination?

ESS 2002, Austria and Germany:

Regardless of whether you are a member or affiliate of a church or religious group ...

[Unabhängig davon, ob Sie Mitglied oder Angehöriger einer Kirche oder Religionsgemeinschaft sind ...]

# Measuring Membership in Religious Group

ISSP 1998, Germany:

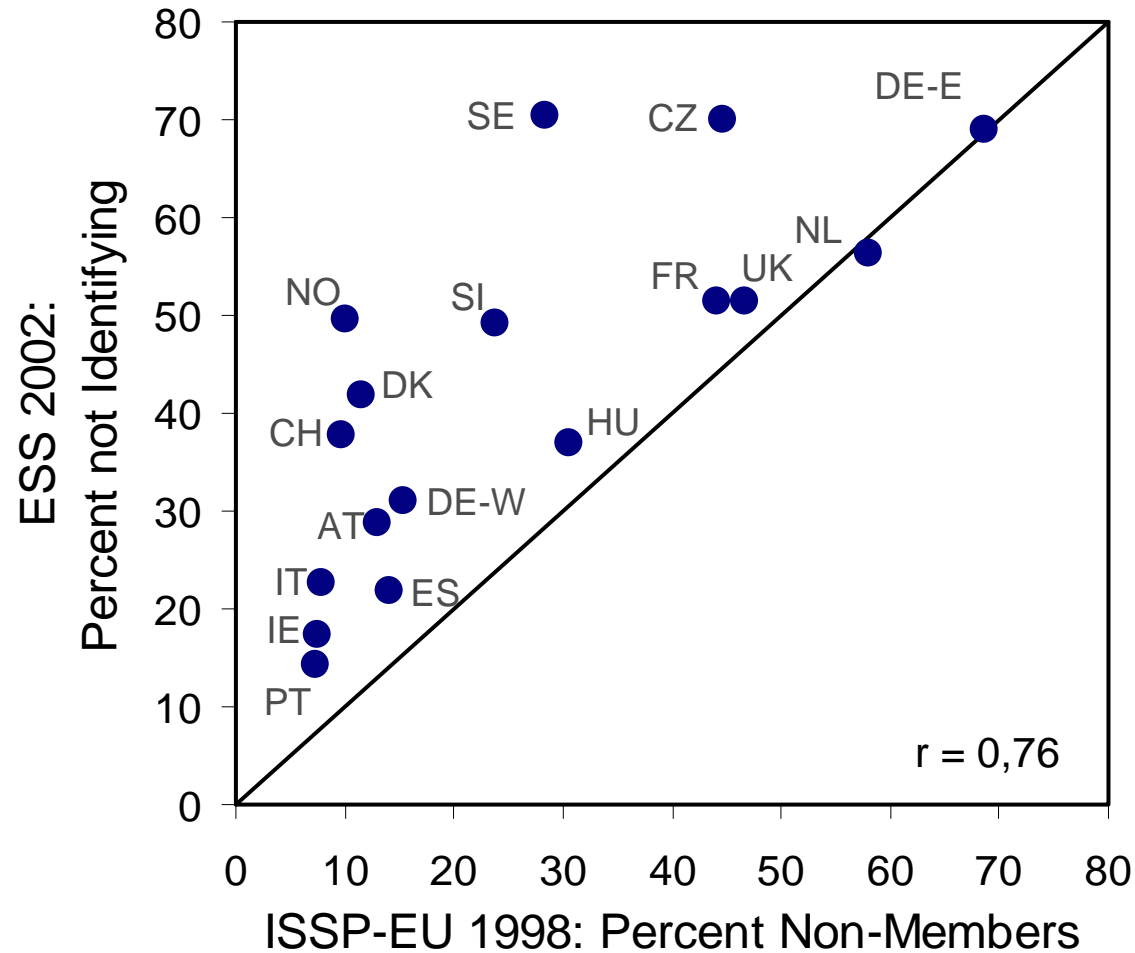
Which religious group do you belong to?

[Welcher Religionsgemeinschaft gehören Sie an?]

