World Religion Project: Codebook
Version 1.1.

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1. Introduction

The World Religion Project (WRP) aims to provide detailed information about religious adherence worldwide since 1945. It contains data about the number of adherents by religion in each of the states in the international system. These numbers are given for every half-decade period (1945, 1950, …., 2010). We also provide percentages of the state's population that practice a given religion. Some of the religions (as detailed below) are divided into religious families. To the extent data are available, the breakdown of adherents within a given religion into religious families is also provided.

The project was developed in three stages. The first stage consisted of the formation of a religions tree. A religion tree is a systematic classification of major religions and of religious families within those major religions. To develop the religion tree we prepared a comprehensive literature review, the aim of which was (a) to define a religion, (b) to find tangible indicators of a given religion of religious families within a major religion, and (c) to identify existing efforts at classifying world religions. We discuss the religion tree and the process of generating it in the next section.

The second stage consisted of the identification of major data sources of religious adherence and the collection of data from these sources according to the religion tree classification. This created a dataset that included multiple records for some states for a given point in time. It also contained multiple missing data for specific states, specific time periods, and specific religions.

The third stage consisted of cleaning the data, reconciling discrepancies of information from different sources, and imputing data for the missing cases.

The codebook is organized as follows. In the next section, we describe the religion tree and we explain how it emerged from the literature review and how it was validated. The third section discusses the methods of reconciling discrepancies among multiple sources that apply to a given data point, and of interpolating missing data. We also discuss specific problems that pertain to subsets of the data, such as dual religion, or the residual category of "other religion." Finally, we discuss the format of the dataset.

2. The Religion Tree

Our review of the literature covered multiple fields. These included religious studies, sociology, anthropology, political science, philosophy, and linguistics. We also covered sources that pertained to the internal characteristics of specific religions.[1] The first and strongest impression that emerged from this review is that there is no universally accepted definition of religion. Because of that, the indicators

[1] The bibliography for this literature review is given in:

of a given religion have not been identified in any systematic manner. What we offer below is a working definition of religion. A religion is a belief system of an individual or a group of individuals that contains several elements (Alston 1967, 142).

- Belief in supernatural beings (gods).
- A distinction between sacred and profane objects.
- Ritual acts focused on sacred objects.
- A moral code believed to be sanctioned by the gods.
- Characteristically religious feelings (awe, sense of mystery, sense of guilt, adoration), which tend to be aroused in the presence of sacred objects and during the practice of ritual, and which are connected in idea with the gods.
- Prayer and other forms of communication with gods.
- A worldview or a general picture of the world as a whole and the place of the individual therein. This picture contains some specification of an overall purpose or point of the world and an indication of how the individual fits into it.
- A more or less total organization of one's life based on the worldview.
- A social group bound together by the above.

Clearly, this is a very general, but also quite vague definition of religion. Other definitions are equally focused on beliefs, moral codes, and rituals. Empirically, one of the most important and commonly mentioned criteria for classification of religions and religious families is self-identification. This, however, does not apply to our project, since we had to rely mostly on secondary data when studying past religious adherence. This required us to focus on a set of four principal criteria of classification that are sufficiently tangible to be used in data collection:

a. *Scriptures.* A central text or a set of texts that—as a whole—encapsulate the general principles of the belief system of a given religion. It is important to note that the nature of scriptures is a key feature that distinguishes among some of the major religions, but it is not a general identifier of all religions. Some religions do not have major scriptures; others incorporate scriptures from other religions with scriptures that are exclusive to a particular belief system. But the absence of central scriptures is also an important distinguishing feature of a religion, provided it possesses the other three characteristics below.

b. *Institutions*. A set of formal or semi-formal institutions that are responsible for interpreting the basic beliefs for adherents, modifying them or changing them over time, training and ordaining priests—the spiritual leaders of various communities—and determining who is a believer and who is not. Here too the nature, size, and formality of institutions vary a great deal across world religions. However, virtually every religion has a set of institutions or a group of individuals who interpret beliefs for adherents and— in many cases—these institutions or priests have primary responsibility for practice of collective rituals. This set of institutions must be unique to that belief system and distinct from the institutions of other belief systems.

