Regional differences in religious diversification in Austria: The impact of migration

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Aim & Content

• AIM:

  ➢ **Comparison of the religious landscapes** in Austria and two Austrian provinces – Vienna and Vorarlberg – with special attention to the diverse **composition of countries of origin** within different religious groups
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  ➢ **Comparison of the religious landscapes** in Austria and two Austrian provinces – Vienna and Vorarlberg – with special regard to the diverse composition of countries of origin within different religious groups

• CONTENT:

  I. Reconstruction of population by age, sex and religious affiliation in 2018

  II. Estimates of country of origin of the Muslim, Christian and religiously unaffiliated population in 2018

  III. Estimates of religiosity by religion and country of origin
Filling the gap – if not us then who?

• Religious affiliations are increasingly presented in public debates over migration, integration, and social cohesion

• Frequent absence of data results in speculations about the actual size of religious groups
Filling the gap – if not us then who?

- Religious affiliations are increasingly presented in public debates over migration, integration, and social cohesion
- Frequent absence of data results in speculations about the actual size of religious groups

FPÖ billboard in 2017:
Kurz (Austrian Chancellor until very recently) quote “Islam belongs to Austria”,
Strache (Austrian Vice-chancellor until very recently) answers “Islamization should be stopped”.

Filling the gap – if not us then who?

• Religious affiliations are increasingly presented in public debates over migration, integration, and social cohesion

• Frequent absence of data results in specifications about the actual size of religious groups

• Impact of the arrival of some 90,000 asylum applicants in 2015 (mostly from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq)
Filling the gap – if not us than who?

• Religious affiliations are increasingly presented in public debates over migration, integration, and social cohesion

• Frequent absence of data results in speculations about the actual size of religious groups

• Impact of the arrival of some 90,000 asylum applicants in 2015 (mostly from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq)

• Data on religious affiliations surveyed at decennial census rounds only until 2001
  • Complete register-based census in Austria since 2011 → no release of data on religious affiliations anymore
Changes in religious affiliation in Austria, Vienna & Vorarlberg (1971-2001)

Source: Authors’ calculations based on Statistics Austria
Level of religiosity matters

• RELIGIOUS DENOMINATION ≠ RELIGIOSITY

• Religiosity is more difficult to measure BUT…
  • ...people's beliefs, sense of belonging, and behavior often are not congruent with their religious affiliation on paper
  • ...there is a strong causal relationship between family planning (contraceptive behavior, fertility ideals, marriage attitudes etc.) and religiosity but less with religious affiliation

• Religiosity is likely to be much more volatile over time than religious denomination (both between and within generations)
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- Religiosity is likely to be much more volatile over time than religious denomination (both between and within generations)

→ Analyzing religious landscapes requires both religious affiliation AND level of religiosity
I.

Reconstruction of the population by religious denomination 2001-2018
Methodology: I. Reconstruction of population by religious affiliation

Reconstruction of the population by religious denomination 2001-2018

1 Population by age, sex, and religion

Census 2001 (Statistics Austria)
Methodology: I. Reconstruction of population by religious affiliation

Reconstruction of the population by religious denomination 2001-2018

1 Population by age, sex, and religion
   > Census 2001 (Statistics Austria)

2 Migration by age, sex, and religion
   > Random migrant assumption was used to link migrants (by country of birth) with religious affiliations
Religious composition of some of the most prominent countries of origin of migrants coming to Austria

Source: Authors’ calculations based on national statistics (2011), PEW Research Center (2011, 2012)
Methodology: I. Reconstruction of population by religious affiliation

Reconstruction of the population by religious denomination 2001-2018

1. Population by age, sex, and religion
   > Census 2001 (Statistics Austria)

2. Migration by age, sex, and religion
   > Random migrant assumption was used to link migrants (by country of birth) with religious affiliations

3. Fertility by age and religion
   > Data on the religion of mothers are available, the number of women by religion (exposure) is derived from the reconstruction
Methodology: I. Reconstruction of population by religious affiliation

Reconstruction of the population by religious denomination 2001-2018

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4. Mortality by age and sex
   - Mortality differentials by religion are not considered
# Methodology: I. Reconstruction of population by religious affiliation

