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Exploring the interplay between religion, tolerance, fundamentalism, and attitudes towards immigrants: a semi-automatic literature review

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ABSTRACT

Migration has profoundly impacted national political agendas and public perceptions of immigrants. Many factors, such as the perceived threat to the residents' economic stability and cultural integration, affect the attitudes toward immigrants. Academics have explored the influence of some socioeconomic and political factors, regional welfare programs, and support for right-wing parties in shaping these perceptions. The study reviews specifically the importance of the role of religion in shaping attitudes towards immigrants. Through a semi-automatic literature extraction, the study aims to explore the intersectionality of religious tolerance with fundamentalism and attitudes towards immigrants. The study aims to shed light on the underlying grounded theories and suggest future studies in the field. Bibliometric analysis of a database of selected studies reveals strong associations between words such as 'Muslims,' 'integration,' 'attitudes,' and 'immigrants,' underscoring their interconnectedness in scholarly analysis. Thus, the study provides a general overview and understanding of the complex relationship between religion and three connected variables: religious tolerance, fundamentalism and attitudes towards immigrants.

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Religion; tolerance; fundamentalism; attitudes towards immigrants; semi-automatic review

1. Introduction

The global migration crisis and an increasingly interconnected world have intensified discussions about the impact of immigration on social cohesion, cultural identity and economic stability. In Europe, the Americas and other regions, migration is often linked to complex issues of multicultural integration, religious tolerance and national security. These interrelated aspects have led to polarised debates, with concerns that migration may disrupt established cultural norms, challenge religious traditions and create economic competition (Davidov & Semyonov, 2017; Davidovitch & Soen, 2016). Such perspectives have shaped public policy, influenced electoral outcomes, and fuelled the rise of right-wing populism, highlighting the social and political significance of migration.

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Religious diversity is a particularly sensitive dimension of the migration discourse. The arrival of immigrants from different religious backgrounds has raised questions about cultural compatibility and social cohesion (Foner & Alba, 2008). Researchers have pointed out that negative attitudes towards immigrants are often linked to perceived threats to economic resources and cultural values (Cohen, 2022; Czymara, 2021; Davidov & Semyonov, 2017; de Vreese, 2017; Dirksmeier, 2021; Indelicato & Martín, 2023). At the same time, the literature suggests that religious tolerance and intergroup contact can play a mitigating role in these tensions. People who regularly have positive interactions with immigrants are more likely to hold inclusive views, suggesting that policies promoting multicultural engagement could improve intergroup relations (Deslandes & Anderson, 2019; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2006; Vishkin & Ben-Nun Bloom, 2022).

The study aims to examine the relationship between religious tolerance, fundamentalism, and attitudes towards immigrants. Thus, the paper is structured as follows: Section 2 provides a brief theoretical framework, Section 3 details the semi-automatic extraction method of relevant literature on the interplay of the topics, and Section 4 presents research findings. Section 5 discusses the main findings. The study presents the relevant conclusions with the main limitations in Section 6.

2. Brief theoretical framework

The migration topic has shaped national political agendas by sparking intense debates about the potential threat immigrants pose regarding economic stability and cultural preservation. The cultural aspect of this issue is significant, as immigration has led to the emergence of religious multiculturalism, primarily between Christians and Muslims, and this coexistence has given rise to fears about the preservation of cultural identities (Barry, 2002). Additionally, the rise of terrorist attacks, such as the 9/11 attacks, Madrid 2005, Charlie Hebdo, and others, has further fuelled concerns about national security related to immigration (Davidov & Semyonov, 2017).

Several scholars have deeply analysed the migratory phenomenon and its effects. For example, highlighting how intolerance towards newcomers is mainly influenced by socio-economic and political contexts (Cohen, 2022; Czymara, 2021; Davidov & Semyonov, 2017; de Vreese, 2017; Dirksmeier, 2021; Indelicato & Martín, 2023). In contrast, Eger and Breznau (2017) have shifted the focus from evaluating national attitudes toward immigrants to the impact of immigration on regional welfare allocation attitudes. In other words, while many studies focus on the cross-national analysis of anti-immigration attitudes, Eger and Breznau (2017) examine the contextual determinants of anti-immigration sentiment in European regions. In particular, they investigated whether and to what extent the size of a region's foreign-born population influences support for national welfare programs.

Karreth et al. (2015) showed that people living in regions with traditionally high immigration levels tend to be more open to immigrants. However, recent increases in immigration, especially in socially 'racially diverse' and economically less developed regions of Europe, are generally associated with lower acceptance of immigration, but only among natives who vote for right-wing parties (Karreth et al., 2015). Furthermore, Dalle Nogare et al. (2021) conducted a comparative analysis of Italian regions, finding that an increase in citizen support for some anti-immigration parties may be negatively correlated

with the presence of public policies aimed at integrating immigrants, such as programs offering free access or discounted tickets at museums.

Moreover, the study of interreligious relationships has also captured the attention of researchers.

