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Faith, Christianity, and Non-Affiliation in the United States

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Sociology

by

Kevin John McCaffree

August 2014

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Faith, Christianity, Non-Affiliation in the United States

by

Kevin John McCaffree

Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Program in Sociology
University of California, Riverside, August 2014
Dr. Jan E. Stets, Chairperson

Rates of religious non-affiliation continue to rise in the United States, with roughly 20% of Americans reporting no identification with any church or religious group. Generally, scholars have assumed these religious "nones" were atheists or agnostics with an active dislike of religious faith. This study explores the demographic, family background, political and moral worldview variation among a large sample of non-affiliates using various statistical regression analyses. Additionally, using a novel coding scheme, non-affiliates were modeled according to their self-reported levels of religiosity and spirituality, revealing further differentiation within this subpopulation. Results suggest that "nones" are not homogenously atheist or agnostic and that they likely vary in terms of their moral worldview and their political attitudes towards the family, among other things.

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General Overview of the Study

This is a large, general study of religiosity in the United States. It is both a study of fairly traditional subject matters (i.e., religious self-identification and religious affiliation), as well as a study of more novel issues such as religious non-affiliation. However, even when dealing with more traditional questions, this study attempts to pose new angles of examination at each turn. The dataset used for this study afforded the inclusion of several theoretically intriguing predictor variables, including measures of respondents' family backgrounds (i.e., relationship with parents or family size) and their moral worldviews (i.e., how important God is for the establishment of moral principles). Overall this dissertation reveals a suite of variation among not only Christian affiliates, but also among non-affiliates or religious "nones," using a novel coding strategy.

There are three studies which form the heart of this dissertation. The first study is a seemingly unrelated regression predicting identification as highly religious or highly god-believing (henceforth "spirituality"). Two models are presented, one predicting levels of respondent religiosity (controlling for spirituality), and one predicting respondent levels of spirituality/belief in God (controlling for religiosity). Study 1 enables a fairly fine-grained analysis into the differences separating those who self-identify as religious as opposed to those who self-identify as primarily believing in a God or "higher power," but who do not necessarily feel religious. Literature will be reviewed in Study 1 showing that past studies have found respondents to associate God-belief or spirituality with a more individualistic orientation to their faith (i.e., having a personal

relationship with God), whereas respondents who feel more religious tend to take a more communal approach to their faith (i.e., attending church).

Thus, Study 1 constitutes an exploration into the possible demographic and attitudinal variation buried underneath self-reported religiosity or spirituality. Surprisingly few studies have asked this question, and results were very interesting.

The second study of this dissertation treats Christian affiliation as the dependent variable, simply because the US is a predominantly Christian nation demographically. After isolating Christian affiliates in the sample, these respondents were subsequently coded into various denominations of Christian affiliation typically discussed in the literature, including Catholic, Mainline Protestant and Evangelical Protestant. Relative risk ratios are then derived using multi-nomial logistic regression, with Evangelicals as the baseline category. Results indeed show substantial variation among Christian affiliates, though some effects are more substantive—and surprising—than others.

Lastly, Study 3 investigates religious non-affiliation. Both non-affiliates, as a general population, as well as specific "types" of religious non-affiliate are investigated. Religious non-affiliates were categorized based on their self-reported religiosity and spirituality/belief in God, so that demographic and attitudinal variation could be sought for. Very few studies have systematically investigated religious "nones," and Study 3 adds to the literature by not only showing the viability of "typing" non-affiliates by their subjective religiosity/spirituality but by also showing that important demographic, political and moral worldview differences separate them.

Each subsequent chapter of this dissertation opens with an extensive literature review of past studies relevant to the present analysis. After this review of past studies, theoretically derived hypotheses are offered, though Study 3's investigation of non-affiliates maintains an exploratory element. Next, the methods and analyses specific to each study are discussed, as each study uses a different statistical technique depending on the nature and measurement of the dependent variable. Lastly, a discussion follows each individual study, with Study 3 incorporating a general discussion of both non-affiliation as well as "types" of non-affiliate.

Chapter 1: The De-Coupling of Faith: Analyzing Religion and Spirituality in Social and Demographic Context

Introduction

Ever since the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century, the European world has had to contend with a strong differentiation of religious culture. In sociology, this fractioning has largely been understood to be a result of the increasing individualism (e.g., Weber [1905]1958) brought on by cultural advances in economic productivity (i.e., nascent capitalism). As Europe's culture and economy emerges out of the "Dark Ages" in the 14th and 15th centuries, numerous resources streams were actively increasing peoples' standard of living and encouraging an individualism previously unattainable. Historic increases in literacy (enabled through the introduction of the printing press in the 15th century) and wealth (through conquest, colonial co-optation and ever-emerging markets) gave citizens in early-modern Europe an intellectual and material freedom to challenge existing norms and to conceptualize God/the divine in uniquely idiosyncratic ways.

Weber conflated the individualism/collectivism characteristic of the Protestant/Catholic split with the emergence of European industrial capitalism. Sure, it is true that Western societies (e.g., US) appear to be more individual-oriented in their media and cultural expectations compared to non-Western societies (e.g., China) (Morling & Lamoreaux, 2008). But critically, individualistic and collectivistic expressions of religious faith are found in *all* faith traditions (Cohen et al., 2005). A review by Saroglou (2011) contends that cross-culturally all faith traditions emphasize individual belief and communal belonging, though to differing degrees.

Personal religiosity appears to represent peoples' organizational religious identity, whereas spirituality/belief in god appears to represent peoples' individual religious identity (Neff, 2006; Reeves et al., 2012; Miran & Flere, 2011; Good & Willoughby, 2006). This dualistic conception finds its historical roots in Max Weber's (1958) important work distinguishing the faith orientations of Protestants compared to Catholics, and its more recent incantation in the empirical work of Gordon Allport and Michael Ross (Allport, 1960; Allport & Ross, 1967). For example, Egbert and colleagues concluded (2004) in a review of the literature:

> Spirituality is commonly viewed as individual experiences relating to God or a higher power, as well as existential aspirations of finding meaning and purpose in life. Religiousness is commonly viewed as society-based beliefs and practices relating to God or a higher power commonly associated with a church or organized group (Egbert et al.., 2004, pg 2).

The vast majority of studies to date have conflated measures of spirituality and religiosity in order to construct a "general religiousness" measure. Few studies have systematically investigated the social and attitudinal differences between people who identify primarily as spiritual and those who identify primarily as religious (Saucier & Skrzypinska, 2006; Zhai et al., 2008). Indeed, only recently has the colloquial identifier "spiritual, but not religious" entered the public lexicon as a way (mostly younger) people identify themselves to one another (Barrie-Anthony, 2014) However, with a few exceptions (e.g., Fuller, 2001) the study of spirituality and religiosity as separate demographic and social dimensions has been largely ignored in sociology. In fact, one article studying this issue concluded that, though there were differences between people who identified as mostly spiritual and those who identified as mostly religious, these differences were basically inconsequential (Zinnbauer et al., 1997).

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Scholars have largely neglected to study spirituality and religiosity separately because of their high correlation, yet there are theoretical reasons to suspect important differences separating those who are primarily individually-oriented to their faith, and those who are more communally-oriented (Bellah et al., 1985). At least in the United States (where this sample was drawn), debates over the role of religious communities in public life continue to be a mainstay of cultural conflict. Whether the topic is fundamentalist Islam and the role of women in civic affairs, or Southern Baptists and the legality of birth control, Americans are quick to frame faith-based disagreements in terms of individual freedoms vs. communal obligations (Wald & Calhoun-Brown, 2010; Gryzmala-Busse, 2012). Given that this is an under-researched area of social science, much knowledge is to be gained from a demographic and attitudinal investigation of these two forms of faith orientation.

This article will thus tentatively define religiosity as a *communally-oriented, faith-based, self-view.* In support of this is the general finding that religiosity is more highly correlated with religious behavior than belief in God alone[1] (e.g., Gall et al., 2011). Alternatively, belief in God or a higher power (here called "spirituality") will be defined as an *individually-oriented, faith based, self-view.* This article is a study of differences between people who identify as religious as compared to people who identify as spiritual. Clearly, these two terms are correlated in many people of faith, and each will be controlled when modeling the other. To the degree that each measures a different self-

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[1] In the sample used for this study, the correlation between religiosity and church attendance was .80, and the correlation between spirituality/belief in God or "higher power" and church attendance was .41; see Table 2.

view orientation to faith, the political, social and moral differences between them will be consequential not only to the study of culture but also to the sociology of religion's study of self-views and faith-based motivation (Taves, 2009).

The driving purpose of this study is to explore, comprehensively, the differences between relatively more communalistic expressions of religious faith and relatively more individualistic forms of faith. The larger theoretical picture is one of increasing individualization—we are, as a society, more occupationally and ethnically differentiated than at any previous point in history. It is this, first and foremost, which is contributing to a decline religious community (Bruce, 2011). As culture becomes more differentiated (caused primarily by increases in immigration and in the sophistication of the economy and technology), people are more frequently exposed to difference. For example, as technology, law, medicine and science have become more sophisticated, colleges and universities have taken on a larger burden of educating the public – undergraduate enrollment in the US has quadrupled since just 1970 (Wright et al., 2013). This expansion of education, however, is lived through the lives of individual college students many of whom are exposed to people of different religions, ethnicities, classes and politics for the very first time in college. Opening up the college experience to more and more people has its downsides, but one clear upside is that it increases the general cosmopolitanism of the population, and cosmopolitanism has long been understood to have a socially liberalizing effect on attitudes and behaviors (Bruce, 2011). Put another way, mere exposure to difference and variation is the first step to removing dogmatic beliefs and attitudes.

Increased demands for education are just one secularizing force in the modern age, turning expressions of faith into increasingly individual manifestations. This study is a study of the forces acting on people to make them either relatively more religious or relatively more spiritual, but it is also, and equally, a study of the forces acting on people to make their expression of faith relatively more collectivistic or individual. Of course, just because spirituality/belief in God is a relatively more individualistic expression of faith compared to one's religiosity doesn't mean that it is an indication of secularity.

Rather, it is argued that the very de-coupling of faith into religious and spiritual manifestations (that is, into collectivistic and more individualistic manifestations) represents a secularizing trend worth studying. What follows is a fairly comprehensive study of the drivers of religiosity and spirituality/god belief respectively.

What Does Religiosity Mean to People?

Confirming previous research, a recent study found that a personal sense of religiosity strongly predicted conservative moral attitudes regarding family and reproduction across several religious traditions in 90 countries (Weeden & Kurzban, 2013). Consistent with this, researchers have also found religious affiliation, in general, to be negatively associated with female educational attainment and positively associated with early marriage and traditional views of womens' capabilities (Norton & Tomal, 2009; Uecker & Stokes, 2008; Burn & Busso, 2005). A meta-analysis conducted by Saroglou and colleagues (2004) using mostly personal, subjective measures of religiosity, also found consistent correlations between religiosity and a valuing of tradition,

conformity and conservative attitudes. Other studies have found similar results (see, for example, Wink et al., 2007) .Critically, however, there is also work which shows religiosity to be more multi-faceted. Work by Malka and colleagues (2011) demonstrate that although personal religiosity is predictive of conservative attitudes towards family and reproduction, it is also associated with attitudes favorable towards pro-social altruism (for example, giving to charity). Again, however, these studies often conflate measures of religiosity and spirituality/belief in God, making the specific roles of each hard to disentangle. This study will attempt to substantiate this seemingly dualistic role of religiosity as *both* an influence on conservative family attitudes and pro-social altruistic giving.

The common finding that personal religiosity predicts church attendance is not insignificant. Church attendance may cause increases in a sense of control and efficacy through the social support of a religious community, independent of personal beliefs in God or a "higher power" -- increased rates of church attendance have long been associated with being female, being married and raising children (Lambert & Dollahite, 2006; Wilcox&Wolfinger, 2008; Schwadel, 2010).

Additionally, a body of research is emerging which shows involvement in church communities to be positively associated with educational attainment and occupational status—perhaps due to the benefits accrued from religious social networks and higher community involvement (Loury, 2004; Theodori& Mayfield, 2008; Glanville et al., 2008). It seems, then, that certain forms of upward mobility (such as educational attainment and income) are associated with personal religiosity through social support

accrued from church attendance (Arias-Vasquez, 2012). Nevertheless, this connection

remains under-investigated and a focus of this study. Lastly, church attendance, similar to

self-reported religiosity, has been consistently associated in the literature with

conservative social politics (e.g., Walls, 2010).

What Does Spirituality/Belief in God Mean to People?

Personal spirituality, here conceptualized as a belief in God or a "higher power,"

tends to be associated less with traditionalism and conservatism, per se, and more with a

need for a sense of control over one's environment (Wink et al., 2007; Kay et al., 2010a;

Kay et al., 2010b). People are motivated to avoid the perception of randomness.

Sociologically, the strain of randomness comes in the form of unstable access to

healthcare or childcare, long periods of unemployment or poverty, and social and

residential instability (Schnittker & Mcleod 2005; Olafsdottir, 2007). Perceiving one's

environment as random and unpredictable can lead to an increased levels of stress and

fear—if one cannot predict and control one's environment, it is impossible to act

purposively (Laurin et al., 2008). Consequently, when people sense an increase in

uncertainty or randomness in their environment, they are more likely to invoke beliefs in

a powerful god as a form of compensatory control. A belief in God may lead to decreased

concerns about unemployment, death or loss of friendship, as examples, by virtue of

increasing the individual's sense that their best interests are being taken into account and

looked out for by an all-powerful supernatural agent. A variety of studies have confirmed

this relationship between belief in God and increases in a sense of personal control and

comfort. Some of these studies have focused on the ways in which a belief in God might

reduce existential anxiety about life's purpose and meaning (Hogg et al., 2010), fears for personal safety (Laurin et al., 2008), and anxieties resultant from social instability, such as low socio-economic status (Schieman, 2010). It is, of course, not only belief in God which can raise one's sense of control over their environment—church attendance also increases a sense of efficacy (e.g., Ellison & Burdette, 2012).

There is also evidence that those who identify as spiritual, but not religious tend to be less orthodox in their approach to faith (i.e., less likely Roman Catholic, or Orthodox Jew) which is consistent with the view that spirituality measures, at least in part, a resistance to traditional religious orthodoxy and, in fact, a resistance to authoritarianism in general (Zinnbauer et al., 1997). Those more likely to identify as spiritual, but not religious are also younger and disproportionately Baby Boomers and the children of Baby Boomers (Marler & Hadaway, 2002). Additionally, there is at least circumstantial evidence that the spiritual, but not religious are more socially and fiscally liberal than the religiously inclined (Chandler, 2008).

The Present Study and Hypotheses

This study is an analysis of the socio-cultural differences which separate those who express their faith primarily in terms of spirituality/god belief and those who express it primarily in terms of religiosity. Few systematic research has been done in the area of sociologically distinguishing religiosity from spirituality. This study measures religiosity and spirituality separately and uni-dimensionally, and attempts to find variation in four theoretically relevant, and distinct, areas. These are summarized below and are as

follows: demographics, family background/upbringing, political worldview and moral worldview.

Demographics

Sociologists have long noted that church affiliation is a primary form of social support for those in socially disorganized, poor areas (Zuckerman, 2002; Bradshaw & Ellison , 2010; Schieman, 2010). As a result of this, some theorists have posited that faith will be most common among the materially deprived, and much empirical evidence supports this view (e.g., Solt et al., 2011). It is unclear in the literature, however, how a sense of material deprivation might affect religiosity and spirituality/belief in God differently. Hoverd and colleagues (2013) for example, find in a recent study that neighborhood material deprivation predicts belief in God, but not necessarily self-identification with a specific religious community. Additionally, at least some work exists which shows little or no relationship between faith and economic deprivation (e.g., McNamara & St. George, 1978), and there is some evidence that spirituality/belief in God is actually more common among those high in SES (e.g.,Zinnbauer, 1997). Clearly, there is a great deal of empirical confusion in this area. This analysis will test the hypothesis that personal religiosity, controlling for spirituality/belief in God, is highest among those low in SES (measured here in education and social class) because community support is more valuable to those who are more structurally vulnerable. Further, this study will use the work of Aaron Kay (e.g., Kay et al, 2010a; 2010b) in experimental psychology to frame the second hypothesis. Hypothesis one suggest that religiosity will be inversely associated with SES, by virtue of the inverse relationship

between community involvement and social class (e.g., Putnam, 2000; Zuckerman, 2002). Kay's research, on the other hand, suggest that belief in God(s) serves, at least in part, to reduce the perception of randomness in one's environment. Given that lower SES respondents will, on average, experience higher levels of social instability and ill health (Schieman, 2010), there may be a selective advantage to one's health and well-being to believe that a deity benevolently oversees one's life as SES moves downward on a likert-style measure.

H1: Personal religiosity will be inversely associated with socio-economic status.

H2: Spirituality/Belief in God will be inversely associated with socio-economic status.

<u>Parental Attachment and Family Context</u>

The family background is commonly considered to be a major influence on peoples' adult expressions of religious faith. Children learn to value religion and religious beliefs in large part through interactions with their parents (Eberstadt, 2013; Kirkpatrick & Shaver, 1990 Granqvist et al., 2010; Kirkpatrick, 2012). There are at least two ways of understanding the relationship between parental attachment and subsequent adult expressions of faith (Granqvist et al., 2010). The first approach, termed the Two Level Correspondence Hypothesis, suggests that religious belief is transmitted to children through harmonious and secure attachments to parental figures.

The second approach, termed the Emotional Compensation Hypothesis, argues instead that religiosity is transmitted to children through negative/conflicted relationships with parental figures. Children tend to form generalized attachment strategies based on interactions with caregivers, especially the mother (Bowlby, 1988). If children have conflicted relationships with their parents (for whatever reason), they may form avoidant or anxious attachments with them. These avoidant or anxious attachments to parents influence, over time, childrens' internal working model of general attachment. Consequently, and to the degree that the individual feels avoidantly or anxiously attached to parents, they may seek a compensatory attachment figure. The ultimate compensatory attachment figure, according to this literature, is God (all knowing, all powerful, all good). Thus, adults who have avoidant or anxious internal working models of attachment, due to conflicted relationships with caregivers (again, especially the mother), may have increased desires for a compensatory relationship with God as adults.