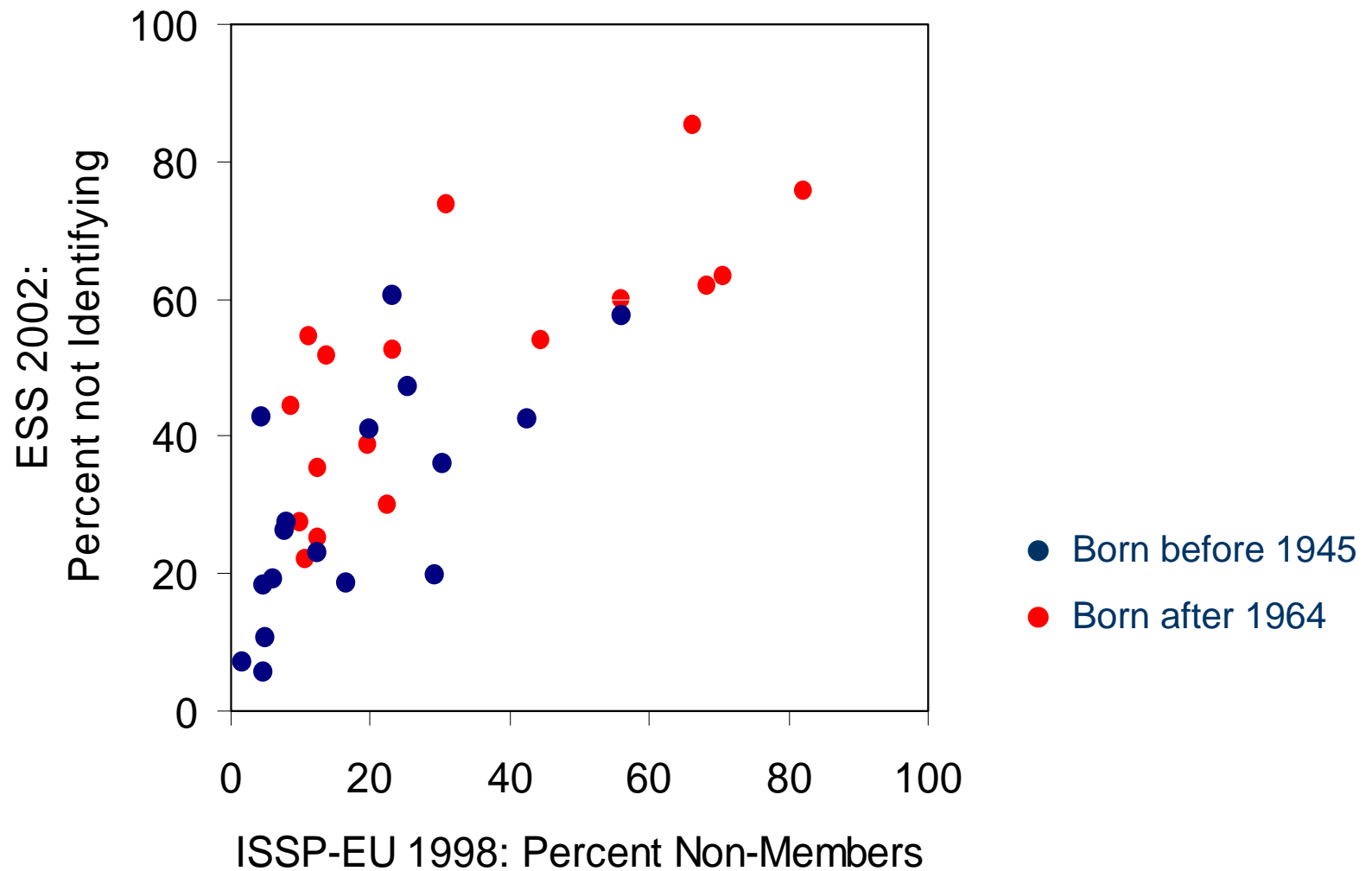
ISSP 1998, New Zealand:

What is your current religion?