Research highlights the complexity of public attitudes towards immigration, shaped by economic and social factors, perceived threats and institutional narratives. The Integrated Threat Theory (ITT) proposed by Stephan et al. (2005) provides insights into how different types of perceived threats, such as realistic threats to resources and symbolic threats to cultural values, contribute to anti-immigrant sentiment. When individuals perceive both types of threats, anti-immigrant sentiments increase. However, Stephan's et al. (2005) research also shows that fostering empathy can help reduce these negative attitudes and suggests possible interventions to improve intergroup relations by reducing perceived threats. Intergroup contact influences attitudes towards immigrants. Ward and Masgoret (2006) show that frequent positive intercultural and interreligious interactions reduce perceived threats and promote more favourable views of immigrants. Their findings suggest that policies promoting multicultural engagement could help change public opinion by reducing fears and building positive associations with diversity. Individuals who support multiculturalism and engage in regular intercultural contact tend to have more accepting attitudes towards immigrants, underlining the value of multicultural policies.

Institutional narratives also play an important role in shaping attitudes towards immigration. According to Putnam and Campbell (2012), religious beliefs and values foster religious tolerance, which includes, in one way, respect for others in holding one's beliefs and practising one's religion without restriction, and in another way, may be considered as a division factor. Similarly, various studies show that religious tolerance depends not only on religion but also on other individuals' socioeconomic characteristics. For example, Oliveira and Menezes (2018b) and Kubicek et al. (2009) highlight how attitudes towards different religions can vary according to sociodemographic factors such as age, as the new generations show less openness towards those who follow other religions. Furthermore, Ferrara (2012) found that education and income influenced religious tolerance since high levels of education and medium/high economic levels favour greater religious tolerance.

Research shows that religion plays a complex role in shaping attitudes towards immigrants, with factors such as religious affiliation, level of religiosity and state-religion relations influencing the degree of tolerance or intolerance. Helbling and Traunmüller (2016) argue that high levels of state support for the dominant religion can reinforce negative attitudes towards out-religious immigrants' group by reinforcing a cultural identity that perceives religious newcomers as a threat. This finding suggests that the institutional link between religion and the state strengthens resistance to accommodating minority religious practices. On the other hand, Doebler (2014) examines differences in religious tolerance across European countries and finds that while intrinsic religious beliefs are associated with lower intolerance towards immigrants, fundamentalist beliefs are correlated with higher levels of prejudice. This suggests that religious beliefs can promote tolerance, but fundamentalist interpretations often reinforce exclusionary attitudes and prejudice.

Similarly, McDaniel et al. (2011) found that in the US, Christian nationalism – the belief that the nation has a divinely ordained mission – significantly predicted hostility towards immigrants. This perspective frames immigration as a threat to national identity and illustrates how religiously infused nationalism can increase anti-immigrant sentiment.

Bohman and Hjerm (2014) emphasise that the broader religious context influences individual attitudes. They show that in Protestant-majority and religiously diverse countries, highly religious people are generally more tolerant of immigrants. Conversely, in religion-homogeneous or Catholic-majority countries, religiosity tends to correlate with more negative attitudes towards immigrants. This finding highlights the importance of considering national religious contexts when researchers aim to understand how religiosity influences attitudes towards immigration.

3. Methodology

This study uses a semi-automated, concept-centred literature review to explore the complex relationship between religious tolerance, fundamentalism and attitudes towards immigration. Drawing on the approaches of Wu and Martín (2022) and Cavallaro and Nocera (2022), we adapt their structured methodologies to analyse and synthesise the literature relevant to this intersection systematically. Cavallaro and Nocera's (2022) work emphasises a rigorous concept-centred structure for exploring emerging themes in transport research and demonstrates how thematic clustering can highlight overlooked trends and gaps. Similarly, Wu and Martín (2022) use systematic review techniques and topic modelling to identify key factors influencing passenger preferences, illustrating how structured reviews can clarify diverse influences within a research area.

This concept-centred approach, implemented in four stages, allows for a thorough examination of the existing literature (see Figure 1). This method proves advantageous for a comprehensive analysis of the state of the art, especially in the initial stages of the research. The process begins by (1) formulating focused research questions that explore the intersection of religious tolerance, fundamentalism and attitudes towards immigration. The inclusion of fundamentalism as a keyword stems from its frequent association with religious intolerance in the existing literature (Ellison & Musick, 1993). An initial hypothesis suggests that this area of intersectionality remains significantly under-researched.

In the second stage, (2) a comprehensive search for relevant studies is conducted on Scopus, using the following search code: TITLE-ABS-KEY ((religious AND tolerance OR fundamentalism) AND immigrants). This search is designed to identify scholarly articles that delve into the overlapping realms of these four critical topics.

Subsequently, (3) the third stage involves filtering the retrieved papers to ensure that the year and source are not null, and both the abstract and title contain the specified keywords. After a careful and detailed process, a total of 126 studies were collected.