c. *Historical evolution*. This is perhaps the most interesting—and probably least tangible—indicator of religion. It is possible to trace the birth, evolution, and diffusion of religions in terms of historical turning points and/or identifiable processes. At these turning points, or during these processes, a single individual, or a group of people is said to have formed the basic principles of

a given religion. This individual or group is also responsible for forming certain central institutions that guide religious practices, ordain priests, and define principles for inclusion or exclusion of believers. This criterion is an important identifier not only of major religions, but also of religious families and denominations. Since many religions evolved in connection with other religions, the historical context in which religions were formed help identify their origins. More important, denominational splits and mergers within religions can be traced to historical events or processes. These can help us gain a higher resolution of classification in cases where the other two criteria are not sufficient for distinction.[2]

d. *A common class of beliefs and practices*. This criterion covers religious practices that lack any of the previous characteristics. It typically allows identification of a broad set of religions that is identified by polytheism and certain rituals that are followed without a clear set of institutions or historical change. Because they had developed or existed in areas that are geographically distinct and non-contiguous, they cover a wide variety of ritualistic elements. Yet there are some basic commonalities in the (rather weak) institutional structure of such religions and their rituals. These allow grouping of such religions into a separate category. However, this criterion does not offer a simple way of dividing such religions into denominations and sub-denominations.

These criteria, along with the literature review resulted in the formation of a tentative religion tree. When formulating the religion tree, we had to decide about the specific level of resolution for our data. In particular, a common type of religion tree consists of four levels, as shown in Figure 1. A preliminary survey of the potential data sources revealed that it would be impossible to obtain data for the denominational (and sub-denominational) levels for most cases. We therefore decided to restrict our data collection to the two top levels of the tree: major religions and religious families.

Validating the Religion Tree. Since the literature indicates a lack of anything resembling a consensus regarding the criteria for religion or the characterization of actual religions, we decided to assess the validity of our criteria and the resulting religion tree by posting a survey to experts on religion from a wide range of disciplines. As a result of the survey, we (a) dropped one of the categories that served to identify religions—holidays, and (b) dropped a number of candidate religions (e.g., Rastafarian, Druze, Samaritans), and religious families.[3]

The resulting religion tree is given in Table 1

[2] A very useful example of how this criterion operates is available on the ARDA Website with respect to Christian denominations in the United States. See http://www.thearda.com/Denoms/Families/trees.asp.

[3] Survey results are available on the project's Website at: xxxx.