# Membership vs Identification



# Change of Membership/Identification





# The Problem of Religious Diversity

Countless religious groups; Steensland et al. (2000) name over 150 Protestant denominations in the USA alone (see also Campbell 2005)

Even bigger problem in cross-national surveys, e.g. ESS:

# The Problem of Religious Diversity

| Questionnaire                      | ESS round 1 | Dataset            |
|------------------------------------|-------------|--------------------|
| Christian – no denomination        |             |                    |
| Roman Catholic                     |             | 1 Roman Cathlic    |
| Greek or Russian Orthodox          | }           | 3 Eastern Orthodox |
| Other Eastern Orthodox, which      |             |                    |
| Protestant (no further detail)     |             |                    |
| Church of England/Anglican         | }           | 2 Protestant       |
| Baptist                            |             |                    |
| Methodist                          |             |                    |
| Presbyterian/Church of Scotland    |             |                    |
| United Reform Church/Congegational |             |                    |
| Free Presbyterian                  |             |                    |
| Bretheren                          |             |                    |
| Other Protestant                   | }           | 4 Other Christian  |
| Other Christian                    |             |                    |

# Indicators of Religiosity

Subjective religiosity

Attending religious services

Praying

Belief

# Subjective Religiosity

## ISSP 1998

Would you describe yourself as ...

- 1 Extremely religious
- 2 Very religious
- 3 Somewhat religious
- 4 Neither religious nor non-religious
- 5 Somewhat non-religious
- 6 Very non-religious
- 7 Extremely non-religious

## ESS 2002

Regardless of whether you belong to a particular religion, how religious would you say you are?

00 Not at all religious

...

10 Very religious

# Attending Religious Services

## ISSP 1998

Attending religious services

- 1 Once a week or more
- 2 2-3 times a month
- 3 Once a month
- 4 Several times a year
- 5 Less frequently a year
- 6 Never

## ESS 2002

Apart from special occasions such as weddings and funerals, about how often do you attend religious services nowadays?

- 1 Every day
- 2 More than once a week
- 3 Once a week
- 4 At least once a month
- 5 Only on special holy days
- 6 Less often
- 7 Never

# Praying

## ISSP 1998

About how often do you pray?

- 1 Never
- 2 Less than once a year
- 3 About once or twice a year
- 4 Several times a year
- 5 About once a month
- 6 2-3 times a month
- 7 Nearly every week
- 8 Every week
- 9 Several times a week
- 10 Once a day
- 11 Several times a day