The study adopts a rigorous approach to ensure the relevance and precision of the dataset by implementing a systematic cleaning process. In this crucial fourth stage, (4) we meticulously examined the initial collection of 126 studies obtained from the Scopus search. Our objective is to refine the dataset by excluding papers that do not align with the topic. To achieve this, we carefully assessed each study, removing those that do not explicitly address the intricate interplay between religious tolerance, fundamentalism, and attitudes towards immigrants. This meticulous cleaning process resulted in a final dataset of 106 studies directly related to the intersection of religious tolerance, fundamentalism, and attitudes towards immigration. This refined dataset forms the basis for our in-depth analysis, providing a comprehensive and targeted exploration of the

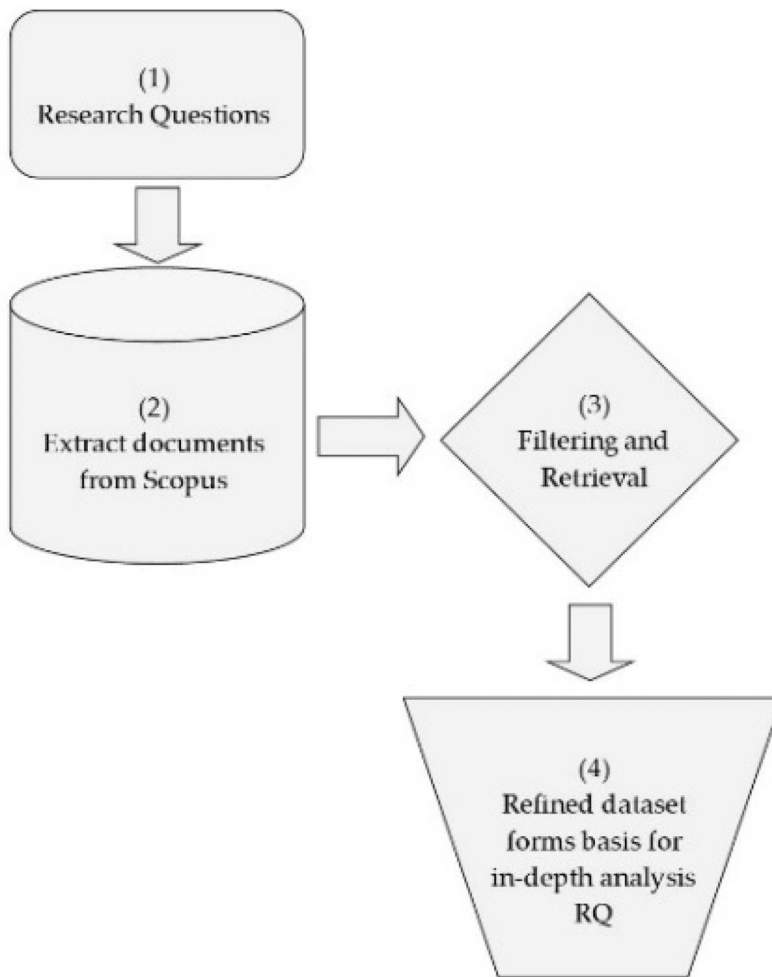


Figure 1. Methodology.

complex relationships within the chosen research framework. The Scopus search is based solely on articles because they are more accessible and allow for a streamlined, semi-automated review process.

4. Findings

4.1. Research trends

The proposed method reveals specific years of increased scientific output, notably 2006, 2013, 2016, 2017, 2019 and 2022 (Figure 2). This trend suggests that scientific output often increases after significant events like wars or terrorist attacks, which often catalyse research in different fields. In particular, events in 2016 and 2017 seem to have boosted research on prejudice, anti-immigrant sentiment and religious intolerance, as documented by the Global Terrorism Database (Herre, 2023). Furthermore, between 2018 and 2022, there was a significant increase in publications examining the relationship between

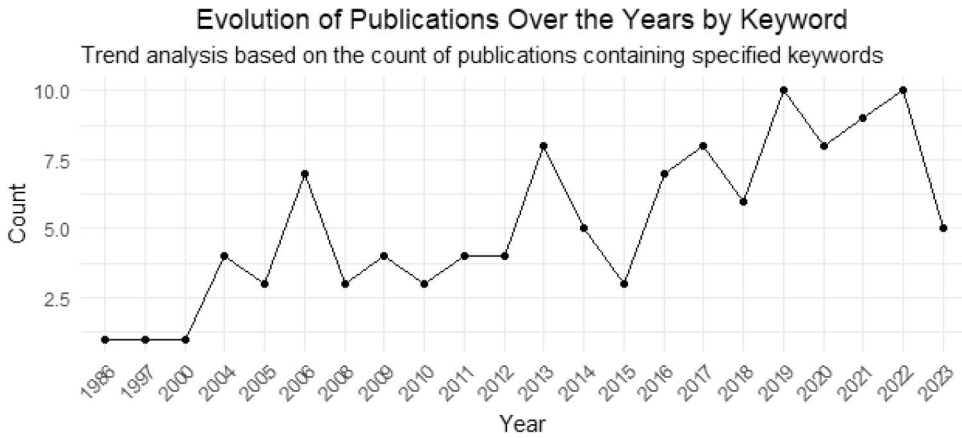


Figure 2. Publications by year.

religious tolerance and migration. This increase coincides with major disruptions such as the 2018 crisis at the US-Mexico border (Durand & Massey, 2019), migration flows following the withdrawal of Western forces from Afghanistan (Herre, 2023), and the Russian invasion of Ukraine (Herre, 2023).