Illustrative Structure of Religion Tree

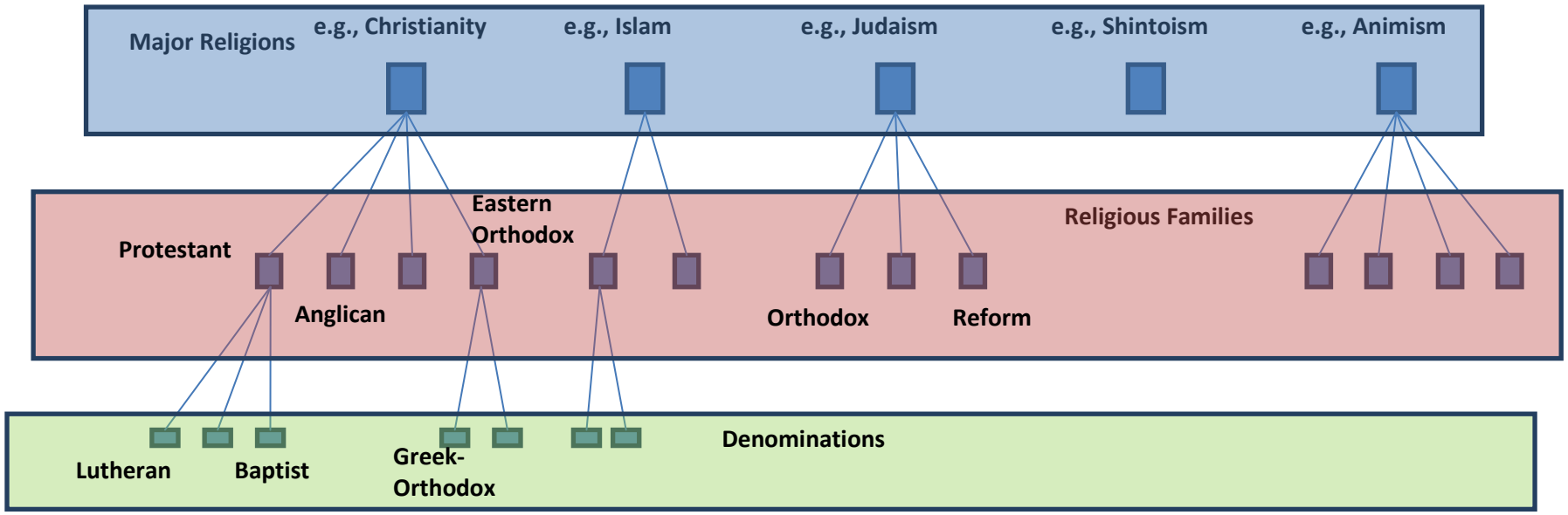

Table 1: Major World Religions and Religious Families

Major Religion	Religious Family	Comments
Christianity		
	Protestant	
	Roman Catholic	
	Eastern Orthodox	
	Anglican	
	Other Christian	
Judaism		
	Orthodox	Currently we found no data on the religious families within Judaism, but we will provide more data on that in the future
	Conservative	
	Reform	
Islam		
	Sunni	
	Shi'a	
	Ibadhi	
	Nation of Islam	
	Alawite	
	Ahmadiyya	
Buddhism		
	Mahayana	
	Theravada	
Zoroastrian		
Hindu		
Sikh		
Shinto		
Baha'i		
Taoism		
Confucianism		
Jain		
Syncretic Religions		**Syncretic Afro/Christian Religions of Latin America – Santeria**
Animist		**Various native American/African religions**
Non-Religious		**Atheists, non-believers**
Other		**Residual categories for all other non-classified religions**

3. Data Collection Methods

As noted above, we first formed our religion data source list.[4] The sources varied from census-based data, to specific estimates of religious groups, or specific sources that focused on a given religion in a longitudinal manner (either within a given country or for several countries). Some of the sources contained multiple data points on global or regional levels, but most contained scattered data on specific countries at discrete points in time.

We then generated a general instructions sheet for coders. In order to insure high inter-coder reliability, we had to deal with a number of issues. First, we had to insure that denominational level data would be aggregated into the appropriate religious families. This proved to be a major challenge especially within the Protestant family of Christianity. For example, some sources coded Anglicans as Protestants. Other included multiple Protestant denominations, sometime under different labels. A related problem was to classify the various Christian Orthodox denominations under the Eastern Orthodox family. Islamic denominations also presented a significant challenge. The coding instructions were not always sufficiently specific to handle the diversity of categories provided by different sources; hence the project directors and the data managers had to resolve multiple ambiguities in these sources.

Our initial strategy was to collect data from each source on a different record. We did that even if a given source listed only the number (or percent) adherents for a single religion. Each data point (or a set of data points) was identified by the source from which it was taken, the date of the data and the date this data was coded within the given source. We ran a number of tests on the data collected from each of the sources (such as consistency over time, source of the data coded in each source—e.g., census, secondary data, etc.—and comprehensiveness of coverage of different religions). We distributed a questionnaire among project members to solicit reliability estimates for each of the sources used. We then ranked sources according to an estimate of reliability.

Before aggregating the data, we had to deal with a number of problems:

1. Adjust source coding of religions to the categories of the religious tree. We faced a number of cases where the religious categories reported in a given source were not consistent with our religious tree. Here we had to make decisions about which specifically-labeled religious group matched which of the religions or religious groups in our religion tree.
2. Eliminate double counting of religious categories. Many of the sources—and some that turned out to be among the most reliable ones—had double-counting of religious groups. For example, some sources with high resolution data going down to the denominational level counted Protestant adherents first by the number of Protestants and then by Protestant denomination. We had to make sure that the sum of the denominations matched the total number of Protestants. In quite a few cases the sum of the denominational data exceeded that of the total Protestants.

[4] See the annotated bibliography on the project's Website at: xxxx.

3. There were also categories such as "doubly affiliated" Christian groups across our religious group categories (e.g., Protestants and Roman Catholics). Since in our conception, these religious groups were mutually exclusive, we had to decide how to allocate these doubly affiliated adherents into religious groups.
4. Adherents of religions not under our religious tree categories. Here we had to be careful to distinguish between adherents of religions that were labeled differently but in practice were those that we considered to be within the purview of our religion tree, and those religions that had been candidate religions but were eliminated in the validation process, or religions that we had deliberately grouped into other categories (e.g., a variety of animist or syncretic religions).

This required the project directors to go over multiple sources and specific data points and make decisions about how to deal with these problems. We documented our decisions in the raw data files, with specific comments. These are available upon request.

Reconciling data points from multiple sources.

We sorted the data by state, year, and source. There were two types of cases in which data existed from two or more sources for the same year. One was a case where two or more sources contained complete or near complete data for all major religions or religious groups. The second consisted of cases when one source provided partial data on some of the religions and another source provided partial data that covered other religions that were not documented in the previous source. We discuss our strategy of reconciling discrepancies across sources in both cases.

