

Explaining the rise of non-theism in the US: The role of material security



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Norris & Inglehart (2011, 2020)

N&I argue that increased existential security reduces the need for religious institutions with costly demands (cognitive dissonance b/w values and desires) BUT

- only some aspects of security predict some aspects of religiosity and these effects may be confounded by the demographic dynamic in developing countries
- N&I stress the importance of adolescence yet have no developmental data
- no test of the cognitive dissonance claim

Is individual decrease in theistic beliefs Granger-caused by material security during childhood? (Study 1)

Is the effect of material security on theistic beliefs facilitated by cognitive dissonance? (Study 2)

Study 1

- NSYR longitudinal data, ~3,300 US adolescents
- 4 waves, ages 13-28, parent data in Wave 1
- Testing the total and direct effects of parent material security on their children's belief in god in Wave 4
- Testing causal pathways corresponding to aspects of religious systems (Lang & Kundt, 2020) in the long-term (FIG1) and short-term (FIG2)

Study 2

- Experimental, 2x2 between-subjects design
- 800 US and Czech non-theist participants
- Random assignment to insecure/secure and religious/secular conditions
- Participants choose to play econ. game in normative and norm-free groups (Lang et al., 2022) (FIG3)
- Testing whether non-theist forgo cooperative benefits in insecure environments due to clashing relig. values

References

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 Inglehart, R. F. (2020). Religion's sudden decline...
 Lang et al. (2022). Advertising cooperative phenotype through costly signals...
 Lang, M., & Kundt, R. (2020). Evolutionary, cognitive, and contextual approaches...
 Norenzayan, A. (2013). Big Gods...
 Norris, P., & Inglehart, R. (2011). Sacred and secular...
 Zyphur, M. et al. (2020). Building a general cross-lagged panel model (GCLM).

Fig.1. DAG for Study 1: Long-term effects

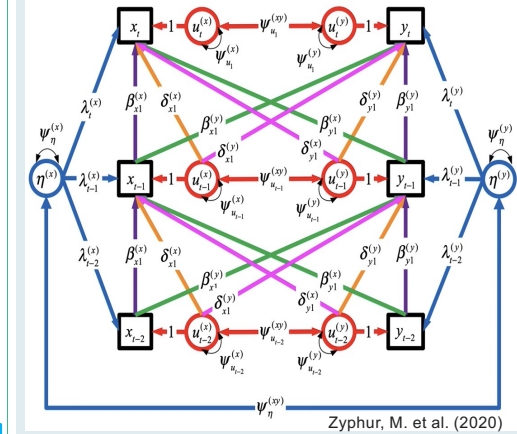
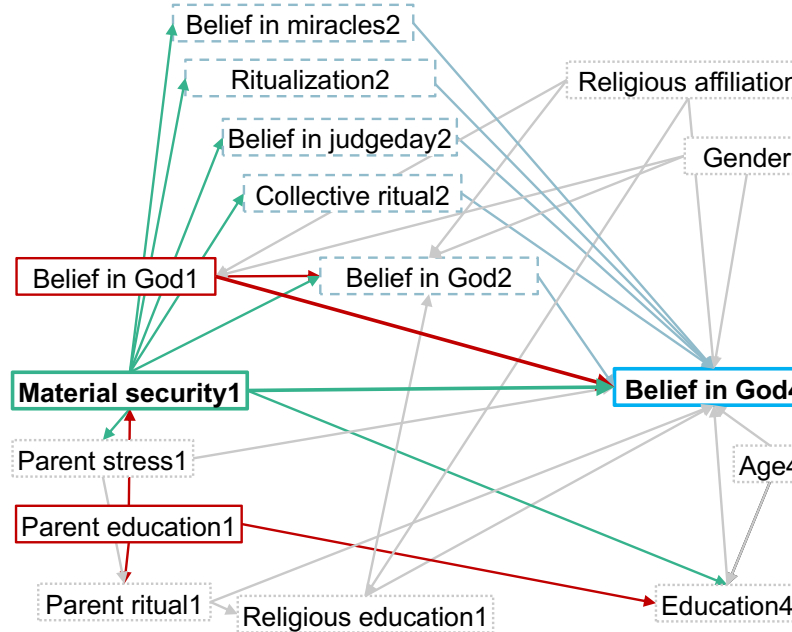


Fig.2. GCLM for Study 1: Short-term impulses

Predictor and outcome variables measured at each Wave

- General trust 2-4 ~ Belief in God 2-4
- Health 2-4 ~ Belief in God 2-4
- Attitudes on sex 2-4 ~ Belief in God 2-4

Fig.3. Simulations of model predictions in Study 2