Figure 3 shows the main journals where articles dealing with the studied intersectionality have been published. It can be seen that *Century of Difference*, *International Journal of Psychology*, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *Religions and Society*, *Religions*, and *Religious Tolerance* have contributed more to understanding the complex interconnection between religious tolerance, fundamentalism, and attitudes towards immigrants. Additionally, there are 90 other journals where articles dealing with the topics have been published. It is interesting to highlight that the topic is not only under-researched but spread over a high number of publications.

Analysing the geographical areas of study, Table 1 shows that the United States stands out as the country most thoroughly investigated concerning religious tolerance, fundamentalism, and attitudes towards immigrants. Close behind are the European continent

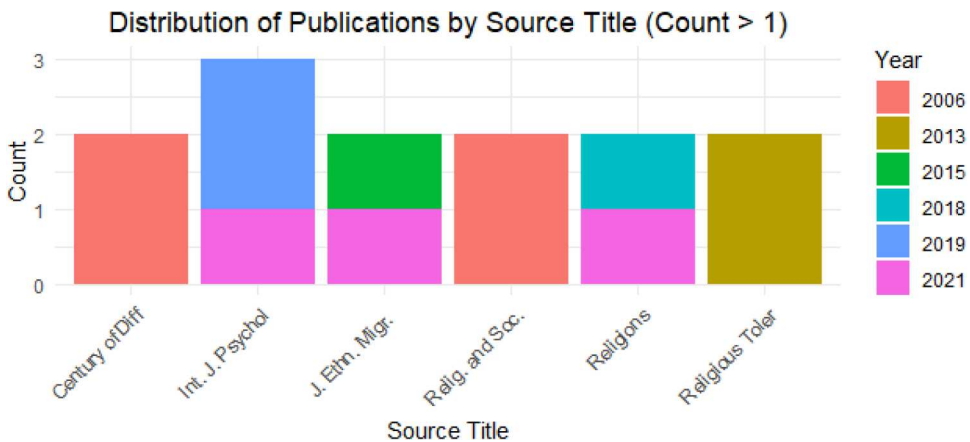


Figure 3. Journals.

Table 1. Geographical areas of study.

Area	<i>n</i>	Area	<i>n</i>
USA	46	Indonesia	1
Europe	18	Ireland	1
Asia	5	Italy	1
United Kingdom	4	Kazakhstan	1
Canada	3	Mexico	1
Australia	2	Nepal	1
Israel	2	Norway	1
New Zealand	2	Oman	1
Poland	2	Pakistan	1
Turkey	2	Sweden	1
Austria	1	Switzerland	1
European Union	1		

(18) and, Asia (5). Nevertheless, we observe that there is only a limited number of countries where the relationship between religious tolerance, fundamentalism, and sentiment towards immigrants has been studied more than once, including the United Kingdom (4), Canada (3), Australia (2), Israel (2), New Zealand (2), Poland (2), and Turkey (2).

Table 2 shows that most literature relies on qualitative approaches, including case studies, interviews and theoretical frameworks. This preference highlights the academic community's emphasis on in-depth understanding, contextual analysis and nuanced narratives. However, the limited use of quantitative methods is also notable. Although some studies employ statistical techniques such as descriptive statistics, structural equation models (SEM) and simulation models, there remains a gap in applying advanced quantitative approaches. This gap represents a significant opportunity for research development, as integrating sophisticated analytical tools could provide more profound and nuanced insights into the phenomenon.

4.2. Intersectionality between religious tolerance, fundamentalism and attitudes towards Immigrants

Using VOS viewer, an advanced tool for constructing and visualising bibliometric networks (Verkuyten et al., 2020), we analysed and mapped the connections between author citations in our document corpus (Figure 4). In this visualisation, the citation impact of each author is represented by the size of the corresponding circle: larger circles indicate a higher number of citations. In particular, the article by Deslandes and Anderson (2019) emerges as a pivotal work in the field, focusing on the analysis of fundamentalism, along with other influential authors such as Williams (2016), who also shows significant citation activity within the network. In addition, a significant citation network emerges among scholars of religious tolerance and immigration studies, including Hunsberger and Jackson (2005). The presence of these networks highlights the importance and centrality of these topics in academic discourse, with a number of influential contributions shaping the field.

The VOSviewer co-occurrence analysis (Figure 5) provides a detailed map of key themes and reveals the complex relationships between religious fundamentalism, tolerance and attitudes towards immigrants. Keywords such as 'religion', 'Islam', 'integration', 'migrant' and 'multiculturalism' highlight how these issues intersect, particularly in discussions about the integration of Muslim immigrants, their experiences of marginalisation

Table 2. Methodologies adopted.