In the first case, when two sources provided relatively comprehensive coverage of all or most religions and these data were very similar or identical this did not present a major problem. The problem emerged when there were substantial differences across sources in terms of the number (or percentages) of adherents of certain religions. The strategy we applied for reconciliation was threefold. First, we checked for within-source consistency over time. The underlying assumption here is that—unless a dramatic political or natural event occurred between two time points (e.g., a major population transfer, a genocide that eliminated a significant proportion of a given religious group), the percentage of a state's population that practiced a given religion did not change dramatically over time. If a given source indicated dramatic shifts in the distribution of religious adherents over time without such evidence of a major event that would have caused such a shift, we concluded that there was a reliability problem. Second, if we had information about the source for this specific data point (e.g., census, survey, estimate), we assigned a specific reliability score to this data point. This enabled us to make aggregation decisions later on.

When a given source contained only partial data on one or more religious groups, we compared this data points to data on that religion from other sources. Here too, we checked for over-time consistency for that source, as well as the origin of the data for that source. Sources that focused on a single religious group or a subset of religious group that proved consistent over time and was determined to have good reliability was generally preferred to sources that focused on multiple religions.

The general strategy for all cases that were covered by multiple sources was to generate single record via a reliability-weighted mean of all sources.

Interpolating missing data

Missing data were a more serious and more common problem. In general, we confronted four types of missing data issues:

1. Missing data on the first data point.[5]
2. Missing data on a specific five-year point, but with data existing for adjacent years (e.g., no data on 1955 but existing data on 1956 and 1957).
3. Missing data on a specific five-year point but with data existing for previous and subsequent five-year points (e.g., no data for 1955 but data available for 1950 and 1960).
4. Missing data for 2010.

In the case of missing data on first or last time point, we applied trend interpolation. We calculated a moving average rate of change coefficient for the series of that particular state and applied it to the first or last data point. In the case of missing data with adjacent data points available, we applied a two-step process. First, if we had data for more than one adjacent year before or after the data point for which data was missing, we calculated an expected distribution of religious groups based on the trend for these two or more years for which data were available. Second, we calculated an expected trend between the two time-points for which data were available before and after the date for which we needed data. Finally, we calculated the average between the expected distribution of religious groups and the trend distribution. Finally, for case #3 we interpolated a yearly distribution from the two time points in which data were available, and applied it to the year where data were needed.

Dual Religions

In general, religious adherence forms mutually exclusive groups. People typically practice one type of religion, or do not practice any religion at all. This means that, when summing across all religious groups in a given state (including non-religious and the "other religion" residual category), the total should equal the state's population. (And the percentages of religious groups should sum up to 100%.) There are, however, few states in which dual religion is a common practice. In such cases, the sum of religious adherents exceeds the population, sometime by a wide margin. We therefore introduced a code for dual religions.

Final Cleaning of Data

Having applied the principles discussed above to aggregation over multiple sources and to interpolation of missing data, we went over each data point and each state-series and applied two additional tests in the process of final data cleaning: Population adjustment and trend adjustment.

The first test was meant to insure that—with the exception of states with dual religions—the sum of the religious groups equaled the state's population. In general, we used the Correlates of War (COW) total

[5] This would be 1945 for states that existed at that time, or the first half-decade year for states that were formed after this point.

population data as the benchmark. There were, however, a few cases where population adjustments had to be made. First, the COW data covered all years up to 2007. Therefore, population data for 2010 had to be taken from other sources. Second, in some cases, the sources we used included data on total population that were dramatically different from those of COW (e.g., one of the sources, Barrett *et al*., 2011 lists Afghanistan's population in 2005 at 27 million, whereas COW's total population for Afghanistan is only 22.66 million). In that case, we adjusted the number of religious adherents in that state to fit COW's total population, by first calculating the percentage adherents for each group based on the original source's population, and then re-multiplying the percentages by the COW total population to get the adjusted raw figures of adherents for each religious group.

The trend adjustment was designed to insure that—barring major events that caused dramatic population changes in a given state—the rates of change in the relative size of any given religious groups in a state would not exhibit dramatic changes from one five-year point to another. This proved to be difficult to insure, as data for specific five-year points were derived from different sources. However, whenever necessary, we applied an adjustment rule to insure that rates of change in the relative sizes of various religious groups are fairly smooth. This was the case especially if the data for a given five-year time point exhibited a dramatic difference between a preceding set of five-year points and a subsequent set of five-year points. However, in quite a few cases, such a smoothing operation was not possible because we lacked sufficient information to enable us to carry out a smoothing operation. In particular, this was the case when the data for that specific time-point was drawn from a high-reliability source. This implies that in quite a few cases, there are significant changes in percent adherents of a given religious groups across five-year time-points. This is the case in particular with respect to two groups: "non-religious" and "other religion." Both these groups represent residual categories in many of the sources. We used the latter category as an adjustment category to insure that the total number of adherents match that of the total population.