## Reconstruction of the population by religious denomination 2001-2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Population by age, sex, and religion</td>
<td>&gt; Census 2001 (Statistics Austria)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Migration by age, sex, and religion</td>
<td>&gt; Random migrant assumption was used to link migrants (by country of birth) with religious affiliations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Fertility by age and religion</td>
<td>&gt; Data on the religion of mothers are available, the number of women by religion (exposure) is derived from the reconstruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Mortality by age and sex</td>
<td>&gt; Mortality differentials by religion are not considered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Secularization by age, sex and religion</td>
<td>&gt; Entrance to and exit from the Roman Catholic Church and Protestant Church are well documented (church membership dues); for Orthodox and Muslims GGS data was used</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Methodology: I. Reconstruction of population by religious affiliation

Secularization rates for Roman Catholics and Protestants from the Church statistics

Source: Statistisches Jahrbuch Österreich and authors’ calculations
Secularization rates for Roman Catholics and Protestants and other religions from a Survey

Source: GGS 2012-2013 AND authors’ calculations;
Weighted counts in brackets

- Available by age and sex
Population by age, sex, and religion, Austria, 2001 and 2018

Results: I. Reconstruction of population by religious affiliation
Comparing Regions

Comparison of reconstruction of the religious composition in 2018 between Austria, Vienna and Vorarlberg

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>AUSTRIA</th>
<th></th>
<th>VIENNA</th>
<th></th>
<th>VORARLBERG</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Roman Catholic</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestants</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthodox</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslims</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unaffiliated</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Similar trends, differences in speed and degree of changes

- **Similar trends** between all regions
  - Significant decline of share of Roman Catholics
  - Increase of Muslim population
  - Rise in share of unaffiliated population

- **Difference in extent of secularization**
  - Share of unaffiliated population doubled in Vorarlberg from 2001 (6%) to 2018 (13%)
  - more moderate growth for Vienna (26% in 2001, 30% in 2018) and Austria (12% in 2001, 18% in 2018)

- Extent of **migration** affected the regions differently
International net migration per 1,000 population, 2002-2017

Source: Authors’ calculations based on Statistics Austria

Discussion: I. Reconstruction of population by religious affiliation
II. Estimates of country of origin of the Muslim, Christian and religiously unaffiliated population in 2018
Estimates of country of origin of Muslim, Christian and unaffiliated population

1. Defining 5 Country of Birth (CoB) categories:

   • Austria
   • Turkey
   • Ex-Yugoslavian countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovenia,

   • EU-28 countries (excluding Austria, Croatia, and Slovenia, as they are included in other categories)

   • Other countries
Estimates of country of origin of Muslim, Christian and unaffiliated population

1. Defining 5 Country of Birth (CoB) categories:
   - Austria
   - Turkey
   - Ex-Yugoslavian countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovenia)
   - EU-28 countries (excluding Austria, Croatia, and Slovenia, as they are included in other categories)
   - Other countries

2. Reconstruction of population by age, sex, and CoB category in 2018 is based on same methodology as described for I. Reconstruction of population by age, sex and religious affiliation in 2018.
Results: II. Estimates of countries of origin

Share of CoB categories in total international immigration (2002-2018)

Source: Authors’ calculations based on Statistics Austria
Comparison between regions: Christians, 2018

Results: II. Estimates of countries of origin

Source: Authors’ calculations
Comparison between regions: **Muslims**, 2018

Results: II. Estimates of countries of origin

Source: Authors’ calculations
Comparison between regions: Unaffiliated, 2018

Results: II. Estimates of countries of origin

Source: Authors’ calculations
### Changes in CoB composition, 2001 and 2018

#### Results: II. Estimates of countries of origin

**Austria**
- **Christians**
  - 2001: 92%
  - 2018: 87%
- **Muslims**
  - 2001: 81%
  - 2018: 69%
- **Unaffiliated**
  - 2001: 90%
  - 2018: 89%

**Vienna**
- **Christians**
  - 2001: 81%
  - 2018: 69%
- **Muslims**
  - 2001: 81%
  - 2018: 69%
- **Unaffiliated**
  - 2001: 90%
  - 2018: 89%