Author(s)	Approach
Kromkowski (1986), Limage (2000), Máiz and Requejo (2005), Shweder et al. (2002), Robinson (2004), Venegoni and Ferrero (2004), Gerstie and Mollenkopf (2001), Mertens (2005), Tauber (2005), (Entzinger, 2006), (Fischer & Hout, 2006), Fischer and Michael (2006), Hondagneu-Sotelo (2008), Hoskins (2006), Bartolo and Smyth (2009), Moore (2009), Racine (2009), Tévanian (2009), Josukutty (2010), Billiet et al. (2010), Calfano (2011), Mookherjee (2011), Stanwood (2011), Mancina (2012), Kozloff (2012), Janicki (2012), Falcone (2012), Kushner (2013), Glaser (2014), Selwood (2014), Egan (2013), Van Minnen and Berg (2013), Triandafyllidou and Kouki (2013), Williams (2016), Sharma (2014), Mosurinjohn (2014), Kersten (2014), Honohan and Rougier (2015), Myhill (2015), Ricucci (2016), Galbraith (2016), Moe and Wiborg (2016), (Davidovitch & Soen, 2016), Fleeglar (2016), Shield (2017), Guzys et al. (2020), Weidinger (2017), Maharjan (2017), Jović (2017), Frager and Patrias (2017), Bhugra et al. (2017), Alexseev and Zhemukhov (2017), Kennedy (2018), Pap (2018), Luku (2019), Stroińska and Cecchetto (2019), Golebiowska (2020), Gadzhimuradova (2020), Duina and Carson (2020), Verkuyten et al. (2020), Žuk and Žuk (2020), Kardis et al. (2021), Vaughan (2021), Choi (2021), Morrish (2021), Wagner and Kössler (2022), Acocella (2022), Zhalelova et al. (2022), Vishkin and Ben-Nun Bloom (2022), Contini and Carrera (2022), Ludington (2023), Nakamura et al. (2023), Banack and Pohler (2023), Hasif (2023)	Qualitative
Jones (1997), Mobasher (2006), Henkel (2006), Schafer and Shaw (2009), Skirbekk et al. (2010), Bangwayo-Skeete and Zikhali (2011), Bangwayo-Skeete and Zikhali (2013), Kashyap and Lewis (2013), Doebler (2014), Koopmans (2015), Gibadullina and Silayeva (2016), Shaver et al. (2016), Slootman and Duyvendak (2018), Clark et al. (1998), Cohen (2018), Sherkat and Lehman (2018), Jhala et al. (2019), Kaya (2019), Berggren et al. (2019), Rowatt (2019), Ben-Nun Bloom et al. (2019), Deslandes and Anderson (2019), Pangalila and Mantiri (2019), Shaw et al. (2019), Aschauer (2020), Bayram Özdemir and Özdemir (2020), Helbling and Traummuller (2020), Stroope et al. (2021), Albaghli and Carlucci (2021), Ziller and Berning (2021), Xia (2021), Sterri (2021), Denisova et al. (2022), Seto and Said (2022), Al-Kire et al. (2022), Renzaho et al. (2022), Dell'isola (2022), (Perrin et al., 2023)	Quantitative

and the societal challenges posed by religious diversity. The concept of religious fundamentalism is closely linked to terms such as ‘religion’, ‘Islam’ and ‘Christianity’, reflecting the fact that much of the discourse focuses on fundamentalist beliefs within particular

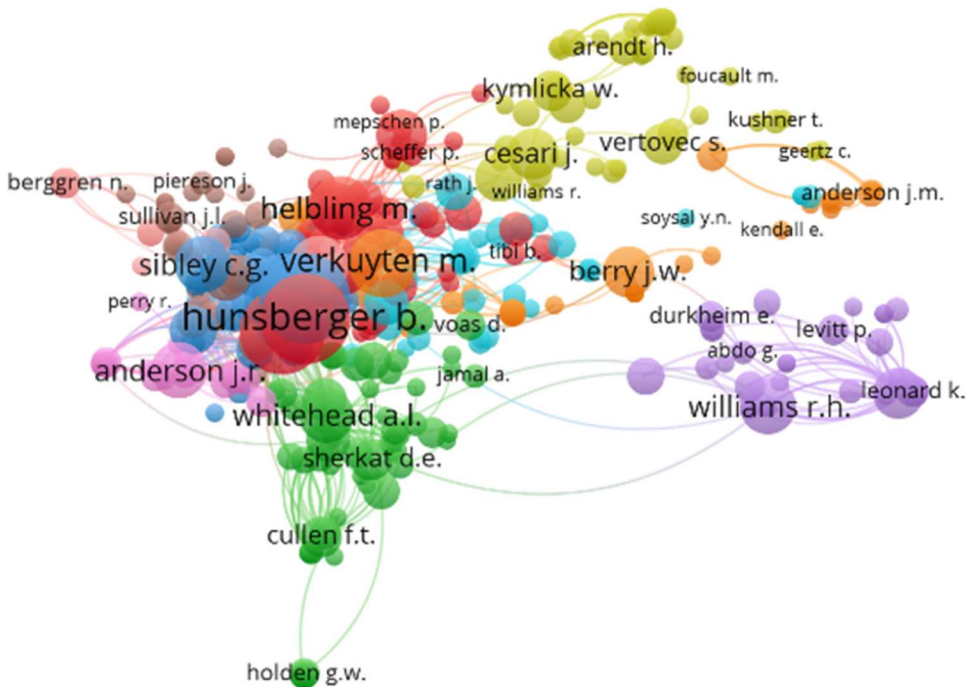


Figure 4. Network of citations.