It is not clear in the literature to what degree parental conflict produces (or does not produce) beliefs in God *as distinct from general self-reported religiosity.* This study will therefore suggest that harmonious relationships with parents constitute ideal an ideal socialization context for the transmission of *both* belief in God and, subsequently, self-reported religiosity. This hypothesis is in line with the assumptions of the Two-level Correspondence approach to religious transmission. If the alternative result is found, that is, if conflict with parents produces belief in God and/or personal religiosity, than this will constitute evidence for the Emotional Compensation approach.

One questions that remains unanswered relates to the role of family size in belief transmission (Eberstadt, 2013). The Two Level Correspondence Hypothesis and the Emotional Compensation Hypothesis can, perhaps, be reconciled with a simple observation: whether or not parents transmit a belief system depends in large part on the absolute number of children it must be transmitted to. It is theoretically easier for a parent to raise a child within a certain faith tradition if that family lives in a homogenous family/peer subculture (Bruce, 2011). Put differently, when a child is raised Catholic, and all of his/her peers and teachers are also Catholic, the child will be more inclined to maintain their faith than when they are raised Catholic by only one parent (perhaps the other is a Buddhist) and have diverse peer networks representative of multiple faith traditions. It is the network cosmopolitanism of the child, according to this view, which threatens the familial transmission of religious affiliation and importance. This observation also explains the higher rates of religious adherence and importance in rural and suburban areas (relative population homogeneity) as compared with urban areas (relative population heterogeneity) (Kosmin, 2011). According to the above, it may be that the *overall size of the family* is important for the transmission of religious faith in cosmopolitan societies (such as the United State). Parents will have an easier time transmitting their religious faith to their children when the absolute number of children are smaller. Fewer children translates to a smaller burden of transmission.

In addition, the "birth order" of the respondent will be included in this study. It will be entered as a control variable due to the substantial evidence for the family-niche theory of Sulloway (1996), which argues that each child in the family confronts unique

pressures given their "niche" of attention, responsibility and closeness to parental figures. In terms of the scope of this research, evidence exists that first-born children form strong alliances with parental figures, which, in turn, serves the function of supervision and guidance for younger siblings (Sulloway, 1996). Perhaps not surprisingly, first-born children tend to be more conservative, as well as religious, relative to their younger siblings (Sulloway, 1996; Saroglou & Fiasse, 2003; Healey & Ellis, 2007). This is relevant here precisely because, following Sulloway, it is the first-born child's primary responsibility to transmit the religious faith of the parents to younger siblings. This therefore makes first-borns somewhat more likely to have the beliefs of their parents (Sulloway, 1996).

The Two-level Correspondence Hypothesis and the Emotional Compensation Hypothesis have not been tested against one another with regard to personal religiosity and spirituality, as this study will do here. In order to provide something of a test of the theories, this study includes a measure of the level of conflict (vs. harmony) the subject had with their parents growing up, controlling for the strength of their parent's moral convictions. This study will thus test the assumption that both belief in God and personal religiosity are transmitted from parents to children through a harmonious attachment.

H3: Personal religiosity will be inversely related to family size.

H4: Spirituality/belief in god will be inversely related to family size.

H5: Personal religiosity will be inversely related to conflict with parents.

H6: Spirituality/belief in God will be inversely related to conflict with parents.

H7: Earlier birth order will predict higher personal religiosity.

H8: Earlier birth order will predict higher spirituality/belief in God.

Political Worldview

Contentious political debates in popular culture exert a strong influence on the religiosity of the public. The opinions, worldviews and mandates of religious texts and religious leaders often have political implications. Indeed, throughout recorded human history, the religiosity of the public has waxed and waned according to the political positions and policies of religious institutions (Hecht, 2004). In the United States, this generally means the policies of Catholic and Protestant churches, though religious institutions, in general and cross-nationally, tend to be traditionally oriented and socially conservative (Weeden & Kurzban, 2013; Saroglou et al., 2004). Though the sample drawn for this study includes respondents of various religious traditions (Muslim, Hindu), most are from the Christian and Catholic tradition, which is reflective of the United States population. The politics and worldviews of self-reported Christians tends to be socially conservative, and this is especially true of Evangelical Protestants (Bauer, 2012). However, and as mentioned above, there is also a body of literature showing religiosity to predict charitable giving and other forms of altruistic behavior(Malka et al., 2011). Though this analysis uses a measure which asks respondents how much they'd like government to help deal with social inequalities, this is still measuring a moral attitude, and one never before used in an attempt to distinguish religiosity from spirituality/belief in God. This study will therefore attempt to substantiate not only that those higher in

personal religiosity are more socially conservative but also whether or not religiosity

predicts concern for the suffering of others. Also of interest is the finding that belief in

God, specifically, and as separate from personal religiosity, may be related to anti-

authoritarianism and individualism (Zinnbauer et al., 1997; Wink et al., 2007). In other

words, more collectively-oriented people of faith express their faith in terms of church

attendance (where they are exposed to politically conservative messages), whereas more

individually-oriented people of faith may express that faith merely in terms of a personal

relationship with God which may not include the formality of attending church.

Consequently, belief in God, alone, may not be related to conservative social politics at

all (Chandler, 2008).

One specific area of political contention has been that of science education and

policy. Conflict has abounded in the United States between various (mostly Evangelical

and Catholic) churches and the scientific community over topics as diverse as the

teaching of evolution in K-12 biology classes (Shermer, 2006), stem cell research

(Nisbet, 2005; Irvine et al., 2011), human-induced climate change (Smith, 2010), and

adolescent sexuality and abstinence-based programs (Kantor et al., 2008) among other

things. Though some denominations of some religious traditions tend to be more

conservative than others, the literature seems to suggest a general socially conservative

orientation among people who are personally religious and attend church often (Hertel &

Hughest, 1987). These "culture wars," at least among Christians in the United States,

have been heating up for at least the last thirty years and represent a merging of church

policy with Republican political platforms (Mooney & Kirshenbaum, 2010).

Political differences between those who self-identify primarily as religious, and those who self-identify primarily as spiritual, are empirically under-investigated. There is some reason to suspect that people who identify primarily as spiritual do so as an expression of an anti-organizational attitude towards organized church (Chandler, 2008), leading this study to presume that spirituality/belief in God, controlling for self-reported religiosity, may predict church opposition—social liberalism and interest in science. Yet, studies which have investigated this are few, and none have parsed personal politics into social and fiscal domains as this study does.

H9: Personal religiosity will be higher among those with socially conservative politics.

H10: Personal religiosity will be higher among those who view individual freedoms in relationships/marriage more negatively.

H11: Personal religiosity will be higher among those who believe the government should play a greater role in addressing social problems.

H12: Personal religiosity will be inversely related to interest in science.

H13: Spirituality/belief in God will be inversely associated with socially conservative politics.

H14: Spirituality/belief in God will be positively related to interest in science.

<u>Moral Worldview</u>

Little to no work currently exists examining moral worldview differences between religious and spiritual people. Consequently, this study's investigation of the moral

worldview of these different groups is primarily exploratory. Nevertheless, there are at least a few reasons to suspect that religiosity and spirituality contain separate assumptions about morality.

Religion, belief in God and morality are often intertwined in both popular and academic discourses (Sinnot-Armstrong, 2009; Dawkins, 2009). Work by Kurt Grey and Daniel Wegner (2010), for example, argue for a "moral typecasting theory" whereby people categorize moral actors as either agents or patients. "Moral agents" are always impervious to harm (e.g., Super-heroes, the Founding Fathers, God) and "moral patients" are always in need of help (e.g., children, the poor, the elderly). This heuristic appears to explain people's conflation of God and moral superiority. This thesis, however, has been challenged as overly simplistic and under-substantiated (Arico, 2012). Regardless of the reason for it, people in the United States generally assume God is the fundamental cause of morality and moral action, however differently "God" is conceived in various religious traditions. Yet, despite this, the literature is bereft of work exploring the selective contributions of personal religiosity and spirituality/belief in God in the God-morality connection.

The moral worldview of adults is importantly influenced by their family background, not only through attachment and socialization dynamics, but also through analogical reasoning conceiving of society as a large family (see Lakoff, 2002). Lakoff argues that the liberal-conservative spectrum often used to understand American political attitudes (e.g., Graham et al., 2009) is rooted in different interpretations of the family. Liberals, according to Lakoff, have a "nurturant parent" morality which views morality as

assistance and helpfulness. Conservatives, on the other hand, frame morality in terms of a "strict father" mindset. This conservative mindset frames morality in terms of hard work and discipline, with considerably less emphasis on aid and assistance. Given this, it is plausible that family dynamics influence beliefs about the relationship between God and morality, a proposition that hasn't received sustained attention from sociologists of religion. This study, because it accounts for a suite of family background variables (including how morally convicted parents were), is well situated to assess the role these variables play in how adults conceive of God and morality.

As discussed above, researchers in the sociology and psychology of religion frequently conceptualize religiosity as a communal expression of faith and spirituality or belief in God as a (relatively) more individualistic expression of faith. This study will assess how stable these assumptions are by attempting to substantiate this communalism/individualism divide with regard to moral worldview. If spirituality is an explicitly individualistic interpretation of faith, than spirituality in this sample should be predictive of conceiving of morality as genetic and universal. If the impetus for moral behavior lies mostly in the individual, than spiritual respondents ought to be more likely to say that whether someone is moral or not depends on their genes (as opposed to their environment). And, if morality is basically a genetic property of human beings, than it should be, essentially, universal among them. This study will posit the converse for religiosity. As a more communal expression of faith, this study hypothesizes that religiosity among respondents predicts viewing morality as environmental and relative. If religiosity is predictive of a communal approach to faith and morality, than religious

respondents should be inclined towards seeing the environment as playing a larger role (compared to spiritual respondents) in whether or not one is moral. Furthermore, to the degree that religiosity predicts viewing morality as environmental, it should also predict an understanding of morality as relative (as opposed to universal). If one's morality depends primarily on their environment, than moral behavior is not going to be universal, as human environments (and religious beliefs) are varied.

Again, the variables measuring moral worldview are largely exploratory in this study. They are partly included because the literature has found spirituality/belief in God to be primarily an individualistic expression of faith and personal religiosity to be a primarily collectivistic expression of faith, yet this difference has not been explored with regard to morality. Additionally, variables in this analysis investigate the importance of God for morality, and whether or not morality is still relevant without God. It is possible, of course, that those who are primarily religious and those who are primarily spiritual will not differ in their opinions on these issues. Nevertheless, this analysis is at least justified by lack of investigation in this area. Two hypotheses are offered below:

H15: Personal religiosity will be higher among those who see morality as more environmental/relative (religiosity as collectivism).

H16: Spirituality/belief in God will be higher among those who see morality as more genetic/universal (spirituality/God belief as individualism).

Data Source

Data from this study come from the "The Morality Test," a previously un-analyzed online survey which was open to the public from 2003-2012. The host website for this survey, http://www.outofservice.com , run by Jeff Potter, has reached over ten million people since 1997. As part of the incentive to take the survey, respondents were provided with a profile of their political and moral leanings, compared to other users, upon completion. This website receives traffic from colleges and universities across the country and data from other surveys hosted on the site have been used in a variety of peer-reviewed social scientific articles. The survey used in this analysis can be found at http://www.outofservice.com/morality/ and is one of several studies currently being hosted and promoted by the site. Michael Shermer, co-creator of the survey, has also promoted the survey to a national audience on his own in various forms of media including magazines (e.g., *Scientific American)* and books (e.g., Shermer & McFarland, 2004)

The survey which provides data for this analysis, "The Morality Test," has a sample size totaling about 10,000 respondents. The survey creators, Michael Shermer (Psychology and Interdisciplinary Studies – Claremont Graduate University), Frank Sulloway (Psychology – UC Berkeley) and Oliver John (Psychology – UC Berkeley) built the survey to have several theoretically interesting components, in addition to standard demographic measures. Among these components are questions which target the respondents' family backgrounds (i.e., relationship with parents), along with their political and moral worldviews.

The data used for this analysis is not representative of the US population in a few significant ways. One is that only white respondents were analyzed in this sample-- sample sizes for African Americans, Latinos and Asians were too small for statistically meaningful comparisons. Another important note is that only single and married respondents were retained for this study due to small sample sizes for widowed, divorced and same-sex partnered respondents. Lastly, as compared to data from the General Social Survey (GSS), subjects in this sample were slightly skewed towards higher social class, and being younger, which is consistent with other findings on the demographics of people who use online social media sites, where this survey was advertised (see, for example, Duggan & Brenner, 2013).

Variables and Measurement

Dependent Variables—Religiosity and Spirituality/belief in God

This survey contained uni-dimensional measures of religiosity and spirituality. Spirituality was measured using a Likert Scale which asked respondents whether or not they believe in a God or "higher power". Answers to this question ranged from "definitely no" to "definitely yes," with higher values representing a higher degree of belief in God. Religiosity, on the other hand, was measured on a continuous scale, ranging from 1-7, using the prompt "I consider myself to be not at all religious---very religious," with higher values representing higher levels of personal religiosity.

<u>Independent Variables</u>

Demographics

Socio-economic status (SES) was assessed using a measure which combined the respondent's subjective social class position and the respondent's educational background. Social class was evaluated with an item asking the respondent to categorize their own current subjective social class standing using a five-item Likert scale measure with responses ranging from "working class" to "upper class," and with higher values representing higher social class standing. The educational attainment of the respondent was measured in terms of highest degree completed. Response options included all commonly-attained degrees – high school degree, AA/AS, BA/BS, MA/MS and PhD/MD/JD. Higher scores represented higher educational attainment. These two measures were combined to create a two-item index, labeled socio-economic status (SES). In the dataset used for this study, social class and educational attainment were moderately correlated (r=.37) and significantly related (*b*=.34, p<.001).

Respondents also answered a question about the frequency of their current church attendance and response options ranged from "never" to "more than once a week," with higher values representing more frequent church attendance. Age was measured as a continuous variable, with higher values representing older respondents. Gender was measured in a standard fashion, asking respondents to select whether or not they identified as "Male or Female". This variable was further dummycoded, such that males=1, and females=0.

Unfortunately, given the small proportion of non-white respondents in this dataset, only whites were retained for analysis. Marital status, as well, was originally measured on the survey with several possible responses: single, married, divorced, widowed and same-sex partnered. But, due to small sample sizes for divorced, widowed and same-sex partnered respondents, this variable was dummycoded to represent only married and single respondents (0=married, 1=single).

Family Upbringing

The respondent's relationship with their parents is assessed in two ways. First, respondents were asked, "How strong were your [mother's/father's] moral convictions?" and subsequently asked to give their parents, separately, a score ranging from 1 ("Not Strong") to 7 ("Very Strong").

Respondents were also asked a second set of questions regarding their relationship with their parents. Subjects were asked, "On average, how was your childhood relationship with your [mother/father]?" and subsequently gave a score from 1 ("Very Conflicted") to 7 ("Very Harmonious") for each parent. Family size was measured continuously, with higher values representing large family sizes.

This survey also included questions assessing the social class and educational attainment of the respondent's parents. First, respondents were asked to categorize the social class of their parents using a five-item Likert-scale with responses ranging from "Working Class" to "Upper Class," with higher values representing a higher parental social class standing. Next, respondents were asked to report the educational attainment

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of their most educated parent, and response options ranged from "less than high school" to "graduate or post-secondary," with higher values representing higher parental education.   These two measures, of parental social class and education, were subsequently combined into a two item index representing the respondent's parental socio-economic status. In the dataset used for this analysis, the respondents' parental social class and education were both highly correlated (r=.59) and significantly positively related to one another (*b*=.54;p<.001)

Respondents were also asked for their church attendance habits growing up with the question, "On average, when you were growing up, how often did you attend religious services?" Response options ranged from "never" to "more than once a week," with higher values indicating more church attendance as a child. Birth order is measured with a single straightforward question which asks, "What is your precise birth rank in your sibling group? i.e, 1 (eldest), 2 (second eldest), 3, 4 etc." Here, higher values represent a later birth rank.

Political Worldview

General social politics were assessed by asking the respondent to score themselves along a continuum ranging from 1 ("Social conservative") to 7 ("Social liberal"), with higher values representing more socially liberal politics. To remove the potentially confounding role of fiscal (i.e., economic) conservatism in peoples' social politics, the respondents' fiscal/monetary views were measured along a continuum between 1 ("Fiscal/economic conservative") and 7 ("Fiscal/economic liberal"), where

higher values represent more liberal fiscal politics. The respondent's interest in science was assessed by asking for a score on a continuum ranging from 1 ("Not very interested in science") to 7 ("Very interested in science"). Higher values on this variable represent higher levels of interest in science.

Attitude towards Family and Sexuality

An index variable was created in order to assess respondents' specific views on the family and sexuality. This was comprised of four questions dealing with homosexuality, premarital sex, divorce and birth control use. In the cases of homosexuality, premarital sex and divorce, the respondent was asked to express his/her views, along a seven-point scale, as to whether or not each behavior is always (1) or never wrong (7). The question on birth control asks respondents whether or not, along a seven-point scale, they disagree (1) or agree (7) that birth control should be made available to anyone. In each case, response options were ordered such that higher scores represented more support for individual freedoms in relationships/marriage. A high score on this index represents attitudes supportive of allowing homosexual relationships, pre-marital sex, access to birth control for women and easy access to divorce for married couples. Each is a measure of individual freedom within the relationship/family context—ie., the freedom to become romantically involved with a member of the same sex, the freedom to have sex before marriage, use birth control, and the freedom to end a marriage in divorce. These four questions were combined into an index after a principle components analysis revealed a single underlying factor. See Table 1.1 for factor loadings.

Attitude towards Government

Another index variable, representing views on government intervention to solve social problems, was comprised of six questions dealing with biodiversity, corporate corruption, political corruption, human rights, foreign aid, and income inequality. For each question, the respondent was asked to express his/her views, along a seven-point scale, as to whether or not they disagree(1) or agree (7) that government should intervene and play a role in addressing these various social problems. For each question, response options were ordered so that higher scores on each question represented higher levels of support for the use of government to solve the above social issues. These six questions were combined into a single index after principal components factor analysis revealed a single underlying factor. See Table 2.1 for factor loadings.

