Personality Traits Predicting Individual's Religiosity - Contextual Dependencies
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Introduction
For decades, religiosity has been object of scientific research. Investigations revealed associations with partnership characteristics and health related outcomes (Doane, 2013; Village, Williams, & Francis, 2010). However, the driving forces behind religiosity have been widely neglected.

The Role of Agency and Communion
Recent studies revealed an interesting pattern of results in cross-country investigations, extending the commonly assumed role of personality traits (Gebauer, Paulhus, & Neberich, 2013; Gebauer et al., 2014). First, they confirmed the positive correlation between communion and religiosity in highly religious countries like the U.S. (where the majority of former investigations took place), which was explained by a tendency to assimilate. Second, they explained the weak and by trend negative correlation between agency and religiosity as a tendency to differentiate from the surrounding culture. Hence, these results show that context has a moderating effect on the association between agency and religiosity as well as communion and religiosity.

Method
Data • DFG funded 14-year long-term project “Panel Analysis of Intimate Relationships and Family Dynamics” (pairfam); fist five waves available • 2011 Census; population census, mainly based on administrative registers
Sample • Participants of panel wave 1 (n=10,572), M = 26.4 years, SD = 8.44 years • 52% female; 72% pertain to a religious denomination
Variables • Personality traits: BFI (Rammstedt & John, 2005) • Individual’s religiosity: frequency of attending a religious institution or ceremony (e.g. church, synagogue), ranging from 1 (never to six) more than once a week • Context religiosity: percentage of people mentioning a religious denomination (e.g. Roman Catholic, Jewish)
Analyses • Hierarchic ordinal (logistic) regression

Discussion
This study aimed to replicate cross-country research within Germany by comparing the association between personality traits and religiosity across administrative districts. A moderating effect of religiosity of context could partially be confirmed.

Agreeableness, used as an indicator of communion, was positively correlated to individual's religiosity. Furthermore, the interaction of personality and context religiosity pointed into the expected direction, although not significant. Moreover the interaction between openness and context religiosity pointed into the expected direction confirming the prediction that openness is related to less individual's religiosity especially in highly religious contexts.

The Big Two and the Big Five
Findings suggested a relationship between the Big Two personality dimensions of agency and communion and the Big Five. Agreeableness and conscientiousness were related to communion whereas openness and extraversion were related to agency (Gebauer et al., 2013; Gebauer et al., 2014; McCrae & Costa, 2008).

In our analyses we used agreeableness and openness as indicators of communion and agency, respectively. We investigated one facet of religiosity (e.g. religious service attendance) and tried to replicate the cross-country findings within Germany by comparing administrative districts.

Hypotheses
• Agreeableness predicts higher individual’s religiosity, especially the more religious the administrative district is.
• Openness predicts lower individual's religiosity, especially the more religious the administrative district is.

Results

| Table 1. Hierarchic Model Results for Both Personality Traits and Context Religiosity. |
|-------------------------------------------------
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>b</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>(p)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main effect agreeableness</td>
<td>.169</td>
<td>.028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main effect openness</td>
<td>.109</td>
<td>.030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreeableness x context</td>
<td>-.012</td>
<td>.035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness x context</td>
<td>-.099</td>
<td>.037</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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(Factors controlled for age and sex.)

Agreeableness
We found the expected positive relation between agreeableness and individual's religiosity. The interaction of personality and context religiosity was not significant, but showed the expected direction.

Openness
We found the expected negative interaction of openness and context religiosity.

References

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