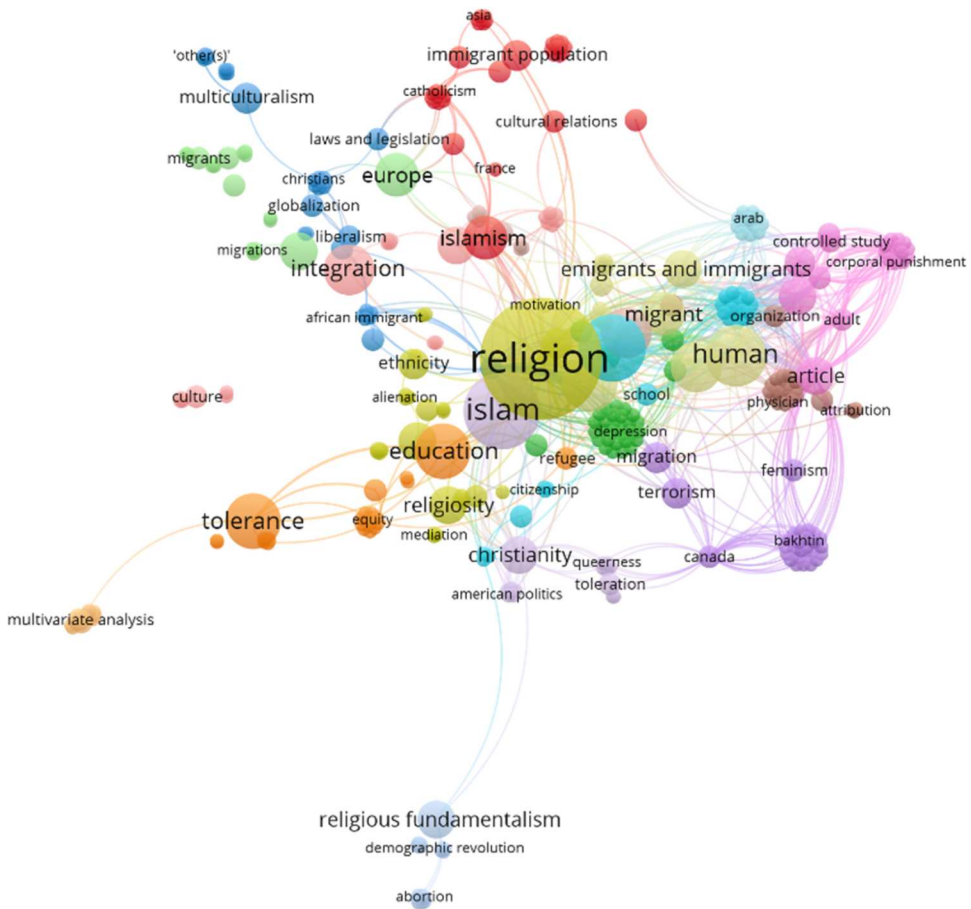


Figure 5. Co-occurrence analysis graph of the keywords.

religious traditions, often contrasting fundamentalist and moderate views. This focus is crucial because fundamentalist ideologies are often associated with rigid in-group and out-group distinctions that contribute to intolerance and resistance to multicultural integration. The association of fundamentalism with concepts such as ‘tolerance’, ‘ethnicity’ and ‘migration’ suggests that fundamentalist attitudes can directly shape negative views of immigrant communities, especially those perceived as religiously or culturally ‘different’ (Doebler, 2014).

Religious tolerance appears alongside terms such as ‘education’, ‘multiculturalism’ and ‘laws and legislation’, suggesting that tolerance is often explored within frameworks that emphasise inclusivity, education and policy. These associations highlight the potential of educational initiatives and legislative measures to combat intolerance by promoting a more inclusive understanding of cultural and religious diversity. For example, educational programmes focusing on religious diversity and tolerance can moderate fundamentalist attitudes and promote a more accepting view of immigrants.

Attitudes towards immigrants, represented by keywords such as ‘migrant’, ‘refugee’, ‘integration’ and ‘multiculturalism’, are influenced by both tolerance and fundamentalist

of these issues on both national and international scale, considering diverse perspectives and contexts. Terms such as 'diversity', 'ethnic', and 'school' suggest a focus on exploring the roles of diversity and ethnicity within religious contexts. Additionally, the inclusion of 'school' as a prominent term indicates a related emphasis on how education may shape tolerant environments towards immigrants.

4.3. Sustained theories

Intolerance and cultural incompatibility have been grounded under two different theories such as the group position theory Blumer (1958) and the social identity theory Tajfel et al. (1979). Both theories propose that the majority group in society develops a strong in-group identity that catalyzes prejudice against the minority group, such as immigrants. The social identity theory reinforces that prejudice is maximised when both groups compete for resources.

The general authoritarian dynamics theory Decker et al. (2022) has been used to explain the right-wing extremism in Germany as a trend affine to dictatorships, chauvinism, the trivialisation and justification of National Socialism, antisemitism, xenophobia, and social Darwinism. The study's innovative feature is based on applying the theory of authoritarianism in the contemporary world, which is characterised by political conflicts and social contradictions.

The conspiracy theory also explains political conflicts and social contradictions (Jolley et al., 2020). The authors contended that globalists use the same type of propaganda used by fascists in the twentieth century with a simple argument in which billions of taxpayers' money are available to help hundreds of thousands of immigrants. Globalisation can be more easily advocated from a penthouse than from social housing. The elites formed by businessmen, politicians, entertainers, actors, and digital workers are blamed for this conspiracy as they mainly control the information.