Moral Worldview

The cultural/environmental vs. universal/genetic conceptions of morality were measured using two items. The first item asked respondents to state their views on a linear scale ranging from 1 ("Moral principles are relative/cultural") to 7 ("Moral principles are absolute/universal"), with higher scores representing more support for the view that moral principles are universal. The second question asks respondents to report, on a continuum, whether or not moral principles are determined by genetics ("1") or environment ("7"), with higher scores representing higher levels of agreement that moral principles are learned from the environment. Recall that this study hypothesizes that

religiosity, as a communal measure of faith, will positively predict views that moral principles are learned from one's environment. And, if one's moral principles are primarily a result of environmental influences, than the very existence of moral behavior will depend largely on the culture/environment it is found in. Conversely, spirituality, as a relatively more individualistic expression of faith, is hypothesized to predict views that moral principles are primarily rooted in one's genes. Of course, if moral behavior is rooted in our genes, moral principles must exist (in theory, at least) in all humans and in all human societies, making it universal.

Two additional moral worldview questions were added in order to measure whether or not the respondent believes morality relates to God at all. The first question asked respondents whether or not moral principles are god given and requests a score along another continuum (1= god given, 7= not god given), with higher values representing more support for the view that moral principles do not come from God. The second question asks respondents whether or not morals still apply ("1") or if anything goes ("7") if there is no God. Here, higher values represent more support for the view that, without God, moral rules no longer apply.

Analysis

Table 3.1 depicts summary statistics for all variables in the analysis (n=10,861). The average age of respondents in this sample was 34. Further, the average respondent in this sample identified as middle class and had obtained at least 2 years of college education. Recall that, unfortunately, all respondents used for this analysis were whites,

due to small sample sizes for African Americans, Hispanics and Asians. Respondents

were split fairly evenly between men and women and between single and married people.

A correlation matrix containing all included variables was also calculated. Some

of the strongest correlations in the matrix were to be expected—such as the positive

correlation relating parental SES to respondent SES (r= .57) or the positive correlation

between being socially liberal and fiscally liberal (r= .52). Other strong correlations in the

matrix are of more specific interest to this study. Self-reported religiosity and church

attendance, for example, are positively correlated with belief that morals come from God,

with more religious (r=-.80) and church attending (r= -.73) respondents reporting higher

levels of conviction that morality is God-given. Indeed, the positive correlation between

religiosity and church attendance is equally high (r=. 80). Religiosity was also inversely

correlated with liberal social politics (r= -.64) and interest in science (r= -.54).

Additionally, respondents who believed that morality comes from God were significantly

less likely to report being accepting of individual freedoms in relationships/marriage

(r=.67).

The primary statistical models used to investigate predictors of religiosity and

spirituality in this study were obtained using seemingly unrelated regression. The

seemingly unrelated regression model assumes cross-equation correlations in the error

terms of each dependent variable, allowing a method of distinguishing statistical

significance despite this correlation in the error term (Zellner, 1962). There are two

reasons why this study uses seemingly unrelated regression to model religiosity and

spirituality/belief in God. One, the model specification is more accurate and efficient

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because it combines information about the correlation of the dependent variables into a single model. Recall that, in the data used for this study, religiosity and spirituality/God belief are highly correlated (r=.53). Second, by modelling both equations simultaneously, the statistical significance of any given independent variable (e.g., SES) can be assessed not only for its importance in predicting spirituality or religiosity, but also for its importance in distinguishing religiosity from spirituality/ God belief (Moon & Perron, 2006). Post-estimation revealed that statistically significant independent variables in each model predicted religiosity and spirituality/belief in God uniquely. The analysis was conducted using Stata11 software.

 Results

In Table 4.1, two OLS regression equations were estimated simultaneously, using seemingly unrelated regression, one each for religiosity and spirituality/belief in God. Control variables were identical for each model with two exceptions—spirituality/belief in God is controlled for in the model predicting personal religiosity, and personal religiosity is controlled for in the model predicting spirituality/belief in God.

As an important preliminary note, and consistent with past research, the subjective measure of religiosity used in this study is more highly correlated with church attendance (r=.80) than belief in God alone (r=.41). This supports the above hypotheses associating personal religiosity with a communal orientation to faith and belief in God with a (relatively) more individualistic orientation to faith. Final regression models for all analyses can be seen in Table 4.1.

In Model 1 of Table 4.1, depicting results for religiosity, the strongest predictors are the respondents' current church attendance (b=.46, p<.001) and the degree to which they believed in a God or higher power (b=. 61, p<.001). Following this, the most substantive effects in the model were found for gender (b=.27, p<.001), marital status (b= -.20, p<.001), and interest in science (b= -.18, p<.001). Specifically, more religious respondents tended to be male, married and less interested in science. Other important effects were found with regard to religiosity and respondents' moral worldview. As respondent religiosity increased, so too did beliefs that moral principles are relative (b= -.11, p<.001), and determined by one's environment (b= .11, p<.001) , suggesting that religious respondents see moral action as rooted more in community, as opposed to residing in the individual. Collectively, these findings confirm hypotheses (H12) and (H15).This study failed to find support for the first hypothesis (H1); in this sample, SES was unrelated to personal religiosity.

Regarding the respondents' family background, support was found for the Two-Level Correspondence approach to parental attachment and religious transmission. Consistent with the view that positive relationships with caregivers (especially the mother) leads to the transmission of religious faith, this study finds that more religious respondents had both (1) mothers with stronger moral convictions (b=.10, p<.001) and (2) more harmonious relationships with their mothers (b=.04, p<.001). Respondents' relationship to their father growing up, however, was not related to their subsequent adult religiosity. Taken together, results suggest that more religious respondents had better

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relationships with their mother, providing support for (H5), which suggested that the successful transmission of religion to children depended on harmonious parent-child relationship. It is important to note that, though statistically significant, effect sizes for relationship to mother and mother's moral convictions are fairly small. Thus, though this study provides evidence that more religious respondents had better relationships with mothers who had stronger moral convictions, further research is needed to substantiate that this finding is authentic, as opposed to resulting from the study's large sample size.

This study did, however, find support for (H3), which suggested that parents have an easier time transmitting religious faith when the absolute number of children is fewer -- in this sample, more religious respondents tended to come from smaller families (b= -.12, p<.001). Relative to the effect sizes found for the role of the mother in respondents' religiosity, coming from a smaller family appears to be playing a slightly more important role in the successful transmission of religiosity.

According to (H7), earlier born children should be closer to their parents than later-born children, because they will be tasked with socialization duties for their younger siblings. This study found the reverse to be true. In this sample, it was later-born children who tended to be more religious (b=.06, p<.001). Though no hypotheses were offered relating religiosity to the respondents' parental SES growing up, more religious respondents in this study did, in fact, grow up in higher SES circumstances (b=.06, p<.001). Both of these effects, though significant, are nevertheless fairly small.

More substantively, and supporting (H9), religiosity in this sample positively predicted socially conservative political leanings (b= -.10, p<.001). Confirming (H10), this study finds that more religious respondents were also more likely to oppose individual freedoms in relationship/marriage (*b*= -.11, p<.001). Also, confirming (H11), this study found that religious respondents were in favor of using the government to address a variety of social problems (*b*= .07, p<.001), though this effect is smaller than that relating religiosity to conservative family views. Lastly, though also a very small effect, having liberal fiscal politics was a positive predictor of religiosity. Thus, though conservative on social politics, religious respondents in this sample were also more likely to be fiscally liberal (*b*=.05, p<.001), indicating that religious respondents were not homogenously conservative.

Turning to column 2 of Table 4.1, results show that gender (b=-.35, p<.001) and personal religiosity (b=.45, p<.001) were the primary drivers of spirituality/Belief in God. Specifically, being more personally religious and being female had the largest positive effects on spirituality/belief in God. Interestingly, though more religious respondents in this sample tended to be male, more spiritual respondents tended to be female. Results support (H2), which suggested that spirituality/ belief in God may be used as a psychological mechanism to gain a sense of control over one's environment, and would thus be more prevalent among respondents who were more structurally vulnerable (measured in terms of low SES).

The results of this study also indicate that spiritual/God believing respondents view society and morality differently from more religious respondents. Results confirm

(H13), (H14), (H16), and show that, compared to religious respondents, more spiritual respondents tended to have socially liberal politics which supported individual freedoms in relationships/marriage (b=.13,p<.001), higher levels of interest in science (b=.13,p<.001) and a view of moral principles as both rooted in our genetics (b= -.12,p<001) and universal (b=.13, p<.001). God was also regarded as less important for morality by spiritual respondents (b=-.09,P<.001) compared to religious respondents (b= -.23,p<.001). Lastly, in this sample, spirituality was found to be inversely associated with church attendance (b=-.10,p<.001), providing further support for the notion that spirituality/belief in God represents a more individualistic expression of faith.

With regard to (H6), only mixed support was found. Though spiritual respondents tended to have a more harmonious relationship with their fathers (b=.02, p<.001), this effect is so small that it is substantively irrelevant. The analysis actually shows the opposite of (H6) to be true with regard to mothers—spirituality was positive function of having a conflicted relationship with one's mother (b= -.14, p<.001), and this effect size was much more substantial. Though no specific hypotheses were made regarding the impact of parental moral convictions on respondent spirituality, this study shows very mild effects. Spirituality/ belief in God in this sample was positively associated with having a father (b=.05, p<.001) with stronger moral convictions than the mother (b=-.09,p<.001). No support was found for hypotheses (H4) and (H8). Not only did spiritual/ God believing respondents in this sample tend to come from larger families (b= .07, p<.001), they also tended to be later-born (b=.04, p<.001), though both effects were small.

Lastly, recall that though religiosity was predictive of conservative social politics, it was also predictive of liberal fiscal politics. In mirrored symmetry, spirituality/belief in God was predictive of both liberal social politics ($b= .03$, $p<.001$) and of conservative fiscal politics ($b=-.09$, $p<.001$). These effect sizes, especially for social politics, are very small, and may not be substantively important for predicting spirituality/belief in God; more research is needed to ultimately discern this. Finally, attitudes towards using government to address social problems such as corporate corruption and inequality had no effect on respondent spirituality/belief in God ($b= -.02$, $p=.085$).

Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to better understand one aspect of secularization—the decoupling of faith into communalistic (religiosity) and more individualistic (spirituality) forms. Since Durkheim ([1893]1997), sociologists have argued that a fundamental relationship in the social world is that tying increasing population growth (through birth or immigration) to increasing cultural differentiation. For Durkheim, this differentiation would be primarily occupational, but others since have theorized other forms of cultural differentiation, including religious differentiation (Bruce, 2011). Whereas in tribal societies, expressions of faith are almost exclusively communalistic, in industrial societies, large accumulations of wealth allow people to live, work and recreate very separately from one another (Bellah, 2011; Putnam, 2000). This "individualism" found in wealthy Western societies, enabled also by increases in technology, is what spirituality/belief in God represents in this analysis. Remember that

this study has analyzed two separate groups of people—those who identify as spiritual/God believers (to varying degrees) and those who identify only as personally religious (to varying degrees). This individualistic (spirituality)/communalistic (religiosity) split is of course somewhat superficial, yet each expression of faith has different correlates and this is of deep importance for the sociology of religion and morality. If the secularization of society is de-coupling faith into relatively more religious (communal) and spiritual (individualistic) forms, as I've suggested here, than the influence of each on behavior, demographics and worldview should be critical to scholars working in this area.

The results of this study suggest that the most substantive differences separating religiosity from spirituality/belief in God, as distinct expressions of faith, are in regards to gender, marital status, church attendance, interest in science, attitudes towards relationships/marriage and views about the nature of moral principles. Specifically, religiosity, compared to spirituality/belief in God, is more associated with being male, married, attending church frequently, being less interested in science, less supportive of individual freedoms in relationships/marriage and more likely to think moral principles are learned through the environment and, thus, cultural.

Additionally, there were other effects that, though hypothesized to be important, turned out to be irrelevant or substantively unimportant in distinguishing religiosity from spirituality/belief in God. Among these were the SES, political worldview and family background of respondents. Though significant effects were found, for example, relating respondents' harmonious relationship to their mother with later adult religiosity, these effects were typically too small to be relied on as substantive.

Spirituality in this study was representative of a more individualistic approach to morality and politics. In support of this is findings that compared to more religious respondents, spiritual respondents were significantly less likely to attend religious services or be married and significantly more likely to view moral principles as genetic and universal as opposed to culturally bound and relative. Perhaps as a result, spiritual respondents were both more socially liberal and more accepting of individual freedoms in relationships/marriage compared to their more religious counterparts.

This study further shows that men are more likely to report high levels of religiosity, whereas women are more likely to report higher levels of religiosity/belief in God. This may be relevant given the secularization theory offered above—that increasing population size (enabled by the development of technology) leads, over time, to increasing cultural differentiation. Occupational differentiation has led to the expansion of the economy, along with large-scale demands by women, at least since World War II, for access to this workforce. However, in order to be competitive, workers in a capitalist economy must be both mobile and highly qualified/credentialed. This perhaps puts more religious women at a cross-roads – forego birth control and begin a family, or purse a career? Though the options are not mutually exclusive to many, the traditional view of women as homemakers may feel restrictive to women who are interested in pursuing a career. What this study therefore shows is some preliminary findings in support of the notion that women, feeling restricted by the sexual and familial conservatism of their more religious and church-going peers, may be turning to spirituality/God belief as a more individualistic identifier. This turn to spirituality/God belief over religiosity may, in

essence, allow for a faith-based rejection of the ideological views of religious organizations. Recall the finding that those who identified as more spiritual were significantly less likely to report viewing morality principles as rooted in environment or culture

There are undoubtedly weaknesses to this study. First, the sample drawn for this study, though large, is not fully representative of the United States population. Because the data for this study was compiled from an internet survey, the demographics of respondents are skewed toward youth, being single, slightly more educated etc. In addition, only white were used as the study population for this analysis due to small sample sizes for African Americans, Hispanics and Asians. Moreover, this study used uni-dimensional measures of religiosity and spirituality, which is definitely an area that can be improved on. Numerous multi-dimensional measures of religious faith exist in the literature, and each might, in theory, provide a different point of view about the forces of secularization. Another weakness of this study is its cross-sectional design. Though I am claiming to investigate the respondents' family background, in fact, I am relying on their retrospective self-report, and this is of course vulnerable to inaccuracy. Yet, so little research exists in this area of de-coupling religiosity and spirituality that this weakness was overlooked in conducting the study. Obviously, longitudinal data is ideal for making inferences about time-ordered effects (i.e., family socialization).

In sum, this study shows that the expression of faith in the United States may be de-coupling into relatively more religious and/or spiritual forms. Results indicate that spirituality tends to be associated with being female, having socially liberal politics

especially regarding views on the family, as well as a more individualistic conception of morality which relies less on God. Respondents who report being spiritual are also significantly less likely to attend church as compared to their religious counterparts, and are also more likely to report being interested in science. Political positions become reversed, however, for fiscal politics, with religious respondents reporting significantly higher fiscal liberalism and spiritual respondents reporting higher levels of fiscal conservatism. Finally, this study reveals that family background experiences may be selectively influencing adult religiosity and spirituality, though effect sizes, as for social/fiscal politics, tended to be small compared to the influence of other variables.

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Table 1.1: Principle Components Factor
Analysis for Views on Family and
Sexuality

Items	Factor Loading
Homosexuality	.82
Premarital Sex	.84
Divorce	.60
Birth Control	.55
Eigenvalue	2.033

Table 2.1: Principle Components
Factor Analysis for Views on
Government Intervention to Solve
Social Problems

Items	Factor Loading
Biodiversity	.64
Corporate Corruption	.67
Political Corruption	.59
Human Rights	.56
Foreign Aid	.61
Income Inequality	.58
Eigenvalue	2.23

Table 3.1: Means and Standard Deviations of Variables
(N=10,861)

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Min.	Max.
Religiosity	3.44	2.3	1	7
Spirituality/belief in God	4.02	1.35	1	5
SES	4.42	1.78	2	10
Gender	.45	.49	0	1
Age	34.14	10.39	21	80
Single	0.46	.49	0	1
Current Church Attendance	2.41	1.66	1	6
Strength of Father's Moral Convictions	5.17	1.75	1	7
Relationship with Father	3.26	1.92	1	7
Strength of Mother's Moral Convictions	5.46	1.65	1	7
Relationship with Mother	4.22	1.99	1	7
Church Attendance Growing Up	4.64	1.23	1	6
Family Birth Order	2.19	1.35	1	12
Family Size	3.39	1.45	1	10
ParentSES	5.42	2.11	2	10
Fiscal Politics	4.03	1.83	1	7
Social Politics	5.00	1.91	1	7
Interest in Science	5.18	2.10	1	7
Moral Principles are Absolute	4.45	1.60	1	7
Moral Principles Learned Through Environment	4.79	1.54	1	7

Moral Principles are Not God-Given	4.77	2.12	1	7
Morals Apply Only If God Exists	2.03	1.74	1	7
Family Views	5.31	1.44	1	7
Governments Role	5.28	1.10	1	7

Table 4.1: Seemingly Unrelated Regression Predicting Form of Faith	Religiosity	Spirituality/ Belief in God
	Model 1	Model 2
Demographics		
SES	-.01	-.03***
Gender (1=male)	.27***	-.35***
Age	-.002	.003**
Single (dummycode)	-.20***	.02
Current Religious Service Attendance	.46***	-.10***
Family Background		
Father's Moral Convictions	-.07***	.05***
Mother's Moral Convictions	.10***	-.09***
Relationship with Father	-.01	.02***
Relationship with Mother	.04***	-.14***
Religious Service Attendance Growing Up	-.03***	.05***
Birth Order	.06***	.04***
Family Size	-.12***	.07***
Parent's SES	.06***	-.01
Political Worldview		
Fiscal Politics	.05***	-.09***
Social Politics	-.10***	.03***
Interest in Science	-.18***	.13***
Moral and Religious Worldview		
Spirituality/Belief in God or Higher Power	.61***	-
Religiosity	-	.45***
Moral Principles are Absolute	-.11***	.13***
Moral Principles Learned Through Environment	.11***	-.12***

Moral Principles are Not God-Given	-.23***	-.09***
Morals Apply Only If God Exists	-.02**	-.02***
Views on Family and Government		
Family Views	-.11***	.13***
Government's Role	.07***	-.02

 * p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

Chapter 2: Political and Moral Worldview Differentiation within Christianity: A
Research Report

Introduction and Background

America is a majority Christian country. As Christianity has spread across the US,

individuals from different geographical locations and socio-economic conditions have

interpreted the faith in various ways (Bauer, 2012; Kosmin, 2011; Putnam & Campbell,

2012). Affiliations today thus differ by the social class and the ideological beliefs of the

adherents. Though debate about how to categorize and study Christian affiliation is

ongoing, a critically important work published by Brian Steensland and colleagues

(2000), has served to organize how the field studies Christianity. Steensland and

colleagues argued that a proper categorization of Christian denominations had to move

beyond simple political monikers such as "liberal" and "conservative," however useful

and accurate such monikers may be (see, for example, Reimer, 2011). Instead, they

suggested, the categorization of Christian denominations should take larger account of

the different historical circumstances and geographical contexts giving rise to each

denomination.