**Vorarlberg**
- **Christians**
  - 2001: 90%
  - 2018: 89%
- **Muslims**
  - 2001: 81%
  - 2018: 69%
- **Unaffiliated**
  - 2001: 90%
  - 2018: 89%

**Source:** Authors’ calculations
Discussion: II. Estimates of religiosity

Changing composition of CoBs in all regions and among all religious groups

- Increasing share of people born in *Other Countries*, particularly among Muslims and Unaffiliated
- Rise of 2nd generation immigrants who were born in *Austria*
  - Austria as top CoB in younger age groups of Muslim population
- Religion-specific differences in age- and sex structure as compared to the total Austrian population
- No significant differences in age-, sex-, and CoB category structure between the different regions
- Decrease of share of population who were born in *Turkey*, particularly among Muslims
III.

Estimates of religiosity
How to measure religiosity?
How to measure religiosity?

- SURVEY QUESTION:
  
  „How important is RELIGION in your life?“

  1) Very important
  2) Rather important
  3) Not very important
  4) Not at all important
Methodology: III. Estimates of religiosity

How to measure religiosity?

• SURVEY QUESTION:

  „How important is RELIGION in your life?“

  1) Very important
  2) Rather important
  3) Not very important
  4) Not at all important

• Same question was asked in World Value Survey (WVS), European Value Survey (WVS), The World’s Muslims Dataset (PEW), and Global Attitudes & Trends Survey (PEW)

• Since 2001 question was asked in 114 countries
Results: III. Estimates of religiosity

Relative frequencies of answers about importance of religion among Christians

Note: Time period considered: 2001-2018
Source: Authors’ calculations based on EVS, WVS, PEW
Relative frequencies of answers about importance of religion among Muslims

Note: Time period considered: 2001-2018
Source: Authors’ calculations based on EVS, WVS, PEW
Results: III. Estimates of religiosity

Relative frequencies of answers about importance of religion among Unaffiliated

Note: Time period considered: 2001-2018
Source: Authors’ calculations based on EVS, WVS, PEW
Results: III. Estimates of religiosity

Average importance of religion in one’s life in different years of survey, 2001-2018

Note: Importance of religion is only shown when CoB category mean is based on a minimum of 100 observations. 
Source: Authors’ calculations based on EVS, WVS, PEW
Results: III. Estimates of religiosity

Average importance of religion by 5-year age groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>20</th>
<th>40</th>
<th>60</th>
<th>80</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>Christians</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Muslims</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unaffiliated</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>Christians</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Muslims</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex-Yugoslavia</td>
<td>Christians</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU-28</td>
<td>Christians</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Importance of religion is only shown when mean is based on a minimum of 100 observations; time period considered: 2001-2018

Source: Authors’ calculations based on EVS, WVS, PEW
Change in religiosity due to changing composition of countries of origin

VIENNA

VORARLBERG

Source: Authors’ calculations based on EVS, WVS, PEW.
Religiosity needs to be analyzed also separated from religious affiliation

• Not only the religious affiliation but also the country of origin plays an important role when analyzing the level of religiosity
  • Muslims in Turkey and Other countries reveal highest level of religiosity

• Being religiously unaffiliated does not mean necessarily that religion is not important in people’s life

• No considerable changes in religiosity during period of observation
  • Vienna indicates trends supporting the theory of postsecularism: slight increase in religiosity of Christians, while religiosity of Muslims is slightly decreasing

• Religiosity increases with age in Austria (age vs. cohort effect), but is rather stable elsewhere
Conclusions

• **Aim:** Comparison of the religious landscapes in Austria, Vienna and Vorarlberg with regard to three central questions:
  
  • I. How large are the different religious groups?
  
  • II. Where do Christians, Muslims and Unaffiliated come from?
  
  • III. How religious are they?

- **Ad I.** Decrease of religious homogeneity in Austria: share of Roman Catholics is decreasing, while the share of Muslims and Unaffiliated is growing

- **Ad II.** With the arrival of many migrants from the Syrian Arab Republic and Afghanistan, these countries partly replaced traditional CoBs of immigrants such as Ex-Yugoslavia and Turkey

- **Ad III.** Despite changing composition of religious denominations and countries of origin, no significant changes in religiosity were observed over the past years
Thank you!

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