Additional cleaning of data will be carried out once we add sources that focus on the demographics of specific religions that would enable us also a higher-resolution breakdown of the adherents of major religions into specific religious groups.

4. Data structure

The WRP contains three datasets: the national dataset, the global religions dataset, and the regional religions dataset.

The National Religion Dataset. The unit of analysis in this dataset is the individual state, observed at five-year intervals. This dataset provides information regarding the number of adherents by religion, as well as the percent of the state's population practicing a given religion. The format of this dataset is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Format of the National Religion Dataset

Column No.	Variable Label	Column Label	Value Labels
A	Year	Year	
B	ccode	COW state number	
C	name	CWO state abbreviation	
D	chrstprot	Christianity—Protestants—No. of Adherents	
E	chrstcat	Christianity—Roman Catholics—No. of Adherents	
F	chrstorth	Christianity—Eastern Orthodox—No. of Adherents	
G	chrstang	Christianity—Anglican—No. of Adherents	
H	chrstothr	Christianity—Others—No. of Adherents	
I	chrstgen	Christianity—Total No. of Adherents	
J	judorth	Judaism—Orthodox—No. of Adherents	
K	jdcons	Judaism—Conservatives—No. of Adherents	
L	judref	Judaism—Reform—No. of Adherents	
M	judothr	Judaism--Others—No. of Adherents	
N	judgen	Judaism—Total No. of Adherents	
O	islmsun	Islam—Sunni—No. of Adherents	
P	islmshi	Islam—Shi'a—No. of Adherents	
Q	islmibd	Islam--Ibadhi—No. of Adherents	
R	islmnat	Islam—Nation of Islam—No. of Adherents	
S	islmalw	Islam—Alawite—No. of Adherents	
T	islmahm	Islam—Ahmadiyya—No. of Adherents	
U	islmothr	Islam--Other—No. of Adherents	
V	islmgen	Islam—Total No. of Adherents	
W	budmah	Buddhism—Mahayana—No. of Adherents	
X	budthr	Buddhism—Theravada—No. of Adherents	
Y	budothr	Buddhism--Other—No. of Adherents	
Z	budgen	Buddhism—Total No. of Adherents	
AA	zorogen	Zoroastrian—Total No. of Adherents	
AB	hindgen	Hindu—Total No. of Adherents	
AC	sikhgen	Sikh—Total No. of Adherents	
AD	shntgen	Shinto—Total No. of Adherents	
AE	bahgen	Baha'i—Total No. of Adherents	
AF	taogen	Taoism—Total No. of Adherents	

Column No.	Variable Label	Column Label	Value Labels
AG	jaingen	Confucianism—Total No. of Adherents	
AH	confgen	Jain—Total No. of Adherents	
AI	syncgen	Syncretic Religions—Total No. of Adherents	
AJ	anmgen	Animist Religions—Total No. of Adherents	
AK	nonrelig	Non. Religious—Total No. of Adherents	
AL	othrgen	Other Religions—Total No. of Adherents	
AM	sumrelig	Sum of Religion Adherents	
AN	pop	Total Population	
AO	chrstprotpct	Christianity—Protestants—Pct. Adherents	
AP	chrstcatpct	Christianity—Roman Catholics—Pct. Adherents	
AQ	chrstorthpct	Christianity—Eastern Orthodox—Pct. Adherents	
AR	chrstangpct	Christianity—Anglican—Pct. Adherents	
AS	chrstothrpct	Christianity—Others—Pct. Adherents	
AT	chrstgenpct	Christianity—General Chrst Pct. Adherents	
AU	judorthpct	Judaism—Orthodox—Pct. Adherents	
AV	jdconspct	Judaism—Conservatives—Pct. Adherents	
AW	judrefpct	Judaism—Reform—Pct. Adherents	
AX	judothrpct	Judaism--Others—Pct. Adherents	
AY	judgenpct	Judaism—General Jewish Pct. Adherents	
AZ	islmsunpct	Islam—Sunni—Pct. Adherents	
BA	islmshipct	Islam—Shi’a—Pct. Adherents	
BB	islmibdpct	Islam--Ibadhi—Pct. Adherents	
BC	islmnatpct	Islam—Nation of Islam—Pct. Adherents	
BD	islmalwpct	Islam—Alawite—Pct. Adherents	
BE	islmahmpct	Islam—Ahmadiyya—Pct. Adherents	
BF	islmothrpct	Islam—Other—Pct. Adherents	
BG	islmgenpct	Islam—General Muslim Pct. Adherents	
BH	budmahpct	Buddhism—Mahayana—Pct. Adherents	
BI	budthrpct	Buddhism—Theravada—Pct. Adherents	
BJ	budothrpct	Buddhism--Other—Pct. Adherents	
BK	budgenpct	Buddhism—Gen. Buddhist Pct. Adherents	
BL	zorogenpct	Zoroastrian—Zoro. Pct. Adherents	
BM	hindgenpct	Hindu—Pct. Adherents	
BN	sikhgenpct	Sikh—Pct. Adherents	