Taking a broader point of view, Steensland and his team divided American

Christianity into Catholic, Mainline Protestant and Evangelical Protestant denominations.

Catholic churches are the oldest Christian religious establishments and are traceable at

least back to Constantine's Roman Empire, which began its reign in the 4th century AD.

Catholicism predates the rise of Protestant Christianity in Europe by over one thousand

years, as Lutheran Protestantism doesn't emerge until the 16th century. Evangelical

Protestantism, on the other hand, is a very recent branch of Christianity rooted primarily

in the United States, which is distinguished by its scriptural literalism and political

conservatism. As compared to contemporary Mainline Protestants in the US,

Evangelicals tend to be more socially conservative, especially as regards marriage, family

and reproduction (Lehrer, 2004). In the contemporary US, Catholics represent about 20%

of the population and have the largest number of churches in the West and Northeast

(Bauer, 2012; Grammich et al., 2012). Mainline Protestants, most common in the Mid-

West and Northeast, represent about 7%-9% of the population, and Evangelical

Protestants, concentrated mostly in the Southern United States, represent about 14% of

the US population (Bauer 2012; Grammich et al., 2012).

Ever since the Steensland (2000) article, Christians in the United States have

tended to be demarcated by researchers into roughly three groups—Catholic, Mainline

Protestant and Evangelical Protestant (Woodberry et al., 2012; Reimer, 2011; McCloud,

2007). This grouping is not exhaustive of Christian affiliation, of course. Rather, it is

used only because it has proven to be helpful in distinguishing forms of Christian faith.

Using this convention, researchers have found some interesting, but conflicting trends

separating the three groups. Evangelical Protestants, on average, come from lower SES

circumstances and adhere to a more literalist, Biblical worldview which promotes

traditional views of marriage (which include highly domestic views of women and

resistance to same-sex marriage) along with opposition to scientific findings which

appear to contradict the Bible (Burn & Busso, 2005; Fitzgerald & Glass, 2008; Sherkat,

2011; Sherkat et al., 2011). Mainline Protestants and Catholics, on the other hand, are typically found to be of similar socio-economic status (e.g., Smith & Faris, 2005; Pyle, 2006; Sherkat, 2012), though empirical confusion exists around whether or not Catholics differ from Mainline Protestants in their politics. Some work shows, for example, that white Catholics tend to place a higher importance on opposition to homosexuality (McKenzie & Rouse, 2013) while other reviews show the opposite (Walls, 2010). At the very least, official Catholic clergy declarations indicate that Catholic Bishops in the United States oppose female use of contraception and birth control[2], whereas Mainline Protestant denominations have been more supportive of female access to contraception (Lehrer, 2004). In summation, Evangelical Protestants are the most socially conservative in their politics, followed by Catholics and Mainline Protestants. An important assumption in the literature is that Evangelical Protestants occupy the lowest socio-economic status of the group primarily because females are discouraged from achieving occupational parity with men and are instead encouraged to focus on marriage and child-rearing (Massengill, 2008; Fitzgerald & Glass, 2008; Uecker & Stokes, 2008).

However, complicating this picture is the fact that, since the 1960s, an accumulation of demographic work has shown that a strong sense of religious identity has been on the decline for Catholics, while simultaneously *increasing* for Evangelicals (Schwadel, 2013; Schwadel, 2010). Consequently, there is reason to believe that ideological differences separating Catholics from Mainline Protestants are decreasing,

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[2] See the office website for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops here: www.usccb.org

causing these two groups to become more ideologically homogenous. On other hand, this also suggests that the differences separating Catholics and Mainline Protestants from Evangelical Protestants may be growing.

The Present Study

This is a study of the demographic, family upbringing, political and moral worldview differences separating various Christian denominations. The focus of this study is on Evangelical Protestants, and the ways in which they are beginning to differ from both Mainline Protestants and Catholics.

One central focus of this study is on the family upbringing of Evangelical respondents, as compared to the Mainline and Catholic peers. Studies of religion in the family, in general, are litany. There is plenty of work, for example, which addresses how parental attachment can influence childrens' conceptions of God, along with their own future adult religiosity (e.g., Eberstadt, 2013; Granqvist et al., 2010). There is also a bevy of work studying how religious affiliation influences marital dynamics among spouses (e.g., Goodman & Dollahite, 2006; Marks, 2005) or about how it increases the tendency to marry in the first place (e.g., Uecker & Stokes, 2008). However, the purpose of this study is to investigate the role of family upbringing in, specifically, different Christian affiliations. On this topic, little work exists. With regard to this literature, some studies have found that affiliation has no influence on the time fathers spend with their children (Petts, 2007) or on family discourse in the home (Wilcox et al., 2004). The bulk of literature in this area, however, underscores a connection between Evangelical

Protestantism and patriarchal, traditional views of marriage, family and children (e.g.,

Mahoney et al., 2002; Gelfer, 2010; Greven 2010; Starks & Robinson, 2005). Many

others have called for more comparative research that juxtaposes Evangelical Protestants

against other Christian affiliations as this study will do here (e.g., Ellison, 1996;

Bartkowski & Xu, 2000; Wilcox, 2004).

There are strong theoretical reasons to suspect differences in the family

upbringing experiences of Catholics, Mainline Protestants and Evangelical Protestants.

Both academics (e.g., UC Berkeley linguist and philosopher George Lakoff—see Lakoff,

2002) and journalists (e.g., political journalist Max Blumenthal---see Blumenthal, 2010)

have argued that Christian conservatism and fundamentalism, as a worldview, encourages

parents to be distant, strict and to corporally punish their children. This study will follow

Lakoff's (2002; 2008) work, which argues that theologically conservative parents

understand the parenting role in terms of a "strict father" frame. This frame understands

the father as both the head of the household and of morality. Children are viewed as

basically untrustworthy, selfish and lazy, and it is assumed that only the discipline of a

strict, moral father can make children trustworthy, cooperative and hardworking. Lakoff

(2002; 2006) also argues for a "nurturant parent" frame, which is more characteristics of

political liberals, and which stands in contrast to the strict father frame. The nurturant

parent frame understands the father as an important participant in the family. The source

of moral order and discipline in the family lies in the father, mother and child working

together to get along and understand each other. Children, according to this frame, are

basically trustworthy, cooperative and eager, and these traits can be elaborated more with

nurturance than with discipline. This study will investigate whether or not Christian affiliates differed in their exposure to a "strict father" growing up, and whether or not they experienced this relationship to their father as conflicted or harmonious. This not only adds to the literature on Christian affiliation and exposure to differing parenting styles, but also to studies of family conflict.

In addition to looking at variations in family upbringing among Evangelical Protestants, Mainline Protestants and Catholics, this study will also attempt to find specific political and moral worldview differences. Though it is largely agreed on in the literature that Evangelical Christians are more socially conservative in general, little is known about specific differences in the political and moral views of the three. This study controls specifically for fiscal (i.e., monetary) politics, views about the role of government in solving social problems, and for views regarding the role of individual free choice in relationships/marriages. Thus, not only are general social politics analyzed in this study, but so also are the selective roles of fiscal politics, views on government's role in solving social problems, and views about the role of individual choice in relationships. This allows a fairly fine-grained empirical analysis of these three groups of Christian affiliate, which will serve to disentangle the role of general social conservatism from (a) family conservatism, (b) fiscal conservatism (c) conservatism about the role of government in solving social problems.

With regard to moral worldview, this study answers a call for research made by Paul Froese and Christopher Bader (2007). Sociologists have ignored the study of religious variation in specific beliefs about the nature of God, and God's importance for

morality. Their study and review concluded that major distinctions between Evangelical

sects and other Christian denominations were (a) views about the importance of God in

everyday life and (b) views about the importance of God for morality. This study

includes measures of both to further investigate these relationships. Lastly, this study

explores the very nature of moral reasoning among Christian affiliates. Whether or not

morality is god-given, moral behavior/ideas must still be understood or learned by

individual humans. This study therefore includes measures assessing how

communal/environmental/cultural vs. genetic/ universal/ absolute respondents felt

morality was.

Study Hypotheses

This study will explore the relative effects of several blocks of variables in

delineating types of Christian affiliate—demographic characteristics, family upbringing,

political worldview and moral worldview. A fifth model will enter index variables into

the regression equation controlling for, specifically, support for individual freedoms in

marriage/relationships and support for government addressing of social problems. The

following hypotheses guide this research into difference among Evangelical Protestants,

Mainline Protestants and Catholics.

<u>Demographics</u>

This study expects Evangelical Protestants to have the lowest social class and

educational attainment of the group, following previous findings (Sherkat, 2012;

Fitzgerald & Glass, 2008). Evangelicals should also be the group that is most likely

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married, given the relatively higher subcultural importance placed on marriage and family (Lehrer, 2004). Though mixed evidence exists in the literature, a third hypothesis of this study will be that Evangelicals will have higher church attendance compared to the other two groups. Though a body of literature exists to show that Catholics, as well, put much emphasis on family and church (e.g., Leherer, 2004), the general consensus is that religion has become less important for Catholics since the 1960s, and this has been demonstrated in lower church attendance (Schwadel, 2010;2013; Williams & Davidson, 1996). Mainline Protestants, in general, should put less relative emphasis on marriage and family as compared to Evangelicals (Lehrer, 2004).

H1: Evangelical Protestants will have the lowest socio-economic status (social class and education) of the group.

H2: Evangelical Protestants will have the highest rate of marriage of the group

H3: Evangelical Protestants will have the highest reported church attendance.

<u>Family Background</u>

This analysis approaches the study of patriarchal fathers in the family by looking at variations among Evangelical Protestants, Mainline Protestants and Catholics. Following Lakoff (2002;2008) and others (e.g., Bartkowski & Xu, 2000), this analysis will hypothesize that Evangelical Protestants perceive their fathers to have the strongest moral convictions of the group, but also that these strong moral convictions will have caused conflict between the respondent and his/her father. Put differently, this analysis proposes that patriarchal fathers will express their behavior in terms of strong moral

convictions, which will in turn cause increased levels of conflict with children. Recall that Lakoff's (2002) Strict Father frame understands children as essentially selfish and uncooperative; and this state is alterable only through harsh, corporal discipline. Evangelical Protestants therefore, should have had fathers with the strongest moral convictions of the group, leading to a conflicted father-child relationship. Critically, however, mothers and fathers work in tandem to socialize the child (however successfully). If the father in the household subscribes to Lakoff's Strict Father frame, the mother likely does as well, or at least goes along with it because the father is the source of morality according to this view. Consequently, in order to maintain a household equilibrium, there would be a tendency for both parents to view the child (and children in general) in a similar way – selfish, uncooperative, and lazy. In essence, this study is predicting that parents who view children as selfish, uncooperative and lazy will experience more conflict with them, and that Evangelical Protestantism is a cultural ideology which promotes this view of children. This study therefore predicts that a patriarchal religious household will produce conflict not only between the child and his/her father, but also between the child and his/her mother as well.

Evangelical Protestantism and Catholicism are generally more pro-natalist than Mainline Protestantism. Among Evangelicals and Catholics, Evangelicals emphasize marriage and family the most, likely due to declines in Catholic orthodoxy occurring alongside corresponding increases in evangelicalism and fundamentalism (Schwadel, 2013; Bruce, 2011). Contributing to the emphasis on family within Evangelical Protestantism is the lower educational and occupational attainment of Evangelical

females (Fitzgerald and Glass, 2008; Sherkat, 2012). Women are given greater autonomy in Catholic and Mainline churches, as compared to Evangelical churches, in choosing their career paths. Relatively speaking, women in Evangelical communities are expected to forego the public sphere for domestic responsibilities, and this contributes to a lower average socio-economic status among Evangelicals (Lehrer, 2004). This study will therefore make hypotheses regarding not only differing parenting styles, but also regarding family size growing up and the socio-economic statuses of respondents' parents.

H4: Evangelical Protestants will be more likely to perceive their father as having had stronger moral convictions growing up.

H5: Evangelical Protestants will be more likely to have had a conflicted relationship with their father growing up.

H6: Evangelical Protestants will be more likely to have had a conflicted relationship with their mother growing up.

H7: Mainline Protestants will have had the smallest families growing up.

H8: Evangelicals will have had parents with the lowest socio-economic status (social class and education) among the three.

Political Worldview and Interest in Science

A large body of research shows Evangelicals to be more socially conservative than both Catholics and Mainline Protestants (e.g., Starks & Robinsion, 2009), though

this work rarely controls for family upbringing as this study will do here. Evangelicals, moreover, are frequently found to be averse to science (Sherkat, 2011), primarily because scientific consensus has directly challenged Biblical authority about the age of the Earth, the nature of human beings, and climate change (Coyne, 2012; Whitehead & Baker, 2012; Plantinga, 2011).

Not only do Evangelicals tend to be the most socially conservative, followed by Catholics and Mainline Protestants, but they also appear to be more fiscally (i.e., economically) conservative as well. Generally, research has found that Evangelicals are more economically conservative, on account of having lower SES, compared to Catholics and Mainline Protestants, who tend to be equally fiscally liberal (Malka, 2013; Bean, 2014; Steensland & Schrank,2011) . The few studies which have looked at fiscal attitudes (or social attitudes) among specifically Christian affiliates do not, however, often control for the religiosity or spirituality of the respondent, as the present study, does so it is unclear how much mere affiliation drives fiscal politics.

H9: Evangelical Protestants will be the most socially conservative of the group.

H10: Evangelical Protestants will be the most fiscally conservative of the group.

H11: Evangelical Protestants will have the least interest in science of the group.

Moral and Religious Worldview

Research generally shows that those who have more orthodox or fundamentalist interpretations of religion make God more central to morality than those who do not, but

work examining differential understandings of God's role in morality among Christian affiliates is few and far between (Froese & Bader, 2007). Certainly, work exists showing that people do in fact view God differently (i.e., as more benevolent or vengeful, for example, see Mencken et al., 2009; Froese et al., 2008; Stroope et al., 2013), but less work exists regarding differences in views of God's importance for morality by religious affiliation. One clue comes from findings which show an inverse relationship between socio-economic status and belief in divine control and involvement (Schieman, 2010). In other words, belief that God controls and is the sole source of morality may be a form of compensatory control for those who are most structurally vulnerable in terms of educational attainment and income (Kay et al., 2010a; Kay et al., 2010b; Schieman & Bierman, 2007). Consequently, this study will hypothesize that Evangelical Protestants view God as the source of morality, such that without God, morality would cease to be a relevant influence on behavior. Moreover, this study will hypothesize that personal religiosity and spirituality/belief in God, generally, are more important for Evangelicals.

Though Christians may differ on how important they think God is for morality, presumably all Christians think morality is a product of both communities and individuals. In fact, religious groups in general, tend to view their faiths along multiple dimensions, both communalistic (bonding and belonging) and more individualistic (believing and behaving) (Saroglou, 2011). This suggests that Evangelicals, Mainlines and Catholics should not differ in their opinions on the nature of morality. Accordingly, and barring any guiding previous research, this study will hypothesize that Christian

affiliations do not differ in their views of morality being relative/cultural/environmental as compared to universal/genetic/absolute.

H12: Evangelical Protestants will be most likely to view God as the source of morality.

H13: Evangelical Protestants will be the group most likely to think that morality no longer applies without God.

H14: Evangelical Protestants will report the highest levels of personal religiosity.

H15: Evangelical Protestants will report the highest levels of spirituality/belief in God.

H16: Christian affiliates will not differ in their views on morality being more relative/cultural/environmental vs. universal/genetic/absolute.

Specific Attitudes on Individual Freedoms in Family/Relationships and the Role of Government

The literature summarized above provides preliminary grounds for proposing that Evangelical Protestants are not only more socially conservative than Catholics or Mainlines, but also that they are specifically conservative on family issues. This study makes use of an index of attitudes towards individual freedoms in marital/romantic relations so as to measure the specific conservatism of Evangelicals on this issue. Included in the index are issues that relate to individual choice in romantic affairs—the freedom to enter into homosexual relationships, get a divorce, use birth control or have pre-marital sex. This study thus hypothesizes not only that Evangelicals are more socially conservative, net of controls, than Catholics or Mainlines, but *also* that Evangelicals are

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independently conservative on/opposed to individual freedoms in romantic/marital relations (controlling for general social politics).

The second index constructed for this analysis is an index measuring attitudes towards government intervention to solve social problems. The social ills included in the index are varied. Included in the index are attitudinal measures of support for government intervention to solve problems of biodiversity, corporate corruption, human rights, foreign aid, material inequality and political corruption. Essentially, this index represents a measure of how supportive respondents are of government-provided assistance (in a variety of areas). Work from psychological social psychology has shown that people frequently use God and the government as monolithic sources of compensatory control, in order to experience life as ordered and predictable (Kay et al., 2010c; Kay et al., 2009; see also Froese & Bader, 2007). When threatened with unemployment, health concerns or general instability, believing that socio-political institutions or God are actively monitoring/improving our current circumstances may provide people a sense of relief and perceived control over their environment. This, alone, may seem to suggest that those for whom God is more important (i.e., Evangelicals), may have less of a need for a second form of compensatory control (such as government). Following this logic, Evangelicals should be least supportive of governmental interventions to deal with social problems, primarily because they are most likely to believe God, not the State, is responsible for addressing corruption, inequality, biodiversity and the rest.

Within the literature, there is evidence that, in fact, Evangelicals report both (a) being more religious and (b) being less supportive of government-assistance to solve

social problems (e.g., Ebaugh et al., 2006; Felson & Kindell, 2007; Steennsland & Schrank, 2011; Bean, 2014). Other studies, however, have shown conflicting or essentially null findings (e.g., Pyle, 1993; Steensland et al., 2000; Curry et al., 2004; Wuthnow & Lewis, 2008). Making matters more confusing, some studies show that Evangelicals are actually *more* supportive of government intervention to solve social problems (Regnerus et al.,1998; Blouin et al., 2013). There is somewhat more consensus that Catholics and Mainline Protestants support government welfare (Steensland et al., 2000), but findings here are also mixed. Tentatively, this study assumes that Evangelical Protestants will be the group most opposed to both individual freedoms in marriage/relationships and governmental intervention to solve social problems.

