

A Theory of Identity Choice: Religion, Ethnicity, and the State

Valery Dzutsati *vdzutsati@asu.edu*

April 16, 2016

Arizona State University

Selection of ethnic and religious groups

- Ethnicity is often defined as an umbrella identity that includes religion (Horowitz 1985). Yet ethnic and religious identities sometimes compete and clash with each other (McCauley 2014; Moskalenko, McCauley, and Rozin 2006)
- When do individuals prefer to join ethnic networks and when do they prefer to join religious networks?
- How do ethnic and religious networks select members?

The toolbox of identities

- Individuals invoke various identities they have, based on circumstances
- Religious and ethnic identities (language) sometimes coincide, but they often cut across populations

Member selection process by groups

- Groups care about their cohesion and the free-riding problem
- Individuals' contribution to the group defines the group's attitude toward individuals \implies
 - Economic functionality of groups is likely to play a role in selection of members by groups
 - Economic status of individuals is likely to affect their identity choices

Mapping ethnicity and religion on economic activities

- Ethnic groups are more numerous than religions. Hence, ethnicity is more useful for establishing a cultural division of labor in the society
- Ethnic identities are more salient in connection to economic activities of groups than religious identities
- Religious groups are less related to daily economic activities than ethnic groups

Ethnic identity choice

- Ethnic groups are more likely to be associated with economic activities
- Ethnic groups should reject the poorer members because of their low contribution and large consumption of club goods the group provides
- Wealthier members of ethnic groups should leave themselves, due to a high social pressure for the in-group material redistribution
- The observable implication: concave relationship between personal income and the affiliation with ethnic groups

Religious identity choice

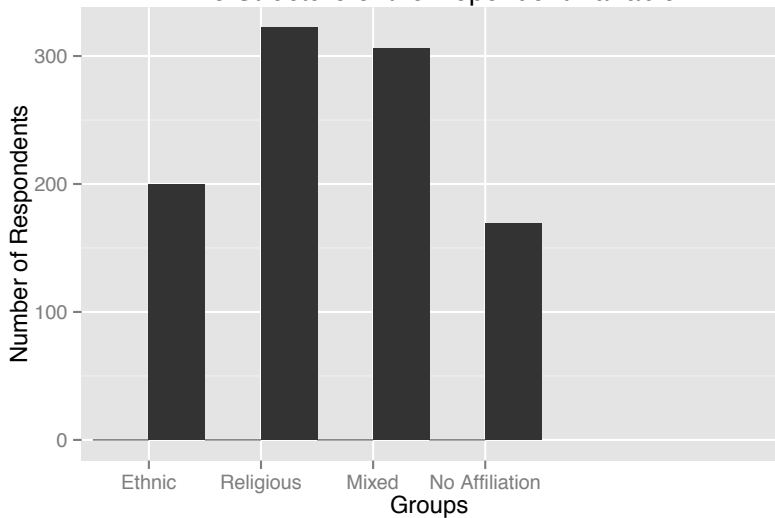
- Religious groups are less likely to be associated with economic activities
- Religious groups have a higher tolerance for material inequality because they deal with daily economic activities less than ethnic groups
- Religious groups have a written ethical code of conduct that obliges members to support the poor and tolerate the material differences
- The observable implication: convex relationship between personal income and the affiliation with religious groups

- Survey in the multiethnic and multi-religious Russian North Caucasus region
- $N \sim 900$
- 7 administrative units
- Over 40 ethnic groups in the sample

Dependent variable

- Affiliation with religious, ethnic, both types of groups or none (state)
- Survey question for the ethnic marker: support for ethnic quotas in the government
- Survey question for the religious marker: following primary religious rituals

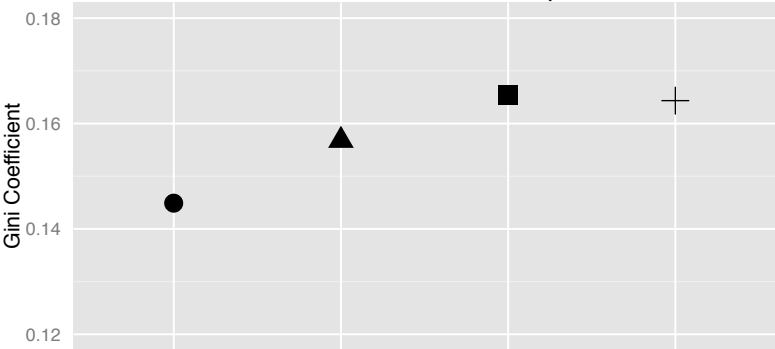
The Structure of the Dependent Variable



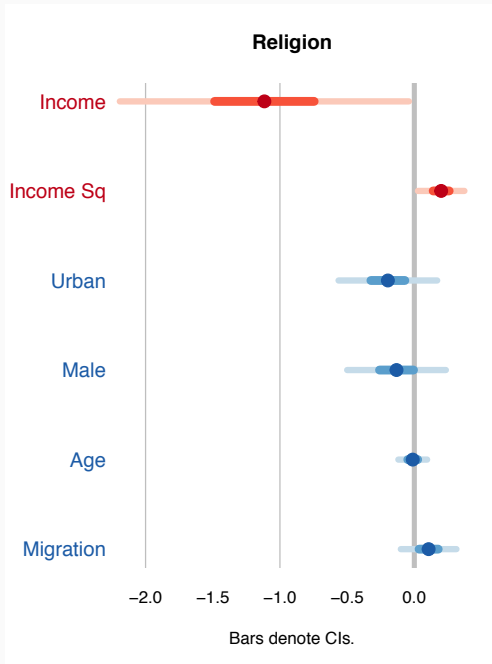
Explanatory variables

- Non-monetary measurement of personal income on a five-point scale and its squared term
- Controls: gender, urban, age, longevity of residence