Column No.	Variable Label	Column Label	Value Labels
BO	shntgenpct	Shinto—Pct. Adherents	
BP	bahgenpct	Baha'i—Pct. Adherents	
BQ	taogenpct	Taoism—Pct. Adherents	
BR	jaingenpct	Jain—Pct. Adherents	
BS	confgenpct	Confucianism—Pct. Adherents	
BT	syncgenpct	Syncretic Religions—Pct. Adherents	
BU	anmgenpct	Animist Religions—Pct. Adherents	
BV	nonreligpct	Non. Religious—Pct. Adherents	
BW	othrgenpct	Other Religions—Pct. Adherents	
BX	Sumreligpct	Sum Percent religious adherents	
BY	totpct	Total population percantage check	Where dual religion 1, total > 1.
BZ	dualrelig	Dual Religion	1=Yes; 0=No
CA	datatype		1=single source 2=multiple sources 3=interpolated 4=adjusted 13=single source, interpolated 14=single source, adjusted 134=single source, interpolated, adjusted 23=mult. sources, interpolated 24=mult. sources, adjusted 234=mult. sources, interpolated, adjusted 34=interpolated, adjusted
CB	Recreliab	Reliability of record=Source+datatype	1=Very High 35=Very Low
CC	Reliablev	Level of Reliability of record	1=High 2=Medium 3=Low

Column No.	Variable Label	Column Label	Value Labels
CD	Sourcecode	Code of major source used for the record	Codes correspond to citations in the sources document
CE	Version	Version number of dataset	

The Regional Religion Dataset. The unit of analysis in this dataset is the region, observed at five-year intervals. This dataset utilizes the COW regional designations with one modification: the Oceania category for COW country code numbers 900 and above. The format of this dataset is given in Table 3.

Table 3: Format of the Regional Religion Dataset

Column No.	Variable Label	Column Label	Comments
A	year	Year	
B	region	Region	1 = Western Hemisphere 2 = Europe 3 = Africa 4 = Middle East 5 = Asia 6 = Oceania
C	chrstprot	Christianity—Protestants—No. of Adherents	
D	chrstcat	Christianity—Roman Catholics—No. of Adherents	
E	chrstorth	Christianity—Eastern Orthodox—No. of Adherents	
F	chrstang	Christianity—Anglican—No. of Adherents	
G	chrstothr	Christianity—Others—No. of Adherents	
H	chrstgen	Christianity—Total No. of Adherents	
I	judorth	Judaism—Orthodox—No. of Adherents	
J	jdcons	Judaism—Conservatives—No. of Adherents	
K	judref	Judaism—Reform—No. of Adherents	
L	judothr	Judaism--Others—No. of Adherents	
M	judgen	Judaism—Total No. of Adherents	
N	islmsun	Islam—Sunni—No. of Adherents	
O	islmshi	Islam—Shi'a—No. of Adherents	
P	islmibd	Islam--Ibadhi—No. of Adherents	
Q	islmnat	Islam—Nation of Islam—No. of Adherents	
R	islmalw	Islam—Alawite—No. of Adherents	
S	islmahm	Islam—Ahmadiyya—No. of Adherents	
T	islmothr	Islam--Other—No. of Adherents	
U	islmgen	Islam—Total No. of Adherents	