H17: Evangelical Protestants will be least supportive of individual freedoms in relationships/marriage

H18: Evangelical Protestants will least supportive of governmental intervention to solve social problems.

Data

Data from this study come from the "The Morality Test," a previously un-analyzed online survey which was open to the public from 2003-2012. As part of the incentive to take the survey, respondents were provided with a profile of their political and moral leanings, compared to other users, upon completion. The host website for this survey, http://www.outofservice.com , run by Jeff Potter, has reached over ten million people since 1997, and has been used to collect data for academic research studies for the

last 10 years. As a result, this website receives a lot of traffic from diverse colleges and

universities across the country. The survey used in this analysis can be found at

http://www.outofservice.com/morality/ and is one of several studies currently being

hosted and promoted by the site. Michael Shermer, co-creator of the survey, has also

promoted the survey to a national audience on his own in various forms of media

including magazines (e.g., *Scientific American)* and books (e.g., Shermer & McFarland,

2004)

The survey which provides data for this analysis, "The Morality Test," has a

sample size totaling nearly 12,000 respondents (n=11,883), though data cleaning left only

n=10861 and further partitioning into Catholic, Mainline and Evangelical respondents left

the sample for the present study at n= 3173. The survey creators, Michael Shermer

(Psychology and Interdisciplinary Studies – Claremont Graduate University), Frank

Sulloway (Psychology – UC Berkeley) and Oliver John (Psychology – UC Berkeley)

built the survey to have several theoretically interesting components, in addition to

standard demographic measures. Among these components are questions which target the

respondents' family backgrounds (i.e., relationship with parents), along with their

political and moral worldviews.

The data used for this analysis is not representative of the US population in a few

significant ways. One is that only white respondents were analyzed in this sample--

sample sizes for African Americans, Latinos and Asians were too small for statistically

meaningful comparisons. Another important note is that only single and married

respondents were retained for this study due to small sample sizes for widowed, divorced

and same-sex partnered respondents. Lastly, as compared to data from the General Social

Survey (GSS), subjects in this sample were slightly skewed towards higher social class,

and being younger, which is consistent with other findings on the demographics of people

who use online social media sites, where this survey was advertised (see, for example,

Duggan & Brenner, 2013**).**

Variables and Measurement

<u>Dependent Variables—Christian Religious Affiliation</u>

The measure of religious affiliation offered on this survey consisted of a single

sentence fragment reading "Current Religious Membership:" and offering 21 subsequent

religious affiliations for respondents to choose from. Following the disciplinary standard

set by Steensland and colleagues (2000; Woodberry et al., 2012), this study organizes

Christian religious affiliation into three categories: Evangelical Protestant, Mainline

Protestant and Catholic affiliates. Data cleaning left 860 Catholics, 717 Mainline

Protestants, and 1,596 Evangelical Protestants, for a total sample size of 3,173.

This study collapsed several denominations into a single item measuring

Evangelical Protestantism, following previous research (e.g, Steensland et al., 2000;

Bauer 2012). Survey respondents claiming affiliation with Baptist, Evangelical,

Pentecostal or Seventh-Day Adventist denominations were categorized as Evangelical

Protestant. Additionally, and following previous research, survey respondents claiming

affiliation with Episcopalian, Lutheran, Methodist or Presbyterian denominations were

categorized as Mainline Protestant. Catholics were included using a single response option for "Catholic" affiliation.

Independent Variables

Demographics

Socio-economic status (SES) was assessed using a measure which combined the respondent's subjective social class position and the respondent's educational background. Social class was evaluated with an item asking the respondent to categorize their own current subjective social class standing using a five-item Likert scale measure with responses ranging from "working class" to "upper class," and with higher values representing higher social class standing. The educational attainment of the respondent was measured in terms of highest degree completed. Response options included all commonly-attained degrees – high school degree, AA/AS, BA/BS, MA/MS and PhD/MD/JD. Higher scores represented higher educational attainment. These two measures were combined to create a two-item index, labeled socio-economic status (SES). In the dataset used for this study, social class and educational attainment were moderately correlated (r=.37) and significantly related (b=.34, p<.001).

Respondents also answered a question about the frequency of their current church attendance and response options ranged from "never" to "more than once a week," with higher values representing more frequent church attendance. Age and gender were measured in standard ways. However, given the small proportion of non-white respondents in this dataset, only whites were retained for analysis. Marital status was

originally measured on the survey with several possible responses: single, married, divorced, widowed and same-sex partnered. Unfortunately, due to small sample sizes for divorced, widowed and same-sex partnered respondents, this variable was dummycoded to represent only married and single respondents (0=married, 1=single).

Family Upbringing

The respondent's relationship with their parents is assessed in two ways. First, respondents were asked, "How strong were your [mother's/father's] moral convictions?" and subsequently asked to give their parents, separately, a score ranging from 1 ("Not Strong") to 7 ("Very Strong"). Higher values on this variable represent stronger moral convictions among the respondents' parents.

Respondents were also asked a second set of questions regarding their relationship with their parents. Subjects were asked, "On average, how was your childhood relationship with your [mother/father]?" and subsequently gave a score from 1 ("Very Conflicted") to 7 ("Very Harmonious") for each parent. Higher scores on this variable represent more harmonious relationships with parents. Family size was measured continuously, with higher values representing large family sizes.

This survey also included questions assessing the social class and educational attainment of the respondent's parents. First, respondents were asked to categorize the social class of their parents using a five-item Likert-scale with responses ranging from "Working Class" to "Upper Class," with higher values representing a higher parental social class standing. Next, respondents were asked to report the educational attainment

of their most educated parent, and response options ranged from "less than high school" to "graduate or post-secondary," with higher values representing higher parental education. These two measures, of parental social class and education, were subsequently combined into a two item index representing the respondent's parental socio-economic status. In the dataset used for this analysis, respondent parental social class and education were both highly correlated (r=.59) and significantly positively related to one another (*b*=.54;p<.001)

Respondents were also asked for their church attendance habits growing up with the question, "On average, when you were growing up, how often did you attend religious services?" Response options ranged from "never" to "more than once a week," with higher values indicating more church attendance as a child. Birth order is measured with a single straightforward question which asks, "What is your precise birth rank in your sibling group? i.e, 1 (eldest), 2 (second eldest), 3, 4 etc." Here, higher values represent a later birth rank.

Political Worldview

General social politics were assessed by asking the respondent to score themselves along a continuum ranging from 1 ("Social conservative") to 7 ("Social liberal"), with higher values representing more socially liberal politics. To remove the potentially confounding role of fiscal (i.e., economic) conservatism in peoples' social politics, the respondents' fiscal/monetary views were measured along a continuum between 1 ("Fiscal/economic conservative") and 7 ("Fiscal/economic liberal"), where

higher values represent more liberal fiscal politics. The respondent's interest in science was assessed by asking for a score on a continuum ranging from 1 ("Not very interested in science") to 7 ("Very interested in science"). Higher values on this variable represent higher levels of interest in science.

Attitude towards Family and Sexuality

An index variable was created in order to assess respondents' specific views on the family and sexuality. This was comprised of four questions dealing with homosexuality, premarital sex, divorce and birth control use. In the cases of homosexuality, premarital sex and divorce, the respondent was asked to express his/her views, along a seven-point scale, as to whether or not each behavior is always (1) or never wrong (7). The question on birth control asks respondents whether or not, along a seven-point scale, they disagree (1) or agree (7) that birth control should be made available to anyone. In each case, response options were ordered such that higher scores represented more support for individual freedoms in relationships/marriage. A high score on this index represents attitudes supportive of allowing homosexual relationships, pre-marital sex, access to birth control for women and easy access to divorce for married couples. Each is a measure of individual freedom within the relationship/family context—ie., the freedom to become romantically involved with a member of the same sex, the freedom to have sex before marriage, use birth control, and the freedom to end a marriage in divorce. These four questions were combined into an index after a principle components analysis revealed a single underlying factor (see Table 1.2).

Attitude towards Government

Another index variable, representing views on government intervention to solve social problems, was comprised of six questions dealing with biodiversity, corporate corruption, political corruption, human rights, foreign aid, and income inequality. For each question, the respondent was asked to express his/her views, along a seven-point scale, as to whether or not they disagree(1) or agree (7) that government should intervene and play a role in addressing these various social problems. For each question, response options were ordered so that higher scores on each question represented higher levels of support for the use of government to solve the above social issues. These six questions were combined into a single index after principal components factor analysis revealed a single underlying factor. See Table 2.2 for factor loadings.

Moral Worldview

The cultural/environmental vs. universal/genetic conceptions of morality were measured using two items. The first item asked respondents to state their views on a linear scale ranging from 1 ("Moral principles are relative/cultural") to 7 ("Moral principles are absolute/universal"), with higher scores representing more support for the view that moral principles are universal. The second question asks respondents to report, on a continuum, whether or not moral principles are determined by genetics ("1") or environment ("7"), with higher scores representing higher levels of agreement that moral principles are learned from the environment.

Two additional moral worldview questions were added in order to measure whether or not the respondent believes morality relates to God at all. The first question asked respondents whether or not moral principles are god given and requests a score along another continuum (1= god given, 7= not god given), with higher values representing more support for the view that moral principles do not come from God. The second question asks respondents whether or not morals still apply ("1") or if anything goes ("7") if there is no God. Here, higher values represent more support for the view that, without God, moral rules no longer apply.

Analysis

Table 3.2 depicts summary statistics for all variables in the analysis (n=3,173). The average age of respondents in this sample was 37.5. Further, the average respondent in this sample identified as middle class, had obtained a little over 2 years of college education, and was more likely to be married than single. Respondents were also split fairly evenly between men and women. The average respondent also reported having parents with very strong moral convictions, a typical respondent scoring nearly a 6 out of a possible 7 for both mother and father. Given that this is a sample of religious affiliates, perhaps the strength of parents' moral convictions, growing up, should be expected to be high. Politically, respondents were fairly moderate as well as reporting a moderate interest in science. Respondents in this sample also reported moderate levels of agreement that morality comes from God, though they felt more strongly that moral principles would still apply even in the absence of a God. Lastly, recall that,

unfortunately, all respondents used for this analysis were whites, due to small sample sizes for African Americans, Hispanics and Asians.

A correlation matrix containing all included variables was also calculated. The strongest correlation in the table is an inverse association between church attendance and supporting individual freedoms in relationships/marriage (r=.70). A strong positive correlation was also found showing that being male positively predicted increased interest in science (r=.63). In this sample, having a harmonious relationship with one's father was positively correlated with a similar harmonious relationship with the mother (r=.62). Of further interest were a pair of strong correlations linking increased belief in God to increased religiosity (r= .59) and increased belief that morals come from God (r=-.59).

This study models Christian affiliation using a multi-nomial logistic regression. The logistic regression model assumes the independence of multiple categories in the dependent variable and, indeed, this study treats Christian religious affiliation as a nominal-level variable (Bull & Donner, 1987). When the dependent variable is not ordinal or linearly measured, ordinary least squares calculations cannot be conducted. Instead, logistic regression can compare strengths of effects of categorically distinct groups (such as race/ethnicity, gender or, in this case, Christian religious affiliation) using a maximum likelihood estimator. In the case of this study, this estimator is a multinomial logit (Cohen et al., 2003). Probit regressions, though able to assess categorically distinct groups in the dependent variable, are not able to handle more than two groups and this study uses three measures of Christian affiliation.

This multinomial logit treats Evangelical Protestants as the baseline nominal category. Evangelicals are compared with Mainlines and Catholics with regard to demographic profile (e.g., SES, age, gender), family background/upbringing, and political and moral worldview. Additionally, two index variables are added to the model, which measure specific political attitudes towards individual freedoms in relationships/marriage (e.g., homosexuality, birth control, divorce) and support for government intervention to solve social problems (e.g., foreign aid, biodiversity, corporate corruption).

Results

Multinomial logit results are reported in Table 4.2. Study results reveal that the largest differences among Christian affiliates involve gender, marital status, social politics, interest in science and levels of religiosity/spirituality. Family effects were also found consistent with this study's hypotheses, though these effects are smaller, and thus arguably less substantive. Overall, Females, lower SES respondents, married respondents and those reporting high levels of personal religiosity and belief in God were the most likely to report being Evangelical Christians (i.e., the least likely to be Catholic or Mainline).

Turning to demographic characteristics, the first three study hypotheses predicted that evangelicals would have the lowest SES of the group (H1), along with the highest rates of marriage (H2) and church attendance (H3). All but one of these hypotheses were confirmed— a one-unit increase in SES increased the probability of being Catholic

(rrr=1.18; p<.001)) and Mainlines (rrr=1.11; p<.01) by 18% and 11% respectively. Furthermore, single respondents were 94% more likely to be Catholic and 44% more likely to be Mainline than Evangelical (Catholic rrr= 1.94, p<.001; Mainline rrr= 1.44, p<.05). Current church attendance actually predicted categorization into the Mainline group, not the Evangelical group as hypothesized above in (H3) (rrr= 1.13, p<.05). Clearly however, of these effects, marital status emerges as the most substantive. Also of substantive significance was the finding that being male increased the likelihood of being a Catholic by 64% (rrr=1.64, p<.001) and raised the likelihood of being a Mainline Protestant by 56% (rrr=1.56,p<.001).

The second set of variables and hypotheses addressed the respondent's family upbringing. Hypotheses (H4)-(H6) suggested that Evangelical Protestant respondents would have had fathers with the strongest perceived moral convictions (on account of the conservative "strict father" sub-culture identified by Lakoff, 2002; 2008) of the group. Moreover, this study argued that these very morally convicted fathers would clash with their children more than less morally convicted fathers. Recall that Lakoff's (2002;2008) "strict father" cognitive frame conceptualizes the father as a disseminator of discipline to children who are fundamentally dishonest, uncooperative and lazy; without this moral father in the household, the family unit would disintegrate into individual selfishness. Thus, this study predicted that Evangelical Protestant adults, compared to other Christian affiliates, will have had (1) the most morally convicted fathers, and (2) the most conflicted relationship with their parents growing up.

Family upbringing hypotheses (H4)-(H6) were all confirmed in this study. Not only were respondents who reported having fathers with strong moral convictions less likely to be either Catholic or Mainline (Catholic rrr= .84, p<.001; Mainline rrr= .85, p<.001). Additionally, respondents who reported having a more conflicted relationship with their mothers (Catholic rrr= 1.17, p<.001) ; Mainline rrr= 1.20, p<.001) and fathers (Catholic rrr= 1.25, P<.001 ; Mainline rrr= 1.26, p<.001) were also less likely to be Catholic or Mainline. Put differently, of the three groups, having a conflicted relationship with one's parents growing up decreased the likelihood of being either Catholic or Mainline, compared to Evangelical. Hypotheses (H7) and (H8) were also offered with regard to the respondent's family size and parent SES growing up. Though parental SES did not selectively influences categorization as a certain Christian affiliates in this study, family size did, in fact, increase the probability of being Catholic by 22% (rrr=1.22, p<.001) providing support for (H7). Other findings show that increased church attendance as a child actually decreased the likelihood that a respondent would identify as a Mainline Protestant as an adult (rrr= .85, p<.01). Also, being born later among ones' siblings was found to decrease the probability of affiliation as a Catholic in adulthood by 15% and to decrease the probability of affiliation as a Mainline Protestant by 19% compared to Evangelical (Catholic rrr= .85, p <.001; Mainline rrr=.81, p<.001) compared to Evangelicals. Taken collectively, these family background variables are notably significant, but distinctly less substantive as compared to the impact of gender and marital status described above.

Hypotheses (H9)-(H11) all made predictions regarding Evangelical affiliation and political attitudes. This study confirms hypotheses (H9) and (H11), revealing that one unit increases in social liberalism and interest in science did, in fact, increase the probability that a respondent would be a Mainline Protestant (rrr=1.31 p<.001; rrr=1.29, p<.001) or a Catholic(rrr=1.25, p<.001; rrr=1.32, p<.001) as compared to Evangelical. Put differently, increased social liberalism and interest in science raised the probability of a respondent being a Mainline by 31% and 29% respectively, while raising the probability of being a Catholic by 25% and 32% respectively. Here, it seems social conservatism and disinterest in science best predicted inclusion into the baseline category of Evangelical. No support, however, was found for (H10), which suggested that Evangelical Protestants would be more fiscally conservative on account of having lower SES.

Regarding respondents' moral worldviews, study hypotheses were largely supported. Very personally religious, God –believing respondents who felt that without God, moral rules would cease to apply because God is the source of morality were the least likely to be either Catholic or Mainline. Specifically, and confirming (H14) and (H15), each one-unit increase in respondent spirituality lowered the probability of affiliation as a Mainline or Catholic (Catholic rrr= .76, p<.05; Mainline rrr= .71, p<.01), as did each one-unit increase in religiosity (Catholic rrr= .81, p<.001; Mainline rrr= .87, p<.05). The effect of spirituality/belief in God is particularly substantive—a one unit increase in self-reported belief in God reduced the probability of being a Mainline, as opposed to Evangelical, by 29%. Also, believing that moral principles were *not* rooted in

God increased the probability of being a Catholics (rrr= 1.15, p<.001) and a Mainline (rrr=1.11, p<.01) relative to an Evangelical. Lastly, respondents who believed that moral principles operate only because God exists were significantly less likely to be either Catholic (rrr= .94, p<.001) or Mainline (rrr=.94, p<.001). These latter effects, however, are fairly small and nearly non-substantive, despite being statistically significant. In sum, being highly religious, spiritual, and believing that morality comes from God significantly reduced the likelihood of being a Catholic or a Mainline Protestant relative to an Evangelical Protestant, indicating that religiosity and the conflation of God and morality matter more for the prediction of Evangelical affiliation than for either Catholic or Mainline affiliation, at least in this sample.