Religion and the (in)tolerance towards immigrants' concepts formed part of the individual personality. Am I a religious person? Am I tolerant? Am I fundamentalist? What is my position about a massive immigrant arrival? Society norms since early childhood shape all the concepts' dynamics in part. Research on personality and political attitudes has been embedded in assimilation social theory (Alba & Nee, 2014) and ethnic boundaries and communities' theory (Alba, 2005; Heisler, 2000). Alba and Nee (1997) defined the assimilation theory as the social phenomenon that embedded ethnic minorities into the American mainstream. However, Heisler (2000) was sceptical about the assimilation theory by its weakness to explain the inequality and conflict persistence between different ethnic groups. For this reason, the author extended the theory to primarily analyse the contexts of economic activity, industry, labour markets, and socioeconomic position.

Out-group hostility has been studied using an intergroup relations perspective, focusing on contact theory (Pettigrew et al., 2011). More recently, Kanol (2021) used discrimination as the variable that measures hostility, and control other demographic and socioeconomic variables, to investigate the role of different religions, religiosity and intergroup relations in explaining unfavourable out-religious groups attitudes. The results suggest that unfavourable attitudes toward other religious out-groups are most strongly associated with religious fundamentalism independently of the Abrahamic religion. Other

scholars have investigated out-group hostility using an intergroup relations perspective, focusing on contact theory, and more recently, on discrimination. While controlling for other relevant factors such as demographic and socioeconomic variables, the study investigated to what extent the role of religiosity and intergroup relations could explain unfavourable interreligious attitudes. The results suggest that unfavourable attitudes toward out-religious immigrants groups are most strongly associated with religious fundamentalism rather than by the religions, and the finding were maintained across all the Abrahamic religions.

Religious fundamentalism is a complex phenomenon widely studied from various academic perspectives. According to Gregg (2016), three main theories can be identified to understand religious activism and violence: social movements, fundamentalists, and apocalyptic warriors.

Religious fundamentalism, as discussed by Rapoport (1993), is characterised by strict adherence to a literal and dogmatic interpretation of the sacred texts of a particular religious tradition. Some individuals who follow a fundamentalist interpretation of their religion tend to oppose more modern and flexible interpretations. They aim to maintain and encourage a traditional and conservative perspective of their faith. However, this rigid mindset can result in the dismissal of certain values and practices that may be perceived as 'dangerous' or 'unorthodox' within or beyond their religious group.

The study by Yustisia et al. (2020) highlights the role of religious fundamentalism in promoting collective narcissism and extreme group behaviour against out-groups. Ideological rigidity and unconditional adherence to religious principles can feed a sense of moral superiority and an exaggerated collective identity. This mindset can foster the dehumanization of those who do not share fundamental beliefs and justify violent actions in the name of religion.

In general, religious fundamentalism can be seen as a response to uncertainty and social disruption, seeking security and cohesion within a rigid belief system. However, this rigidity can lead to intolerant attitudes, the rejection of diversity, and the justification of violence in the name of religion (Herriot, 2014). Studying these phenomena is essential to understand better social dynamics and the factors contributing to religious extremism in different contexts.

5. Discussion

The study dives deep to reveal the complex dynamics that characterise the relationship between religion and the key elements encapsulated in the triple helix – tolerance, fundamentalism and immigration. Through careful analysis of the scholarly literature, a compelling result emerges that highlights the existence of significant intersectionality between keywords such as 'Islam', 'social' and 'cultural'. This intricate web of interrelated concepts represents a deep interdependence in academic discourse, revealing the complex connections that shape perceptions (Alietti & Padovan, 2013). Recognising the strong link between these keywords implies a nuanced relationship in which religious dimensions significantly influence and contribute to the formation of public attitudes toward immigrants. Scholars have increasingly focused on a comprehensive framework that links religious tolerance, fundamentalism and perceptions of immigrants and how these interrelated elements shape attitudes, especially in contexts where immigration is

a serious political and social issue. At its core, the model emphasises the role of religion not as a static influence but as an active agent that dynamically interacts with social values, economic interests and cultural identities (Fan et al., 2021; Ferrara, 2012; Oliveira & Menezes, 2018a).

While religious tolerance and fundamentalism appear to be opposing forces in this framework, their impact on attitudes towards immigration is far from clear. Tolerance can promote acceptance and integration, while fundamentalism often reinforces exclusionary attitudes. However, this dichotomy does not exist in isolation. Rather, both are influenced by external factors, including economic pressures, the socio-political climate and demographic changes, which add layers of complexity to the model. The intersectionality of religion and societal attitudes towards immigrants, analysed comprehensively, goes beyond superficial cause-and-effect relationships to capture the complex and multifaceted ways religion intersects with social, cultural and political factors.