Column No.	Variable Label	Column Label	Comments
V	budmah	Buddhism—Mahayana—No. of Adherents	
W	budthr	Buddhism—Theravada—No. of Adherents	
X	budothr	Buddhism--Other—No. of Adherents	
Y	budgen	Buddhism—Total No. of Adherents	
Z	zorogen	Zoroastrian—Total No. of Adherents	
AA	hindgen	Hindu—Total No. of Adherents	
AB	sikhgen	Sikh—Total No. of Adherents	
AC	shntgen	Shinto—Total No. of Adherents	
AD	bahgen	Baha'i—Total No. of Adherents	
AE	taogen	Taoism—Total No. of Adherents	
AF	jaingen	Confucianism—Total No. of Adherents	
AG	confgen	Jain—Total No. of Adherents	
AH	syncgen	Syncretic Religions—Total No. of Adherents	
AI	anmgen	Animist Religions—Total No. of Adherents	
AJ	nonrelig	Non. Religious—Total No. of Adherents	
AK	othrgen	Other Religions—Total No. of Adherents	
AL	sumrelig	Sum of Religion Adherents	
AM	pop	Total Regional Population	
AN	Worldpop	Total World Population in Independent states	*excluding non-independent populations
AO	chrstprotpct	Christianity—Protestants—Pct. Adherents	
AP	chrstcatpct	Christianity—Roman Catholics—Pct. Adherents	
AQ	chrstorthpct	Christianity—Eastern Orthodox—Pct. Adherents	
AR	chrstangpct	Christianity—Anglican—Pct. Adherents	
AS	chrstothrpct	Christianity—Others—Pct. Adherents	
AT	chrstgenpct	Christianity—Total Pct. Adherents	
AU	judorthpct	Judaism—Orthodox—Pct. Adherents	
AV	jdconspct	Judaism—Conservatives—Pct. Adherents	
AW	judrefpct	Judaism—Reform—Pct. Adherents	
AX	judothrpct	Judaism--Others—Pct. Adherents	
AY	judgenpct	Judaism—Total Pct. Adherents	
AZ	islmsunpct	Islam—Sunni—Pct. Adherents	
BA	islmshipct	Islam—Shi'a—Pct. Adherents	
BB	islmibdpct	Islam--Ibadhi—Pct. Adherents	
BC	islmnatpct	Islam—Nation of Islam—Pct. Adherents	
BD	islmalwpct	Islam—Alawite—Pct. Adherents	
BE	islmahmpct	Islam—Ahmadiyya—Pct. Adherents	
BF	islmothrpct	Islam--Other—Pct. Adherents	

Column No.	Variable Label	Column Label	Comments
BG	islmgenpct	Islam—Total Pct. Adherents	
BH	budmahpct	Buddhism—Mahayana—Pct. Adherents	
BI	budthrpct	Buddhism—Theravada—Pct. Adherents	
BJ	budothrpct	Buddhism--Other—Pct. Adherents	
BK	budgenpct	Buddhism—Total Pct. Adherents	
BL	zorogenpct	Zoroastrian—Total Pct. Adherents	
BM	hindgenpct	Hindu—Total Pct. Adherents	
BN	sikhgenpct	Sikh—Total Pct. Adherents	
BO	shntgenpct	Shinto—Total Pct. Adherents	
BP	bahgenpct	Baha'i—Total Pct. Adherents	
BQ	taogenpct	Taoism—Total Pct. Adherents	
BR	jaingenpct	Jain—Total Pct. Adherents	
BS	confgenpct	Confucianism—Total Pct. Adherents	
BT	syncgenpct	Syncretic Religions—Total Pct. Adherents	
BU	anmgenpct	Animist Religions—Total Pct. Adherents	
BV	nonreligpct	Non. Religious—Total Pct. Adherents	
BW	othrgenpct	Other Religions—Total Pct. Adherents	
BX	sumreligpct	Total Pct. Adherents	>1 if dualrelig=1 in WRP
BY	Totalpct	Total population percent	
BZ	Totalregpct	Total regional population/World population	
CA	version	Version Number	

The Global Religion Dataset. The unit of analysis in this dataset is the global system, observed at five-year intervals. This dataset aggregates the number of adherents of a given religion and religious group for all states, globally. The format of this dataset is given in Table 4.

Table 4: Format of the Global Religion Dataset

Column No.	Variable Label	Variable	Value Label
A	year	Year	
B	chrstprot	Christianity—Protestants—No. of Adherents	
C	chrstcat	Christianity—Roman Catholics—No. of Adherents	
D	chrstorth	Christianity—Eastern Orthodox—No. of Adherents	
E	chrstang	Christianity—Anglican—No. of Adherents	
F	chrstothr	Christianity—Others—No. of Adherents	
G	chrstgen	Christianity—Total No. of Adherents	
H	judorth	Judaism—Orthodox—No. of Adherents	
I	jdcons	Judaism—Conservatives—No. of Adherents	
J	judref	Judaism—Reform—No. of Adherents	
K	judothr	Judaism--Others—No. of Adherents	
L	judgen	Judaism—Total No. of Adherents	
M	islmsun	Islam—Sunni—No. of Adherents	
N	islmshi	Islam—Shi'a—No. of Adherents	
O	islmibd	Islam--Ibadhi—No. of Adherents	
P	islmnat	Islam—Nation of Islam—No. of Adherents	
Q	islmalw	Islam—Alawite—No. of Adherents	
R	islmahm	Islam—Ahmadiyya—No. of Adherents	
S	islmothr	Islam--Other—No. of Adherents	
T	islmgen	Islam—Total No. of Adherents	
U	budmah	Buddhism—Mahayana—No. of Adherents	
V	budthr	Buddhism—Theravada—No. of Adherents	
W	budothr	Buddhism--Other—No. of Adherents	
X	budgen	Buddhism—Total No. of Adherents	
Y	zorogen	Zoroastrian—Total No. of Adherents	
Z	hindgen	Hindu—Total No. of Adherents	
AA	sikhgen	Sikh—Total No. of Adherents	
AB	shntgen	Shinto—Total No. of Adherents	
AC	bahgen	Baha'i—Total No. of Adherents	
AD	taogen	Taoism—Total No. of Adherents	