On the other hand, results fail to support hypothesis (H16), which suggested that affiliates would not differ on their moral orientation. Recall that this study measured moral orientation by asking respondents about their views on the nature of "moral principles". Response options were bi-polar, requiring the respondent to categorize their view of moral principles as relatively more cultural, (i.e., rooted in the environment), or relatively more universal (i.e., rooted in the individual's genes). Though this study hypothesized no differences among Christian affiliates, results reveal that, in fact, some differences may exist. Believing that moral principles were primarily learned from one's environment slightly increased the probability of affiliation as both a Mainline Protestant (RRR= 1.07, p<.05) or a Catholic (RRR= 1.07, p<.05) as compared to an Evangelical. Further, respondents who felt that moral principles were absolute and unchanging were significantly *less* likely to be a Mainline Protestant (RRR= .93, P<.05). All of these

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effects, though interesting and suggestive of a need for future research, are nevertheless small in size and are therefore only hints as to possibly underlying differences among Christian affiliations in their views of the moral universe

Lastly, study results provide no support for the final two hypotheses (H17) and (H18). Family politics and support for governmental intervention to solve social problems failed to distinguish Catholic and Mainline affiliates from Evangelicals.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study found that, among Christian affiliates, having high SES and being single were strong predictors of self-identification. Single respondents, for example, were 94% more likely to be Catholic than Evangelical Protestant. Also, men in the sample were 64% more likely to be Catholic and 56% more likely to be a Mainline Protestant than Evangelical. Also, as expected, being socially liberal and interested in science predicted Catholic or Mainline affiliation over Evangelical affiliation. This study also showed a somewhat novel result—though social conservatism was more characteristic of Evangelicals in this sample, this social conservatism didn't appear to be explained by political attitudes regarding the family, at least after religiosity, spirituality and moral worldview are controlled for.

Though Evangelicals are largely regarded as being the most conservative/traditional on family issues among Christian affiliates (e.g., Wilcox et al., 2004), permissive attitudes towards individual freedoms in relationships/marriage were *not* predictive of Mainline or Catholic affiliation over Evangelical affiliation in this

sample. Recall that these "individual freedoms" were measured using an index which asked questions about respondent attitudes towards homosexuality, birth control, divorce and premarital sex. The finding that, though distinctly more socially conservative, Evangelicals may not place more importance on family issues is a contribution to the literature in need of further study. This finding indicates that there may indeed be other issues, separate from issues of the family, per se, which are central to the social conservatism of Evangelicals. Having said the, this finding must nevertheless be interpreted cautiously, as the sample for this study was entirely Caucasian, and slightly better educated than the US average. This may be part of the reason for the above finding that Catholics and Mainlines failed to differ from Evangelicals with regard to views on family/marriage.

This study also revealed several other intriguing findings. First, Evangelical respondents in this sample recalled perceiving their father as having very strong moral convictions growing up, and additionally, recalled having a more conflicted relationships with both parents in general, relative to Mainlines and Catholics. Not only does this provide some support for Lakoff's contention that Evangelicals and political conservatives may tend to take a more punitive, adversarial stance with child-rearing, but it shows that Evangelicals may do this at a rate higher rate than Catholics or Mainline Protestants. To put the results into perspective, a one-unit increase in remembering ones' relationship to their father as harmonious increased the likelihood of being a Mainline by 25% or a Catholic by 26% compared to Evangelical. What about an interpretation for why *both* Evangelical parents might have more conflicted relationships with their

children compared to other Christian affiliates? It is possible that Lakoff's "strict father" is representative, from the point of view of the child, as a "strict parental unit," in which strict rules and strict punishments are disseminated/legitimated by both the father and, perhaps to a lesser extent, the mother. This may explain why Evangelical respondents remember having had a conflicted relationship with both their mothers and their fathers, despite their fathers having the strongest moral convictions.

Also of interest is that Christian affiliates in this sample did not differ on their fiscal politics, or their attitudes on the use of governmental intervention to address social issues (i.e., biodiversity, inequality). This suggests that the driving wedge between Mainlines and Catholics on the one hand, and Evangelicals on the other, may be an issue of social, not fiscal, politics. Recall, however, that this study failed to find support for the view that Evangelicals were more concerned with family politics than other Christian affiliates, net of controls for moral worldview and religiosity/spirituality. Evangelicals indeed appear to be the group most likely to be socially conservative, but more research is needed to investigate the specific political sources of Evangelicalism. According to this analysis, a simple interpretation which views Evangelicals as united on a single basis -- "anti-individualism" with regard to family affairs -- would be incorrect.

This study also provides some moderate support for the view that Evangelicals care more about God, religion and spirituality than other Christian affiliates. Put differently, religiosity and belief in God are less important aspects of affiliation for Mainlines or Catholics than for Evangelicals, at least in this sample. Catholics and Mainlines were also less likely to feel that all moral principles had to come from God,

though these effect sizes begin getting small. The largest relative risk ratios in the model were obtained for respondent religiosity and spirituality, not views on morality. This implies that, though views on morality may be important to Evangelicals, their identification as religious, and their belief in God are perhaps most important of all.

Though this study confirms some previous findings (i.e., having higher SES, being single and less socially conservative predicts Mainline or Catholic affiliation over Evangelical affiliation), it also offers new details on Christian affiliation (differing relationships to parents, differing views about the nature of morality, lack of difference on family and government politics). This being said, the present study also has several weaknesses. First, and most important, is that this study has treated adult Christian affiliation as an indicator of the Christian affiliation they grew up in. This study did not measure parental Christian affiliation, only respondent affiliation. Consequently, inferences made about Evangelical Christian respondents being raised in Evangelical Christian households may be unfounded in some cases. Critically, however, a very large body of research exists in the sociology of religion demonstrating that, by far, the strongest predictor of adult religious affiliation is that of parental affiliation (Uecker & Ellison, 2012). The transmission of religious affiliation is most likely to occur in a religiously homogamous, two-parent household (Eberstadt, 2013). Thus, though this study assumes that Evangelical Protestants were raised in Evangelical Protestant households, Mainlines in Mainline Protestant households and so on, this assumption is hardly unjustified. Nevertheless, ideally, this study would have included a measure of parental affiliation in order to remove all doubt.

Other weaknesses of this study involve the limited measure of Christian affiliation. At least some research exists to show that as much (if not more) variation exists *within* Christian denominations as exists *between* them (e.g., Reimer, 2007; Garneau & Schwadel, 2013). This study focused on only Evangelicals, Mainlines and Catholics due to their empirical substantiation in the literature as uniquely separate groups (historically and socially—see Steensland et al., 2000; Bauer, 2012), and because much research remains to be done. This study, for example, shows not only that Catholics may be merging with Mainlines with regard to social politics, but also that Catholics may be similar to Mainlines with regard to family upbringing, interest in science and views about morality and God among other things. Lastly, this study has a significant weakness in the sample used—only white respondents were retained for analysis due to small sample sizes for other race/ethnicities; consequently, the inferences made here are only generalizable to whites.

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Table 1.2: Principle Components Factor Analysis for Views on Family and Sexuality

Items	Factor Loading
Homosexuality	.82
Premarital Sex	.84
Divorce	.60
Birth Control	.55
Eigenvalue	2.033

Table 2.2: Principle Components
Factor Analysis for Views on
Government Intervention to Solve
Social Problems

Items	Factor Loading
Biodiversity	.64
Corporate Corruption	.67
Political Corruption	.59
Human Rights	.56
Foreign Aid	.61
Income Inequality	.58
Eigenvalue	2.23

Table 3.2: Means and Standard Deviations of
Variables (N=3,173)

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Min.	Max.
Religiosity	5.0	1.36	1	7
Spirituality/belief in God	4.68	.72	1	5
SES	5.23	1.5	2	10
Gender	.55	.50	0	1
Age	37.5	11.2	21	80
Single	.30	.46	0	1
Current Church Attendance	3.32	1.52	1	6
Strength of Father's Moral Convictions	5.6	1.8	1	7
Relationship with Father	3.8	1.96	1	7
Strength of Mother's Moral Convictions	5.98	1.42	1	7
Relationship with Mother	4.28	1.97	1	7
Church Attendance Growing Up	4.79	.99	1	6
Family Birth Order	2.58	1.46	1	12
Family Size	3.37	1.37	1	10
ParentSES	6.63	1.87	2	10
Fiscal Politics	3.39	1.48	1	7
Social Politics	3.72	1.66	1	7
Interest in Science	4.05	2.38	1	7
Moral Principles are Absolute	4.79	1.61	1	7
Moral Principles Learned Through Environment	4.83	1.42	1	7
Moral Principles are Not God-Given	3.52	1.82	1	7

Morals Apply Only If God Exists	2.24	1.99	1	7
Family Views	4.86	1.74	1	7
Governments Role	5.18	1.07	1	7

Table 4.2: Multinomial Logistic Regression Predicting Type of Religious Affiliation (Baseline=Evangelical Affiliates ; Coefficients are relative risk ratios; n=3,173)

	Model 1	
	Catholic	Mainline
Demographics		
SES	1.18***	1.11**
Gender (1=male)	1.64***	1.56***
Age	.99	1.01
Single (dummycode)	1.94***	1.44*
Current Religious Service Attendance	1.02	1.13*
Family Background		
Father's Moral Convictions	.84***	.85***
Mother's Moral Convictions	.92	.90*
Relationship with Father	1.25***	1.26***
Relationship with Mother	1.17***	1.20***
Religious Service Attendance Growing Up	.92	.85**
Family Birthrank	.85***	.81***
Family Size	1.22***	1.07
Parent SES	.95	1.04
Political Worldview		
Fiscal Politics	.99	.96
Social Politics	1.25***	1.31***
Interest in Science	1.32***	1.29***
Moral Worldview		
Moral Principles are Absolute	.97	.93*
Moral Principles Learned Through Environment	1.07*	1.07*
Moral Principles are Not God-Given	1.15***	1.11**
Morals Apply Only If God Exists	.94*	.94*
Religiosity	.81***	.87*
Belief in a "higher power"	.76*	.71**
Views on Family and Government		
Family Views	.98	1.09
Government's Role	1.07	.96

 * p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

Chapter 3: Religious Non-affiliation: Correlates and Manifestations

Introduction

From its inception, sociologists assumed traditional religion would recede in the coming industrialized modern era. Emilie Durkheim, who inherited Comte's project of establishing sociology as a scientific discipline, shared Comte's assumption that the modern world would be characterized by impersonal science, not religious faith. Durkheim argues:

"Yet if there is one truth that history has incontrovertibly settled, it is that religion extends over an ever diminishing area of social life. Originally, it extended to everything; everything social was religious – the two words were synonymous. Then gradually political, economic and scientific functions broke free from the religious function, becoming separate entities and taking on more and more a markedly temporal character. God, if we may express it in such a way, from being at first present in every human relationship, has progressively withdrawn. He leaves the world to men and their quarrels." (Durkehim, 1997, pg. 119)

Though this thesis of impending secularization found much support among sociologists and other intellectuals of the 18th and 19th centuries, it became obvious in the 20th century that religion had not disappeared. As a result, non-religious people were still viewed as deviants. A 1932 article published in the *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* categorized non-believers alongside "Single [i.e., flat] Taxers, Fundamentalists [and] Communists" as subscribing to an excessive or extreme outlook (Vetter & Green, 1932). This marginalization of non-belief as bizarre and deviant indicates the degree to which religious forms of meaning-making still dominated academia and society in the early twentieth century.

Nearly forty years later, sociologist Glenn Vernon (1968) published a groundbreaking article discussing social science's overt neglect of the religiously

unaffiliated, along with the presentation of some early statistics on the topic. Among

other things, Vernon found that those reporting no religious preferences did not always

self-identify as either atheist or agnostic and that those who did tended to be from the

middle and upper class (Vernon, 1968).

Vernon's research was both a sign of growing interest in the religiously unaffiliated and a

catalyst for new research.

Riding this wave of interest in the 1960s, and seeing the undermining potential of

a 'culture of unbelief', the Second Vatican Council requested that Catholic social

scientists make inroads in evaluating the prevalence and consequences of growing

religious disinterest (Bullivant &Lee, 2012; Pasquale, 2012). The Vatican quickly

convened a conference to discuss the issue in 1969 which included numerous eminent

sociologists of religion such Peter Berger (1967; Berger et al., 2008), Robert Bellah

(1964; 2007; 2011) and David Martin (1969; 2005). This conference on non-believers,

held at the Vatican, drew s*ignificant* interest with over 3,000 people in attendance, but

fizzled quickly as participants struggled to define their terms and discuss just what "non-

belief" amounted to. Indeed, the topic of non-belief seemed a bit like studying the non-

existence of unicorns – where does one begin? Interest in non-belief within social science

thus waned in the ensuing decades, mired in definitional problems and personal/political

interest in maintaining the benefits (health, social) of a belief in God (Bruce, 2011;

Pasquale, 2012).

Interest in the field was rejuvenated when surprising findings from data sources such as the American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS) and the General Social Survey (GSS) indicated a huge jump in religious disinterest during the 1990s. The proportion of Americans who reported being unafiiliated with any religious tradition doubled from 7% in 1990-1991 to 14% in 1998-2000. This increase seemed truly inexplicable to researchers, many of whom were coming to accept non-belief as a persistent, but largely irrelevant phenomenon. Echoing this surprise, Hout and Fischer (2002) write in their seminal article on the topic, "After 17 years of no significant change in surveys, from 1974 to 1991, this sudden increase is one of the most dramatic proportional changes in any of the variables measured by the GSS," (pg 166). Social scientists who study religion now generally agree that growing religious disinterest is a staple of Western Europe, and, though less common in the US, still represents the orientation of sizable (and growing) numbers of Americans (e.g., Bruce, 2011; Pasquale, 2012; Schwadel, 2010; Zuckerman, 2005; Zuckerman, 2008). Currently, the most recent figures put the proportion of religious non-affiliates in the US population at just under 20% according to a recent PEW poll (PEW Forum on Religion and Public Life, 2012).

The Present Studies

Who Are the Religiously Unaffiliated? – Generations, Demographics and Social Attitudes

Those who report being a religious "none," (people who are un-affiliated with a religious institution or denomination) continue to be the fastest growing religious

demographic (Kosmin, 2009). Despite this growth in numbers, very little data exists on the social attitudes of non-affiliates and almost no data exists on attitudinal and behavioral variation among *types* of religious none. This lack of research is especially glaring in light of the frequent reports of political violence and intolerance directed towards religious non-believers (Zuckerman, 2008; Edgell et al., 2006). Though few non-affiliates will declare themselves openly atheist (Bruce, 2011), many report varying levels of spirituality and interest in moral-metaphysical speculation (Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 2012).

In order to add to a newly emerging body of literature on religious non-affilation, this study will investigate the demographic, family background, political and moral worldview correlates of specific *types* of religious non-affiliate. This study will distinguish types of nonaffiliated based on their self-reported religiosity and spirituality/belief in God. As will be explained in more depth below, this study divides religious non-affiliates into three groups: (1) those who report high levels of religiosity and spirituality/belief in God, despite being unaffiliated with a religious tradition, (2) those who report high levels of spirituality/ belief in God, but low levels of personal religiosity and (3) those who reported low levels of both religiosity and spirituality/belief in God. This study offers several specific hypotheses about how these "types" of none may be different from one another.

Political and Moral Worldview

Hout and Fischer (2002), in a heavily cited work, demonstrate that much of the increase in the rate of non-affiliation occurred during the 1960s, in what is called a sixties "legacy effect" (Schwadel, 2010; Bruce, 2011; Merino, 2012). This "sixties effect" is attributed to high rates of "inter-group" contact (and, thus, exposure to difference, consequent egalitarianism and religious relativism) never before experienced in the United States (Bruce, 2011). These novel levels of inter-group contact characteristic of the 1960s were facilitated by unprecedented levels of religious inter-marriage (where married couples share different religious worldviews). Indeed, prior to the 1990s increase in religious non-affiliation captured by the General Social Survey (which saw rates of religious non-affiliation jump from 7-15%), the last well documented increase occurred in the 1960s when it rose from only 2 % to around 7% (Smith & Kim, 2007). Prior to this "sixties effect," rates of religious non-affiliation had been stable at around 2-3%. (Hout & Fischer, 2002; Bruce, 2011). Religious "nones" or those claiming no affiliation continue to be one of the fastest growing demographic groups in the country (Zuckerman, 2005; Kosmin et al., 2009; Bruce, 2011; Bullivant & Lee, 2012). Perhaps related to a "cultural liberalizing" which took place in the 1960s, religious non-affiliates up to the present day continue to be more politically liberal compared to the general population (Pew Forum on Religion in Public Life, 2012).

In general, research shows that religiously affiliated people are more conservative on family/relationship issues than religious nones (Lehrer, 2004). Though the sample drawn for this study includes respondents of various religious traditions (Muslim, Hindu),

most are from the Christian and Catholic tradition, which is reflective of the United States population. The politics and worldviews of self-reported Christians tends to be socially conservative when it comes to the family, and this is especially true of Evangelical Protestants (Bauer, 2012).

However, there is also a body of literature showing religiosity to predict charitable giving and other forms of altruistic behavior (Malka et al., 2011). There may be at least one good reason to think that religious non-affiliates would be more likely to favor using government to solve social problems. Work from psychological social psychology has shown that people frequently use God and the government as monolithic sources of compensatory control, in order to experience life as ordered and predictable (Kay et al., 2010; Kay et al., 2009; see also Froese & Bader, 2007). When threatened with unemployment, health concerns or general instability, believing that socio-political institutions or God are actively monitoring/improving our current circumstances may provide people a sense of relief and perceived control over their environment. This suggests that those who are religiously affiliated, and benefit from the efficacy of belonging to a religious community, may have less of a need for a second form of compensatory control (such as government). Following this logic, religious affiliates should be least supportive of governmental interventions to deal with social problems, primarily because they are most likely to believe God, not the State, is responsible for addressing corruption, inequality, biodiversity and the rest. Nevertheless, very little research exists directly comparing affiliates with non-affiliates on their views of relationships/family and the role of government.

Family Upbringing, Marriage and Social Attachment

Those raised Catholic comprise the highest levels of currently religiously unaffiliated people who were raised in a religious tradition -- 24% of religious "nones" identified as Catholic at age 12 (Kosmin, 2009; Hout & Fischer, 2002). This is consistent with Bruce's (2011) argument that religious non-affiliation is driven by an individualization/compartmentalization of religiosity – those faith traditions most tied to a strict religious community and church hierarchy (e.g., the Catholic church) should be most threatened by high levels of structural and cultural differentiation. Also, in keeping with this finding about Catholics, those who have Irish ancestry represent 33% of the religiously unaffiliated.