## ESS 2002

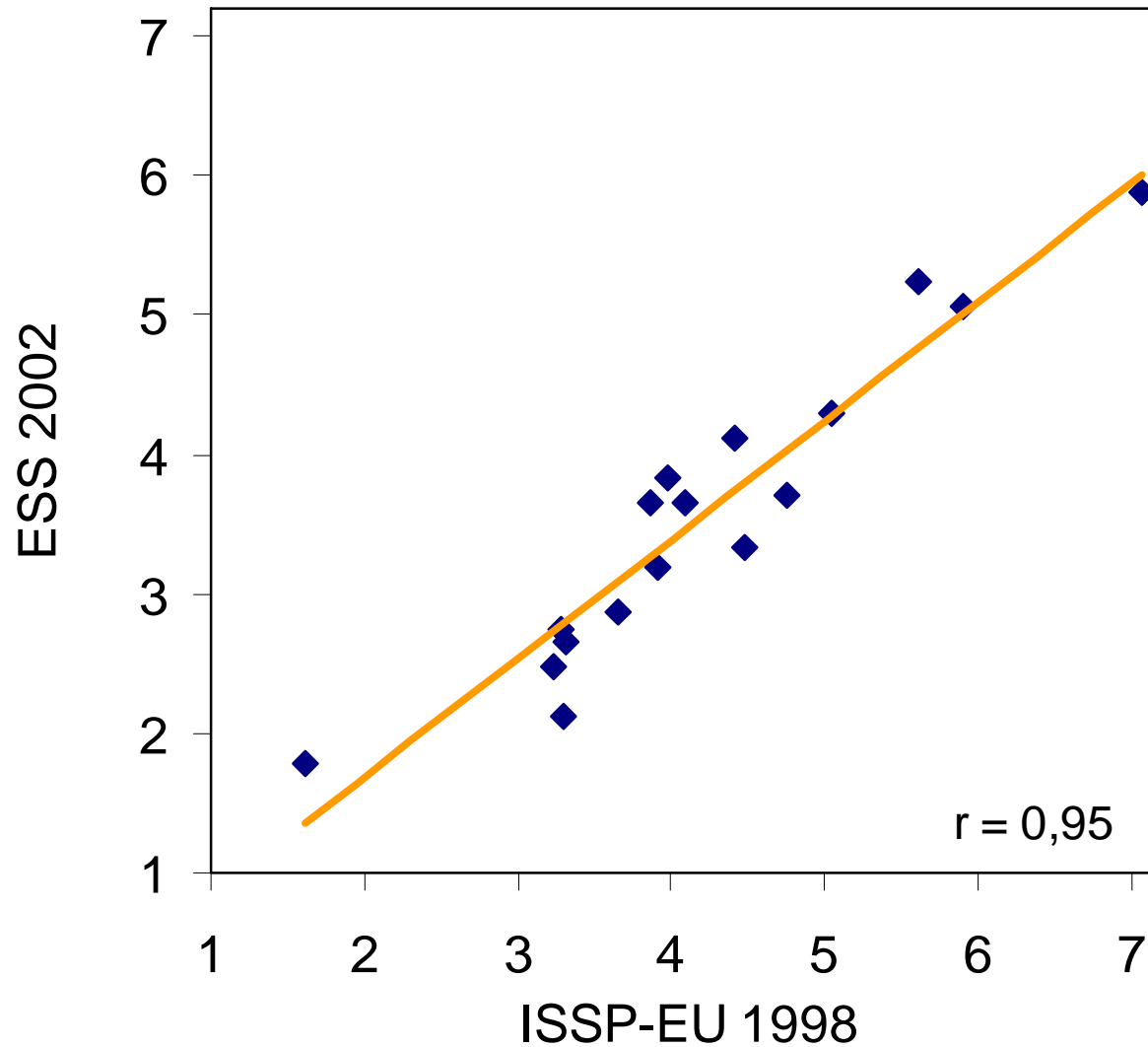
Apart from when you are at religious services, how often, if at all, do you pray?

- 1 Every day
- 2 More than once a week
- 3 Once a week
- 4 At least once a month
- 5 Only on special holy days
- 6 Less often
- 7 Never

# Index of Religiosity: Factor Loadings

|                        | ISSP-EU | ESS  |
|------------------------|---------|------|
| Subjective Religiosity | 0.86    | 0.88 |
| Services               | 0.86    | 0.87 |
| Praying                | 0.90    | 0.89 |
| Common Variance        | 76%     | 77%  |