Column No.	Variable Label	Variable	Value Label
AE	jaingen	Confucianism—Total No. of Adherents	
AF	confgen	Jain—Total No. of Adherents	
AG	syncgen	Syncretic Religions—Total No. of Adherents	
AH	anmgen	Animist Religions—Total No. of Adherents	
AI	nonrelig	Non. Religious—Total No. of Adherents	
AJ	othrgen	Other Religions—Total No. of Adherents	
AK	sumrelig	Sum of World Religion Adherents	
AL	pop	Total population in independent states	
AM	Worldpop	Total world population	
AN	chrstprotpct	Christianity—Protestants—Pct. Adherents	
AO	chrstcatpct	Christianity—Roman Catholics—Pct. Adherents	
AP	chrstorthpct	Christianity—Eastern Orthodox—Pct. Adherents	
AQ	chrstangpct	Christianity—Anglican—Pct. Adherents	
AR	chrstothrpct	Christianity—Others—Pct. Adherents	
AS	chrstgenpct	Christianity—Gen. Pct. Adherents	
AT	judorthpct	Judaism—Orthodox—Pct. Adherents	
AU	jdconspct	Judaism—Conservatives—Pct. Adherents	
AV	judrefpct	Judaism—Reform—Pct. Adherents	
AW	judothrpct	Judaism--Others—Pct. Adherents	
AX	judgenpct	Judaism—Gen. Pct. Adherents	
AY	islmsunpct	Islam—Sunni—Pct. Adherents	
AZ	islmshipct	Islam—Shi’a—Pct. Adherents	
BA	islmibdpct	Islam--Ibadhi—Pct. Adherents	
BB	islmnatpct	Islam—Nation of Islam—Pct. Adherents	
BC	islmalwpct	Islam—Alawite—Pct. Adherents	
BD	islmahmpct	Islam—Ahmadiyya—Pct. Adherents	
BE	islmothrpct	Islam--Other—Pct. Adherents	
BF	islmgenpct	Islam—Gen. Pct. Adherents	
BG	budmahpct	Buddhism—Mahayana—Pct. Adherents	
BH	budthrpct	Buddhism—Theravada—Pct. Adherents	
BI	budothrpct	Buddhism--Other—Pct. Adherents	
BJ	budgenpct	Buddhism—Gen. Pct. Adherents	
BK	zorogenpct	Zoroastrian—Pct. Adherents	
BL	hindgenpct	Hindu—Pct. Adherents	
BM	sikhgenpct	Sikh—Pct. Adherents	

Column No.	Variable Label	Variable	Value Label
BN	shntgenpct	Shinto—Pct. Adherents	
BO	bahgenpct	Baha'i—Pct. Adherents	
BP	taogenpct	Taoism—Pct. Adherents	
BQ	jaingenpct	Jain—Pct. Adherents	
BR	confgenpct	Confucianism—Pct. Adherents	
BS	syncgenpct	Syncretic Religions—Pct. Adherents	
BT	anmgenpct	Animist Religions—Pct. Adherents	
BU	nonreligpct	Non. Religious—Pct. Adherents	
BV	othrgenpct	Other Religions—Pct. Adherents	
BW	sumreligpct	Percent Religions Adherents	>1 because of dual religions
BX	pctotal	Percent of total population	Percent of total world population included in religion dataset
BY	Version		

5. General Comments

Data generation processes are invariably based on some theoretical and empirical premises; as such they may reflect certain biases and may not satisfy all potential users. Ours is no exception. We have also made some decisions about including or excluding major religions or religious groups, and about aggregating others. These decisions may be controversial. We tried to be transparent in how the religions were conceptualized and why these decisions are reasonable. However, if certain users feel that we missed something, or that our decisions are problematic, we invite them to comment and make suggestions. In addition, large-scale data collection processes are always vulnerable to coding errors. Our dataset involves a great deal of aggregation across multiple sources, interpolation of missing data, and smoothing and adjustments. Here too, we invite users to send us their comments and suggestions. We will maintain an ongoing cleaning and updating operation of these data. We will report any changes, updates, and revisions of these data on the various Websites on which they are posted.

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