Outside of the large proportion of "nones" raised Catholic, 32% of current religious "nones" reported no religious affiliation at age 12 (Kosmin, 2009). This is a result of the general trend away from raising children within a religious tradition – more children are reared today with no religious affiliation than at any other time in recorded history (Bruce, 2011). Only 3% of Americans were raised with no religious preference between 1940-1944; this number has steadily grown to just under 15% for those born between 1980-1984 (Schwadel, 2010). The rate of religious disaffiliation hit its peak among those who matured in the 1960s, in other words, those who were born between 1945 and 1959 (Zuckerman, 2005; Schwadel, 2010; Bruce, 2011; Merino, 2012). In a very real sense, those coming of age in the 1960s irrevocably changed the religious

landscape of the United States, and this effect continues to reverberate today, as is demonstrated in the subsequent 1990's increase in nonaffiliation fed, in part, by the increasingly secular children of those born between 1945 and 1959 (Bruce, 2011). Suffice it to say, being raised with no religion is, consistently, the strongest overall predictor of religious non-affiliation (Bruce, 2011; Hout & Fischer, 2002).

Married people, on average, are less likely to be religious unaffiliated compared to single people (Bruce, 2011; Bainbridge, 2005; Hout & Fischer, 2002). A recent PEW poll found that 39% of religious non-affiliates were married compared to 54% of religious affiliates (Pew Forum on Religion in Public Life, 2012).The religiously un-attached, some argue, are essentially socially unattached/abandoned people (Bainbridge, 2005). Hout & Fischer (2002) find that religious "nones" are less likely than the religiously affiliated to have been married, while others have found that those who were currently married were 28% less likely to report disaffiliation compared to single people. Religious "nones" are also less likely to have kids (Stark, 2012). Bainbridge (2005) found other interesting results showing, for example, that those who were not religious were less inclined to social gatherings and numerous social commitments relative to their religious counterparts. Countering this, however, and consistent with the 1960s cohort period effect, those who cohabitate were 31% or 20% more likely to disaffiliate, depending on controls (Uecker et al. 2007). Religiously non-affiliated Americans may not be anomic, so much as increasingly children of those who matured in the 1960s.

Despite this compelling generational and marital/cohabitation research among nones, very little, if anything, is known about how religious non-affiliates related to their

parents growing up. Much work exists on religious socialization in the family (e.g., Kirkpatrick & Shaver, 1990; Granqvist et al.,2010), but researchers have yet to turn their attention to non-affiliates and their experience of parents and parental authority in the family. This study is one of the first examinations of parental relationships with children among a large sample of religious non-affilates. Though historically religious adults tended to come from large families, on account of faith-based encouragements to procreate, scholars are now noting that transmitting religious faith becomes more difficult for parents as the number of children increases (Eberstadt, 2013; Bruce, 2011).

In a religiously undifferentiated society, children are socialized not only by parents, but also by the larger community, who shares the worldview and religious beliefs of the parents. Children with Muslim parents, who live in a predominantly Islamic society, for example, are at low risk of being exposed to countervailing religious/irreligious ideologies. Even if the parents in this example fail to impart "Islamic values" to children, the larger culture, also devoutly Muslim, will pick up the slack. However, in a highly religiously differentiated society like the US, the burden of religious transmission falls more squarely on the shoulders of both parents—if parents fail to transmit their religious ideology to their children, American popular culture will expose these children to numerous other religious traditions and religious criticisms. It is hardly uncommon to find urban and suburban communities in the US filled with people of diverse faiths both within a tradition (Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist, Catholic) and between traditions (Christianity, Judaism, Islam). Children in the US are consequently exposed to numerous religious traditions in schools and through media. In this context,

large families place a significant burden on parents—transmit the faith of family tradition, or risk culture both attacking it and offering alternative options. This study will therefore assume that religious affiliation is most common among adults who grew up in small families, where parents were better able to focus and control the dissemination of their religious beliefs. On the other hand, this implies that religious nones should be disproportionately more likely to come from large families, where the burden on parents to transmit religious beliefs was higher.

Lastly, the "birth order" of the respondent will be included in this study. It will be entered as a control variable due to the substantial evidence for the family-niche theory of Sulloway (1996), which argues that each child in the family confronts unique pressures given their "niche" of attention, responsibility and closeness to parental figures. In terms of the scope of this research, evidence exists that first-born children form strong alliances with parental figures, which, in turn, serves the function of supervision and guidance for younger siblings (Sulloway, 1996). Perhaps not surprisingly, first-born children tend to be more conservative, as well as religious, relative to their younger siblings (Sulloway, 1996; Saroglou & Fiasse, 2003; Healey & Ellis, 2007). Put differently, later-born siblings are afforded a measure of freedom by virtue of their distance from the oldest sibling, who job it is to enforce the will and authority of the parents (Sulloway, 1996). Following this family-niche approach to religiosity, the studies which comprise this paper will hypothesize that having a later birth rank in the family will be associated with higher rates of adult non-affiliation.

Age

Age has been a fairly consistent predictor of religious non-affiliation – younger people are more likely to be non-affiliated as compared with older people. It is a mistake, however, to assume that people *become* more religious over the life course – age is wiped out as a factor in religious non-affiliation once birth cohort is controlled for (Schwadel, 2010; Bruce, 2011). In a sample of over 45,000 respondents, Schwadel (2010) found that those raised with no religion has grown steadily in the United States since the 1950s. Age is thus negatively correlated with religious non-affiliation (i.e., older people are less likely to be non-affiliated) not because religiosity becomes more salient over the life course, but because religion has become *less salient*, on the whole, over the past several generations and beginning with those who matured in the 1960s. Only 5% of contemporary religious "nones" are over the age of 70; 65% of "nones" are aged 30-69 (Kosmin, 2009).

Gender and Race[3]

Gender is a well-known predictor of religiosity, with females consistently found to be more religious across almost every study which has examined the relationship. Indeed, the positive correlation between being female and having generally higher levels of religious/spiritual/supernatural commitment is one of the most established findings in all of social science, let alone in the sociology of religion, and this effect is reliably found regardless of which country the data is collected in (Hayes, 2000; Bader et al., 2010; see

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[3] Unfortunately, due to the small sample size of African American, Hispanic and Asian respondents, only whites were retained for analysis in the two studies constituting this paper.

also Goode, 2000). This is borne out, as well, in the research on religious non-affiliation. Across numerous studies, women are significantly less likely to be religiously unaffiliated compared to their male peers, though this gap appears to be narrowing slowly (Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 2012; Bruce, 2011; Hayes, 2000; Hout & Fischer, 2002; Uecker et al., 2007). Specifically, when it comes to self-identification as an atheist, men vastly outnumber women with 64% of non-affiliated men claiming to be atheists compared to only 36% of women (Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 2012). Moreover, other recent research indicates that men are even more likely to *consider* leaving their religion, and once they consider it, men are more likely to leave (Lim et al, 2010). Currently, it is thought that men comprise at least 60% of religious "nones" (Kosmin, 2009) and, thus, generally, non-affiliates are viewed in the literature as males.

With regard to race and ethnicity, there is a general consensus in the empirical literature that whites are more likely to be religiously non-affiliated compared with African Americans and Latinos (Bruce, 2011). Hout and Fischer (2002), for example find that both African American and Latino respondents were less likely to claim no religious affiliation compared with whites, but that Chinese and Japanese respondents were more likely. This latter finding on Asian respondents is less consistent. Kosmin (2009) shows that the overwhelming majority, 72%, of religiously unaffiliated people in the US are white. Nevertheless, this is down from 80% in 1990, indicating increasing levels of racial and ethnic diversity within the religious "none" population. Among minority groups, Hispanics appear to be joining the ranks of the religiously non-affiliated most quickly –

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Hispanics totaled 4% of religious "nones" in 1990, and 12% in 2008, a three-fold

increase (Kosmin, 2009, see also Bruce, 2011). This finding among Hispanics is

consistent with research mentioned above regarding the high rates of disaffiliation among

Catholics – a joint survey by the Pew Hispanic Project and the Pew Forum on Religion

and Public Life shows that Hispanics are (and have long been) an overwhelmingly

Catholic population[4].

Socio-Economic Status

Much attention has been directed to the role of class and religiosity. Despite

Marx's (1977) famous pronouncement that religion was an opiate for the economically

exploited masses, little actual evidence exists in favor of a simple "deprivation theory" of

religiosity (e.g., Estus & Overington, 1970). It appears that religion is less a simple

method of coping with hardship and more a matter of cultural/family socialization

(Eberdtadt, 2013). It is true that economically disadvantaged minority groups often report

high levels of religiosity, but it is difficult to disentangle class effects from community

and family effects (see, for example, Zuckerman, 2002).

For Marx, economic strife in this life should lead to a desire to hope for salvation

in the next life (i.e., in heaven). Yet, given that religious commitments are not just

compensatory in some existential sense, but are also composed of real flesh-and-blood

human social networks, it may be that those who struggle financially have a more

difficult time maintaining social relationships and are, hence, more likely to disaffiliate

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[4] http://www.pewforum.org/uploadedfiles/Topics/Demographics/hispanics-religion-07-final-mar08.pdf

from their religious tradition. According to Kosmin's (2009) recent profile class makes little difference. Religious "nones" in the year 1990 comprised 8% of Americans making below-median income and 9% of those making above-median income. In 2008 these numbers grew-- 15% of Americans making under-median incomes are religious "nones" compared with 16% of those with incomes above the national median.

There are slightly mixed findings with regard to educational attainment and religious non-affiliation. In general, as educational attainment increases, people become less religiously committed and affiliation drops off. Non-affiliation, for example, appears to be growing fastest among educated populations, with an 11% increase in non-affiliation among college educated people (Pew Forum on Religion in Public Life, 2012). Hayes (2000), as well, finds a small, but statistically significant, positive correlation between educational attainment and non-affiliation. However, Kosmin's (2009) cumulative profile of religious "nones" shows that, over time, this population is coming more and more to represent the general population with regard to educational attainment.

In general, then, the empirical research shows a negative relationship between education and religious affiliation (e.g., Arias-Vazquez, 2012; Hout & Fischer, 2002; Bruce, 2011; Zuckerman, 2009), yet, some emerging research is questioning this connection. Merino (2012) finds no relationship between educational attainment and affiliation, while Uecker and colleagues (2007) find that those who did not attend college were 55% more likely to disaffiliate from religion compared to those enrolled in a four-year college. Others have recently shown that, for birth cohorts after 1960, roughly 23% of persistent non-affiliates (those who have never had a religious identity) have a

bachelors degree compared to 28% of persistent religious affiliates (Massengill & MacGregor, 2012).

Of course, whether or not higher education is predictive of religious affiliation depends, at least in part, on the specific religious tradition in question. Pentecostal and Baptist Christians, for example, have consistently lower SES compared to Mainline Protestant or Catholic Christians (McCloud, 2007). Nevertheless, a body of work exists which theorizes the numerous ways in which religious social networks benefit individuals in their pursuit of work and education. Generally, involvement in a religious community increases educational attainment through increased access to mentors and tutors, free and extensive social psychological support and increased access to extra-curricular activites (i.e., sports leagues) which build self-esteem and which further builds friendship networks (Glanville et al., 2008).

There is a further potential relationship between 'scientific interest' and religious non-affiliation. Much research exists showing a negative relationship between interest in science and religious fundamentalism (Coyne, 2012), on account of "culture wars" between science and religion in the US dating at least back to the Scope Monkey Trial of the early 20th century (Shermer, 2006). Further, in a recent study, Baker (2012) shows that those who report an interest in science and those who agreed with the statement "Humans evolved from primates over millions of years," were significantly more likely to be religiously non-affiliated people. Despite this work, this area nevertheless suffers from a paucity of studies.

Study 1

The first study of this paper explores religious affiliation and non-affiliation. Four blocks of theoretically relevant variables are included in this study: the demographics, family upbringing, political and moral worldview of respondents. Though literature exists showing that non-affiliates tend to be more single, male and politically liberal, little or no work has explored the family upbringing or the moral worldview of religious nones. Study 1 will therefore offer several tentative hypotheses, rooted in the previous work described above, while considering findings regarding family upbringing and moral worldview as exploratory.

<u>Study Hypotheses</u>

Study 1, drawing from the above literature, contains fifteen hypotheses about the differences between religiously affiliated and religiously non-affiliated people. Firstly, religious affiliates have consistently been found to be disproportionately female, married and older, so this study proposes that the reverse is true of non-affiliates. Additionally, this study hypothesizes that non-affiliates will have lower SES, because they presumably have less (or no) access to the extensive social support networks that affiliation with a religious community often provides.

H1: Non-affiliates will be younger than affiliates.

H2: Non-affiliates are more likely to be male

H3: Non-affiliates will have lower SES

H4: Non-affiliates are more likely to be single than married

With regard to respondents' family upbringing, this study hypothesizes that non-affiliates will have come from larger families with a lower parental SES, where the burden on parents to transmit their religious beliefs was heightened (i.e., more kids, fewer resources). Non-affiliated respondents should also be of a later birth rank (i.e., fewer parental expectations for sibling child-rearing duties). This study makes no hypotheses about differences in respondents' relationships to their parents, or respondents' views about the degree of moral conviction of their parents, given the lack of previous research.

H5: Non-affiliates will come from larger families

H6: Non-affiliates will be less likely to have attended religious services growing up

H7: Non-affiliates will have a later birth rank among their siblings, compared to affiliates

H8: Non-affiliates will have had parents with lower SES growing up

Regarding political and moral worldview, Study 1 hypothesizes that non-affiliates will be less socially and fiscally conservative, and more interested in science compared to affiliates. Moreover, this study assumes that non-affiliated respondents will be less likely to see morality as coming from God, and to think that even without a God, moral principles would continue to be relevant to human affairs. Lastly, with regard to specific

political attitudes, this study hypothesizes that non-affiliates will be more supportive of individual freedoms in relationships/family and more supportive of government intervention to solve social problems.

H9: Non-affiliates will be more fiscally liberal

H10: Non-affiliates will be more socially liberal

H11: Non-affiliates will be more interested in science

H12: Non-affiliates will be less likely to think that morals are god given

H13: Non-affiliates will believe that moral principles are still applicable, even without a God

H14: Non-affiliates will be more supportive of individual choice in family/relationship

H15: Non-affiliates will be more supportive of government intervention to solve social problems

Data and Methods

Data from this study come from the "The Morality Test," a previously un-analyzed online survey which was open to the public from 2003-2012. As part of the incentive to take the survey, respondents were provided with a profile of their political and moral leanings, compared to other users, upon completion. The host website for this survey, http://www.outofservice.com, run by Jeff Potter, has reached over ten million people since 1997, and has been used to collect data for academic research studies for the last 10 years. As a result, this website receives a lot of traffic from diverse colleges and

universities across the country. The survey used in this analysis can be found at

http://www.outofservice.com/morality/ and is one of several studies currently being

hosted and promoted by the site. Michael Shermer, co-creator of the survey, has also

promoted the survey to a national audience on his own in various forms of media

including magazines (e.g., *Scientific American)* and books (e.g., Shermer & McFarland,

2004)

The survey which provides data for this analysis, "The Morality Test," has a

sample size totaling nearly 12,000 respondents (n=11,883), though data cleaning left only

n=10861 and further partitioning into Catholic, Mainline and Evangelical respondents left

the sample for the present study at n= 3173. The survey creators, Michael Shermer

(Psychology and Interdisciplinary Studies – Claremont Graduate University), Frank

Sulloway (Psychology – UC Berkeley) and Oliver John (Psychology – UC Berkeley)

built the survey to have several theoretically interesting components, in addition to

standard demographic measures. Among these components are questions which target the

respondents' family backgrounds (i.e., relationship with parents), along with their

political and moral worldviews.

The data used for this analysis is not representative of the US population in a few

significant ways. One is that only white respondents were analyzed in this sample--

sample sizes for African Americans, Latinos and Asians were too small for statistically

meaningful comparisons. Another important note is that only single and married

respondents were retained for this study due to small sample sizes for widowed, divorced

and same-sex partnered respondents. Lastly, as compared to data from the General Social

Survey (GSS), subjects in this sample were slightly skewed towards higher social class, and being younger, which is consistent with other findings on the demographics of people who use online social media sites, where this survey was advertised (see, for example, Duggan & Brenner, 2013).

As stated above, Study 1 measures affiliation/non-affiliation using a dummy-coded dependent variable (1=non-affiliation, 0=affiliation). Affiliation is then modeled with the above-mentioned independent variables using logistic regression. Logistic regression assumes a binomial distribution of the dependent variable, whereas linear regression assumes a continuous distribution of the dependent variable. Given that this study uses a dependent variable with two dichotomous outcomes (affiliation vs. non-affiliation), logistic regression is an appropriate statistical test for this analysis (Hosmer & Lemeshow, 2004). Coefficients in this study are represented as odds ratios for ease of interpretation.

Variable Measurement

The dependent variable in Study 1 is a dichotomous measure of religious affiliation (1= non-affiliate, 0= religious affiliate). Affiliation here is a measure of any type of religious affiliation, be it Baptist, Muslim or Unitarian. All religious affiliations used in this analysis, and their proportions, can be seen in Table 1.3. Non-affiliation was measured using a single indicator—that of the option for "none" on the question measuring respondents' religious affiliations. All told, the sample for Study 1 contained

over 5,000 affiliated and non-affiliated respondents, respectively (affiliate n= 5,310; non-affiliate n=5,551; total n= 10,861).

Demographics

Socio-economic status (SES) was assessed using a measure which combined the respondent's subjective social class position and the respondent's educational background. Social class was evaluated with an item asking the respondent to categorize their own current subjective social class standing using a five-item Likert scale measure with responses ranging from "working class" to "upper class," and with higher values representing higher social class standing. The educational attainment of the respondent was measured in terms of highest degree completed. Response options included all commonly-attained degrees – high school degree, AA/AS, BA/BS, MA/MS and PhD/MD/JD. Higher scores represented higher educational attainment. These two measures were combined to create a two-item index, labeled socio-economic status (SES). In the dataset used for this study, social class and educational attainment were moderately correlated (r=.37).

Respondents also answered a question about the frequency of their current church attendance with six Likert-style response options ranging from "never" to "a few times a year" to "more than once a week," with higher numerical values representing more frequent church attendance. Age and gender were measured in standard ways. Age was measured in this survey as a continuous variable, with higher values representing older respondents (range= 21-80). Gender was dummycoded with females serving as the

baseline comparison group (male=1).Unfortunately, sample sizes for non-white respondents in this dataset were too low for reliable inferential statistics. Consequently, only whites were retained for analysis, and the results herein are tentatively generalizable to only that racial group. Marital status was originally measured on the survey with several possible responses: single, married, divorced, widowed and same-sex partnered. Unfortunately, due to small sample sizes for divorced, widowed and same-sex partnered respondents, this variable was dummycoded to represent only married and single respondents (0=married, 1=single).

