

BEYOND THE DIVINE MANDATE: THE CONDITIONAL DYNAMICS OF RELIGIOSITY, SECULAR ETHICS, AND RULE-COMPLIANCE

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ABSTRACT

This article critically synthesizes empirical evidence from the first quarter of the twenty-first century (2001-2025) to examine the complex, conditional relationship among religiosity, rule compliance, and social order. Challenging conventional assumptions that religion inherently fosters law-abiding behavior and that secularism undermines morality, this review analyzes findings across three social strata: the family unit, the organizational workplace, and broader society. At the micro-level, religiosity often acts as a protective factor against deviance, yet it can paradoxically be leveraged to justify harmful behaviors, revealing a dual-edged sword effect. In organizations, while intrinsic religiosity correlates with reduced deviance and increased whistleblowing, hierarchical religious structures frequently enable systemic corruption by prioritizing loyalty over accountability. Crucially, the synthesis reveals that the impact of religiosity is not linear but is moderated by eight key variables, including intrinsic motivation, fundamentalism, the balance between civic and religious identity, and the quality of secular institutions. Furthermore, contrary to pervasive anti-atheist prejudices, robust secular societies consistently exhibit high levels of rule of law and well-being, demonstrating that consequentialist ethics and strong secular institutions effectively promote social order without supernatural surveillance. The article concludes by urging legal scholars and policymakers to prioritize institutional quality and inclusive civic governance over simplistic religious assumptions to ensure equitable justice and human rights.

Keywords: Rule-Compliance, Sociology of Religion, Secular Ethics, Legal Pluralism, Institutional Quality

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