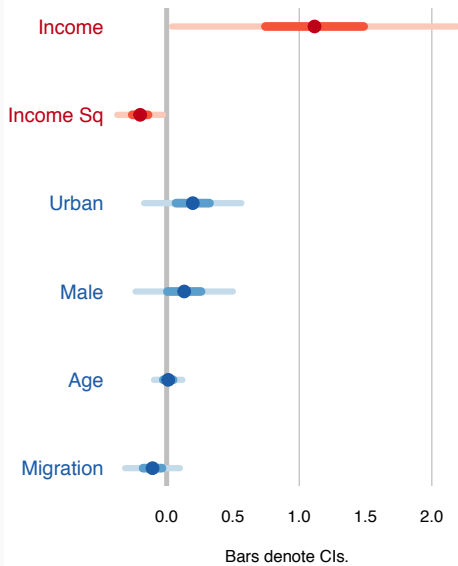
Gini Coefficients of Groups



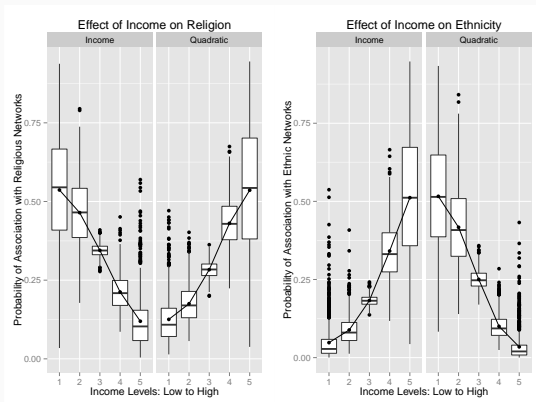
● ethnicity ▲ mixed ■ religion + state



Ethnicity



Marginal effects



(a) Effect of Religion

(b) Effect of Ethnicity

Figure 1: Predicted Probabilities of Association with Ethnic and Religious Groups

Conclusions

- Economic status of individuals predicts their association with ethnic and religious groups
- Ethnic identity is stronger among the middle class
- Religious identity is stronger among the poor and the rich

The End

Ethnicity as base

	Religion	No Affiliation	Mixed
income	-1.12*	-0.98	-0.57
	(0.55)	(0.64)	(0.56)
income2	0.20*	0.18	0.11
	(0.09)	(0.10)	(0.09)
urban	-0.20	0.36	-0.26
	(0.19)	(0.22)	(0.19)
male	-0.13	0.15	-0.41*
	(0.19)	(0.22)	(0.19)
age	-0.01	-0.10	0.02
	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.05)
migrate	0.11	0.22	-0.07
	(0.11)	(0.12)	(0.11)

*** $p < 0.0001$, ** $p < 0.001$, * $p < 0.01$

Religion as base

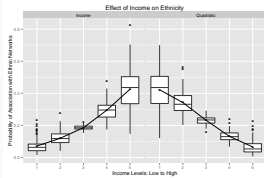
	Ethnicity	No Affiliation	Mixed
income	1.12* (0.55)	0.14 (0.54)	0.55 (0.45)
income2	-0.20* (0.09)	-0.02 (0.09)	-0.09 (0.07)
urban	0.20 (0.19)	0.55** (0.20)	-0.06 (0.17)
male	0.13 (0.19)	0.28 (0.20)	-0.28 (0.17)
age	0.01 (0.05)	-0.09 (0.06)	0.03 (0.05)
migrate	-0.11 (0.11)	0.11 (0.10)	-0.18 (0.10)

*** $p < 0.0001$, ** $p < 0.001$, * $p < 0.01$

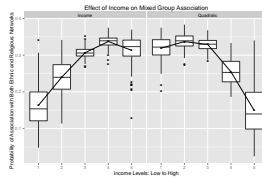
Group Tolerance for Income Inequality

	Non Curvilinear Model	Curvilinear Model
Income	0.06 (0.06)	-0.60* (0.32)
Income Sq		0.10** (0.05)
Urban	0.16 (0.12)	0.16 (0.12)
Male	0.11 (0.12)	0.13 (0.12)
Age	-0.05 (0.03)	-0.05 (0.03)
Migration	0.15** (0.07)	0.15** (0.07)

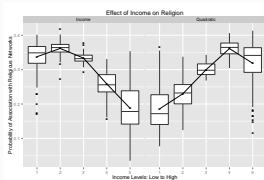
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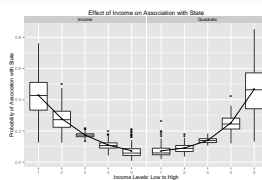
(a) Effect of Income on Ethnic Affiliation



(b) Effect of Income on Mixed Affiliation



(c) Effect of Income on Religious Affiliation



(d) Effect of Income on Staatsvolk

Figure 2: Marginal Effects. Ordinal Model.