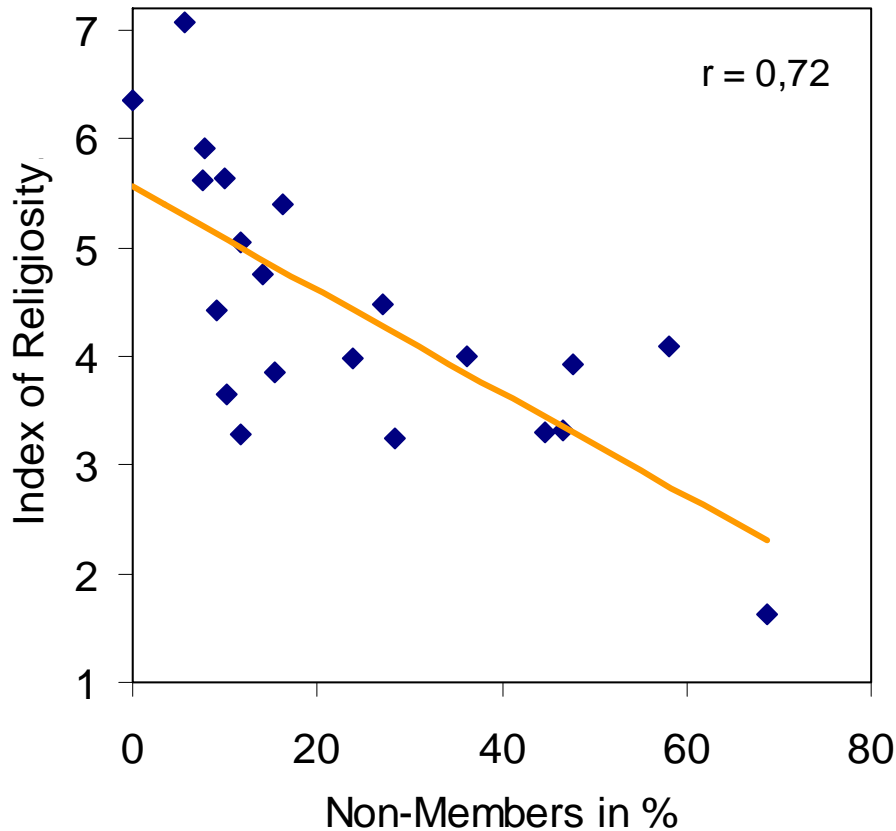
# Index of Religiosity: Country Means



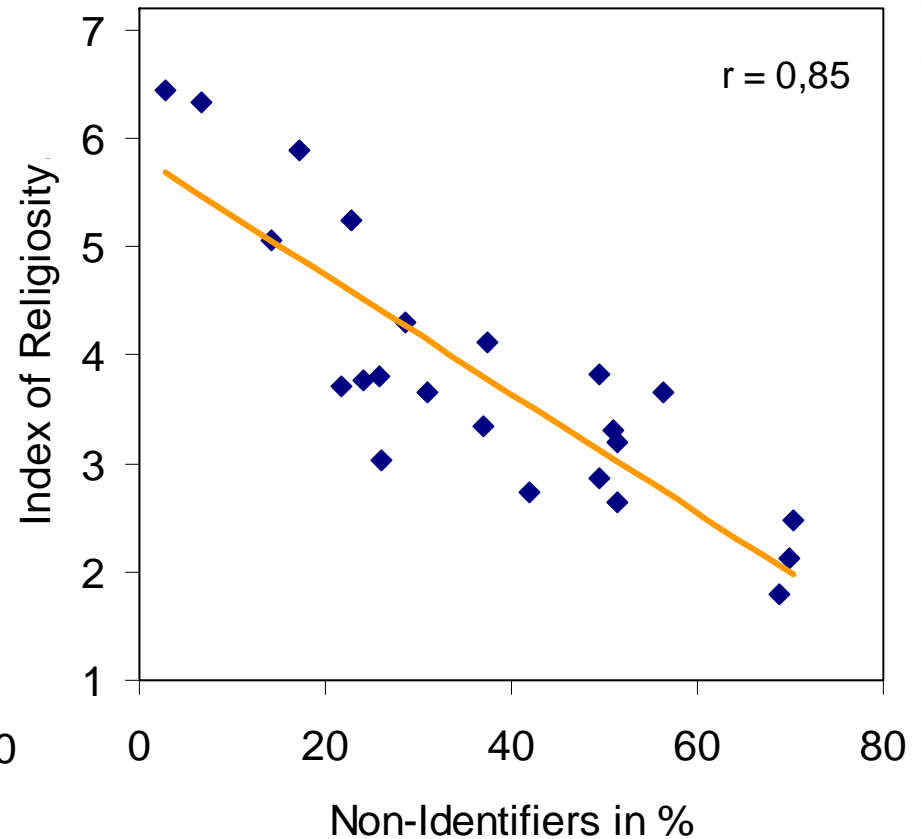


# Membership/Identification and Religiosity

ISSP-EU 1998



ESS 2002



# Conclusion

- Membership in and identification with a religious group does not have the same meaning in most European countries
- Religiosity can be measured reliably and validly across European countries and across denominations in Europe
- Measures for non-institutionalized, individual religiosity should be added

Thank you!