Religion is often a fundamental aspect of identity, deeply rooted in individual and collective consciousness (Myhill, 2015). Both a personal belief system and a social institution frame values, norms and worldviews. Religious identity is the primary marker distinguishing 'insiders' from 'outsiders' in many societies. When these boundaries are reinforced, particularly in homogeneous societies experiencing an influx of immigrants, religion becomes a cultural lens through which immigrants are judged, often reinforcing notions of difference and 'otherness'. For example, in European countries facing increased immigration from predominantly Muslim countries, Islam is often embedded in discourses of 'otherness' in which cultural differences are emphasised, often overshadowing commonalities. This has led to Muslims being portrayed as fundamentally different from local or majority religious groups (Akbarzadeh & Roose, 2011).

Religious tolerance is a crucial dimension of attitudes towards immigrants, especially in pluralistic societies that value diversity. Religious tolerance is often shaped by a society's history, legal framework and cultural values, which can either promote inclusivity or exclusivity (Habermas, 2004). For example, secular societies with solid religious freedom and anti-discrimination policies often welcome religious diversity and foster environments where multiple religions coexist (Skirbekk et al., 2010). However, tolerance is not evenly distributed across demographic groups. Socioeconomic, educational and cultural factors strongly influence levels of religious tolerance, with individuals from wealthier or more educated backgrounds often showing greater openness to religious diversity (Ferrara, 2012; Oliveira & Menezes, 2018b).

Tolerance is thus not simply a by-product of religious doctrine but is influenced by contextual factors that reinforce inclusive or exclusive behaviour. In this context, religion acts as a channel through which individuals accept or reject immigrant communities. In contrast to religious tolerance, fundamentalism often arises in response to a perceived threat to cultural or religious purity (Weidinger, 2017). This phenomenon is particularly prevalent in communities where traditional values are perceived to be threatened by the arrival of culturally different immigrant populations (Rowatt, 2019). Fundamentalism, with its rigid interpretation of religious principles, frames these interactions as a struggle for cultural survival and creates an 'us versus them' mentality that polarises communities (Ramakrishna, 2015). This threat perception is not limited to religious beliefs but extends to cultural practices and values. For example, portraying Islamic practices such as veiling or dietary habits as incompatible with Western values fuels narratives of incompatibility

and reinforces fundamentalist sentiments in indigenous populations. Such rigid attitudes can lead to exclusion and foster an environment where religious differences become points of contention rather than understanding (Bhugra et al., 2017; Kashyap & Lewis, 2013). Another aspect worth mentioning is the influence of religious institutions in shaping public opinion. Prominent religious figures and organisations often play a significant role in shaping the public discourse on immigration, whether they promote inclusivity or reinforce exclusivity. Pope Francis, for example, has publicly advocated the humane treatment of migrants and refugees and emphasised the Christian moral obligation to help the marginalised. Some religious leaders, on the other hand, promote nationalist and protectionist views and see immigration as a threat to social cohesion and religious identity (Beaman, 2003).

The economic dimension is also central to understanding the subtle interplay between religion and attitudes towards immigrants. Building on the findings of Sides and Citrin (2007), this study highlights that during economic downturns, immigrants are often portrayed as potential economic burdens or competitors for jobs and resources, especially by the media and political elites. This perception can fuel xenophobic and anti-immigrant sentiments, often couched in religious terms. In countries struggling economically, religious fundamentalism can become a rallying point for anti-immigrant sentiment, where immigrants are seen not only as an economic threat but also as a cultural disruptor. Conversely, religious tolerance tends to flourish in more economically stable environments where immigrants are less likely to be seen as a direct threat (Hopkins, 2010).

6. Conclusions

A semi-automated, concept-focused literature review effectively highlights the complex relationships between religious tolerance, fundamentalism and attitudes towards immigration. The final dataset of 106 studies provides a solid basis for exploring this under-researched area and offers insights into how religious tolerance and fundamentalism intersect with attitudes towards immigration. Religion does not appear as a static influence, but as an active, multifaceted agent that shapes perceptions and often creates a divide between tolerance and fundamentalism. This divide is further complicated by external factors such as economic conditions, socio-political pressures and demographic changes. Consequently, the review highlights the dynamic and complex ways in which religious identity, societal attitudes and external pressures combine to shape feelings of inclusion and exclusion towards immigrants.

Despite considerable research, there remains a significant gap in methodological approaches. The literature largely relies on traditional models such as structural equation modelling (SEM) and regression, which provide valuable insights but often fail to capture the complex, non-linear relationships between religious tolerance, fundamentalism and attitudes towards immigration. Current studies rarely venture beyond these conventional methods, resulting in an incomplete understanding of the multifaceted interactions within this framework.

It is important to acknowledge some limitations of the study. The used approach may exclude evidence from non-peer-reviewed sources such as books, book chapters and reports, which could provide valuable context and alternative perspectives on a particular topic. In addition, while effective, the semi-automated extraction method may have

inadvertently missed some relevant studies. Future research could consider a more comprehensive approach, including a wider range of sources, to understand the topic better.

In conclusion, the study highlights the interconnectedness of religion and the triple helix concepts, tolerance, fundamentalism and attitudes toward immigrants, emphasising the need to consider it in shaping the political discourse in the EU social integration of immigrants. The findings shed some light on the complex relationship between religion and the triple helix concepts, finding that a panoply of factors such as age, gender, income and political adherence could mediate it. By exploring the intersectionality of these factors, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of public perceptions of immigrants and work towards fostering greater tolerance and integration in diverse societies.

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