Family Upbringing

The respondent's relationship with their parents is assessed in two ways. First, respondents were asked, "How strong were your [mother's/father's] moral convictions?" and subsequently asked to give their parents, separately, a score ranging from 1 ("Not Strong") to 7 ("Very Strong"). Higher values on this variable represent stronger moral convictions among the respondents' parents.

Respondents were also asked a second set of questions regarding their relationship with their parents. Subjects were asked, "On average, how was your childhood relationship with your [mother/father]?" and subsequently gave a score from 1 ("Very Conflicted") to 7 ("Very Harmonious") for each parent. Higher scores on this variable represent more harmonious relationships with parents. Family size was measured continuously, with higher values representing large family sizes.

This survey also included questions assessing the social class and educational attainment of the respondent's parents. First, respondents were asked to categorize the social class of their parents using a five-item Likert-scale with responses ranging from "Working Class" to "Upper Class," with higher values representing a higher parental social class standing. Next, respondents were asked to report the educational attainment of their most educated parent, and response options ranged from "less than high school" to "graduate or post-secondary," with higher values representing higher parental education. These two measures, of parental social class and education, were subsequently combined into a two item index representing the respondent's parental socio-economic status. In the dataset used for this analysis, respondent parental social class and education were both highly correlated (r=.59).

Respondents were also asked for their church attendance habits growing up with the question, "On average, when you were growing up, how often did you attend religious services?" Response options ranged from "never" to "more than once a week," with higher values indicating more church attendance as a child. Birth order is measured with a single straightforward question which asks, "What is your precise birth rank in your sibling group? i.e, 1 (eldest), 2 (second eldest), 3, 4 etc." Here, higher values represent a later birth rank.

Political Worldview

General social politics were assessed by asking the respondent to score themselves along a continuum ranging from 1 ("Social conservative") to 7 ("Social

liberal"), with higher values representing more socially liberal politics. To remove the potentially confounding role of fiscal (i.e., economic) conservatism in peoples' social politics, the respondents' fiscal/monetary views were measured along a continuum between 1 ("Fiscal/economic conservative") and 7 ("Fiscal/economic liberal"), where higher values represent more liberal fiscal politics. The respondent's interest in science was assessed by asking for a score on a continuum ranging from 1 ("Not very interested in science") to 7 ("Very interested in science"). Higher values on this variable represent higher levels of interest in science.

Attitudes towards Family and Sexuality

An index variable was created in order to assess respondents' specific views on the family and sexuality. This was comprised of four questions dealing with homosexuality, premarital sex, divorce and birth control use. In the cases of homosexuality, premarital sex and divorce, the respondent was asked to express his/her views, along a seven-point scale, as to whether or not each behavior is always (1) or never wrong (7). The question on birth control asks respondents whether or not, along a seven-point scale, they disagree (1) or agree (7) that birth control should be made available to anyone. In each case, response options were ordered such that higher scores represented more support for individual freedoms in relationships/marriage. A high score on this index represents attitudes supportive of allowing homosexual relationships, pre-marital sex, access to birth control for women and easy access to divorce for married couples. Each is a measure of individual freedom within the relationship/family context—ie., the freedom to become romantically involved with a member of the same

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sex, the freedom to have sex before marriage, use birth control, and the freedom to end a marriage in divorce.

These four questions were combined into an index after a principle components analysis revealed a single underlying factor. See Table 2.3 for factor loadings.

Attitudes towards Government

Another index variable, representing views on government intervention to solve social problems, was comprised of six questions dealing with biodiversity, corporate corruption, political corruption, human rights, foreign aid, and income inequality. For each question, the respondent was asked to express his/her views, along a seven-point scale, as to whether or not they disagree(1) or agree (7) that government should intervene and play a role in addressing these various social problems. For each question, response options were ordered so that higher scores on each question represented higher levels of support for the use of government to solve the above social issues. These six questions were combined into a single index after principal components factor analysis revealed a single underlying factor. See Table 3.3 for factor loadings.

Moral Worldview

Whether the respondent conceived of morality as cultural/environmental or universal/genetic was measured using two items. The first item asked respondents to state their views on a linear scale ranging from 1 ("Moral principles are relative/cultural") to 7 ("Moral principles are absolute/universal"), with higher scores representing more support for the view that moral principles are universal. The second question asks respondents to

report, on a continuum, whether or not moral principles are determined by genetics ("1")

or environment ("7"), with higher scores representing higher levels of agreement that

moral principles are learned from the environment.

Two additional moral worldview questions were added in order to measure

whether or not the respondent believes morality relates to God at all. The first question

asked respondents whether or not moral principles are god given and requests a score

along another continuum (1= god given, 7= not god given), with higher values

representing more support for the view that moral principles do not come from God. The

second question asks respondents whether or not morals still apply ("1") or if anything

goes ("7") if there is no God. Here, higher values represent more support for the view

that, without God, moral rules no longer apply.

Results

Table 4.3 depicts summary statistics for all variables in the analysis (n=10,861).

The average respondent in this sample was 34 years old, self-identifies as middle class,

and had obtained at least 2 years of college education. Recall that, unfortunately, all

respondents used for this analysis were whites, due to small sample sizes for African

Americans, Hispanics and Asians. Lastly, respondents were split fairly evenly between

men and women and between single and married people.

Generally, this sample reported being somewhat politically liberal (both fiscally

and socially), with average scores of 4.03 and 5 out of a possible 7 for fiscal and social

politics, respectively (high number= fiscal/social liberal). Subjects in this sample were

also generally in favor of considering morality apart from God. For example, respondents

reported an average score of 2.03 out of a possible 7 points on a question which asked

respondents whether or not moral principles would still apply to human affairs, even in

the absence of a God (high number= morals no longer apply). This may be due in part to

the low average church attendance in this sample—the typical respondent reported

attending church only a few times a year. In sum, this sample is white, 34 years of age,

middle class, fairly well educated and leans left when it comes to social and fiscal

politics. When it comes to faith and religion, this sample leans secular, making it an ideal

sample for this analysis.

A correlation matrix containing all included variables was also constructed. Some

of the strongest correlations in the matrix were to be expected—such as the positive

correlation relating parental SES to respondent SES (r=.57) or the positive correlation

between being social and fiscal political orientation (r= .52). Church attendance in this

sample was strongly correlated with socially conservative politics (r= -.57), belief that

moral principles come from God (r= -.73) and conservative/traditional views of

marriage/relationships (r= -.70). Also, respondents who believed that morality comes

from God were significantly less likely to report being accepting of individual freedoms

in relationships/marriage (r=.67).With regard to the respondents' family upbringings, the

strength of moral convictions of fathers were highly correlated with those of mothers (as

recalled by the respondent) in this sample (r=.57). Other strong correlations, however,

were somewhat less expected. Respondents, for example, with more socially liberal

politics were much more likely to report believing that morals were *not* God-given

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(r=.62), and much more accepting of individual freedoms in relationships/marriage (i.e., birth control, divorce, premarital sex, homosexuality).

Table 5.3 shows results of a logistic regression predicting religious affiliation. The first set of hypotheses (H1-H4) offered above made predictions about demographic differences among religious affiliates and non-affiliates. Only half of these hypotheses were supported by the results of study 1. Age was non-significant and, contrary to the prediction, being male in this sample actually decreased the probability of being non-affiliated by 22% (*OR*= .78, p<.01) disconfirming hypotheses (H1)-(H2). On the other hand, being single increased the probability of non-affiliation by 80% (*OR* = 1.80, p<.001) and a one-unit increase in SES scores lowered the likelihood of non-affiliation slightly (*OR*= .90, p<.001)--confirming both hypotheses (H3) and (H4). Substantively, marital status (i.e., being single) and gender (i.e., being female) appear to be the strongest demographic contributors to respondents' non-affiliation with a religious tradition.

The second set of hypotheses (H5-H8) made predictions about the family background of affiliates as compared to non-affiliates. Confirming hypothesis (H5), coming from a larger family increased the probability of identifying as a none by 22% (*OR*= 1.22; p<.001). Hypothesis (H8) was also supported by the results of this study with a one-unit increase in the SES index producing an 18% decrease in the probability of being non-affiliated (*OR* = .82; p<.001). Hypotheses (H6) also found support in this analysis, which suggested that church attendance as a child would negatively predict self-identification as a "none" in adulthood. Results show that, in fact, a one unit increase in church attendance growing up decreased the probability of the respondent being non-

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affiliated as an adult by 18% (*OR*=.82,p<.001*)*. However, contrary to hypothesis (H7), being later born failed to predict non-affiliation. Instead, the opposite was true, with later born respondents 23% less likely to report being non-affiliates (*OR*=.77; p<.001).

Though no hypotheses were made about differences in parental relationships/upbringing between religious affiliates and non-affiliates, study results indicate intriguing leads. Having a mother with stronger moral convictions reduced the likelihood of identifying as a "none" by 11%, though having a father with stronger moral convictions actually raised the probability of being a "none" by 11% (OR_{mother}= .89; p<.001; OR_{father}= 1.11; p<.001). Regarding relationships to parents, only very small effects were found. Specifically, those who viewed their childhood relationship with their father as harmonious decreased the odds of a respondent being a non-affiliate by 8%, while respondents who viewed their childhood relationship with their mother as harmonious had 7% *greater* odds of being a "none". (OR_{father}= .92 ;p<.001; OR_{mother} = 1.07;p<.001). This perhaps suggests that the mother's moral views may be driving the tendency to affiliate, though this may also be associated with a more conflicted relationship between child and mother growing up. Critically, however, these findings on parental moral convictions and relationship to parents growing up, though significant, are not very substantively important given the small odds ratios.

This study also made predictions (H9-H15) about the political and moral worldview of affiliates as compared to non-affiliates. Hypotheses H10 and H11 were both confirmed. A one unit increase in self-reported social liberalism raised the probability of non-affiliation in adulthood by 19% (*OR*=1.19; p<.001) and a one unit

increase in self-reported science interest raised the likelihood of being a none by an average of 42% (*OR*= 1.42;p<.001), one of the largest effects in the model. Hypotheses (H9), however, was not confirmed, that is, fiscal liberalism did not predict non-affiliation. In fact, a one-unit increase in fiscal liberalism actually decreased the probability being a non-affiliate, though this effect was very small and consequently not very substantive (*OR*=.94; p<.01).

The last four hypotheses of Study 1 (H12-H15) addressed specific moral worldview and political beliefs. As predicted, having a worldview which separates morality from God raises the odds that someone will be a "none". Specifically, a one-unit increase in belief that moral principles were *not* God-given increased the probability that respondents would be non-affiliates by 71% (*OR*= 1.71, p<.001). However, also important was the finding that believing moral principles no longer apply in the absence of a God positively predicted non-affiliation (*OR*= 1.07, p<.001). Put differently, a one unit increase in belief that moral principles no longer apply without a God actually increased the likelihood of non-affiliation by 7%, though this effect size is very small. It is unclear what this says, given the early state of research on non-affiliates.

Further exploratory results (for which no hypotheses were offered) show that viewing moral principles as absolute (as opposed to relative) increased the odds of being non-affiliated by 8% (*OR*= 1.08; p<.001).   Also, believing that moral principles are rooted in the environment decreased the probability of being a none by 11% (*OR*=.89,p<.001). These effect sizes are not large, however, and so these preliminary findings are in need of future corroboration.

Lastly, this study offered two hypotheses (H14 and H15) with regard to the specific political attitudes of religious affiliates compared to non-affiliates. Hypotheses suggested that being supportive of individual freedoms in marriage/relationship contexts (i.e., divorce, homosexuality) and of governmental intervention to solve social problems (i.e., corporate corruption, inequality, etc) would positively predict inclusion into the category (i.e., identification as) of "none" No evidence at all was found to support the latter contention, but hypotheses (H14) was supported. Results indicate that a one unit increase in support of individual choice in relationship/marriage raised the probability that the respondent would be a non-affiliate by 33% (*OR*=1.33,p<.001).

Discussion

Findings from Study 1 provide confirmations of previous research, while also highlighting some intriguing novel findings. Confirming previous research, this study indicates that having lower SES increases the odds of non-affiliation, as does being single, socially liberal and relatively more interested in science. However, this study also provides results not previously reported. For example, this study finds that believing moral principles are *not* god-given raises the likelihood of non-affiliation by 71%. Additionally, belief that moral principles no longer apply (given the lack of a God) was also predictive of identification as a non-affiliate (this effect, however, was much smaller—only a 7% increase in the odds of being a "none").

Though most studies show that being female often predicts religious affiliation, the results of this study show that being female actually increased the likelihood of self-

identifying as a "none". Also adding to the literature, this study shows that being earlier born may actually predict non-affiliation, despite the assumption that eldest children are closer to the authority of their parents (and thus more conservative/traditional) compared to later-borns within the family niche. Regarding the respondents' relationship to their parents, results were interestingly mixed. Having a more harmonious relationship with a mother who had relatively weaker moral convictions increased the probability of being a non-affiliate by 7% and 11% respectively. In a mirrored effect, having a more conflicted relationships with a father who had relatively stronger moral convictions increased the probability of being a non-affiliate by 8% and 11%, respectively. Clearly, these effect sizes are small. Yet, what, if anything, is going on here? Maybe, if the mother is assumed to be the primary (religious/moral) socializing influence on children, and affiliation requires socialization into a religious community, then it makes sense that people who recall their mother as having weaker moral convictions will be more likely, as adults, to be non-affiliated. Regardless, further research is needed to explicate the family backgrounds of religious non-affiliates, as this study constitutes one of the few (if any) in existence right now.

Results revealed that support for individual freedoms in marital/relationship contexts (e.g., birth control, pre-marital sex) increased the odds of non-affiliation by 33%. Importantly, this effect was found even controlling for respondents' social liberalism, and, as stated, "nones" were also more likely to be socially liberal. Lastly, this study provides preliminary evidence to suggest that viewing morality in a more genetic and, therefore, universal way may increase the odds of being a non-affiliate. If moral

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principles are rooted in our genes, than the morality of any given community must be subject to some innate, genetic foundation. From the standpoint of a religious worldview, Christians believe, for the purposes of eternal salvation, that it *truly matters* whether or not one is Christian. In other words, affiliates believe that morality is relative to the faith-group that it is found in. This is why affiliates can speak of Christian morality, Muslim morality, Jewish morality or Hindu morality—moral principles are relative to the culture and group. On the other hand, study results reveal that believing morality to be genetic and universal actually increases the odds of being non-affiliated, though, again, these effects were small.

Ultimately, results suggest that the odds of identifying as a religious non-affiliate increase most substantively as a function of being single, more interested in science, believing morality is not god given, and supporting individual freedoms in marriage/relationships. Why these four? Firstly, marriage and child-rearing have long been priorities of faith communities, making them relatively less important to single people (Eberstadt, 2013). Second, scholars have long noted an incompatibility between scientific and religious worldviews. The primary and most fundamental source of this incompatibility is in the ultimate-level explanations that are offered to explain reality. Religionists and church leaders are more likely to locate the ultimate cause of physical and social events in the mind of a (more or less) anthropomorphized creator, whereas scientists and researchers locate the ultimate cause of physical and social events in natural patterns and variable relationships. This ultimate-level tension in explaining reality comes into consistent view when a "source" is needed to explain some societal

problem, for example, hurricanes or poverty. Ultimately, scientists think that natural

disasters are caused by changes in weather patterns and climate, whereas poverty is

ultimately caused by the lingering effects of historical discrimination, and the expectation

states of the people living in socially disorganized areas. For a religious affiliate who

views moral principles as rooted in the existence of a God, on the other hand, both of

these events may best be explained by appeal to God's will, desire or plan. Lastly, being

supportive of individual freedoms in marriage/relationships, for example, birth control,

premarital sex and homosexuality, may be predictive of non-affiliation simply due to the

strong oppositional stance that churches in the United States have long taken towards

non-traditional marital/relationship arrangements. Without an integrative ideology being

offered by the church, which would provide a religious message to single people who are

divorced or on birth control or who are homosexual, some people in this camp may feel

unaccepted by church communities and choose to be (or remain) non-affiliated.

Study 2

Types of Religiously Un-affiliated People?

Almost no research exists on differences within the religiously unaffiliated

population (Bruce, 2011; Baker & Smith, 2009; Lim et al., 2010; see also Bullivant &

Lee, 2012 for general common topics). This is the case despite indications of significant

variation among religious non-affiliates. For example, recent research has shown that

71% non-affiliates self-report "nothing in particular" with regard to religious beliefs,

while 12% self-identify as atheists and 17% self-identify as agnostic. Additionally, a full

20% of non-affiliates in one study told researchers that religion was nevertheless "somewhat important" to them, while 14% reported that religion was "very important" to them (Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 2012). Equally interesting, 37% of non-affiliates referred to themselves as "spiritual, but no religious". With so many self-identifications in play, it is currently very difficult to get a handle on both (1) what *types* of non-affiliates exist and (2) how each *type* differs in their social and moral attitudes.

Within what literature exists, religiously unaffiliated people are generally found to divide along degrees of commitment to supernatural beliefs. Kosmin (2009) is instructive here. His profile of religious "nones" shows only 7% agreeing with the statement, "There is no such thing as God," whereas 51% of religiously non-affiliated people reported being certain that a higher power exists, or that God exists. In other words, most religiously non-affiliated people are "un-churched believers" who, while maintaining an essentially religious worldview, have abandoned organized religion and the church (Bruce, 2011; Baker & Smith, 2009). Other terms for this population include "the spiritual but not religious," "believing without belonging," "religious seekers," "tinkerers," "fuzzy fidelity," and "liminals" (Lim et al., 2010).

So, while some religiously non-affiliated people appear to be conceive of morality in a very scientific way, others seem to be more religious or deistic in their worldview, despite being unaffiliated with a church or religious tradition. Non-affiliates, in other words, trend towards religion/spirituality and trend away for as yet unresolved reasons. It is still unclear in the empirical literature, given the lack of studies, what sorts of demographics discern these two general trends of non-affiliates. Baker (2012), using an

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extremely small sample size (e.g., n=63), finds a few trends. Baker distinguishes between those who self-report as "atheist," along with uncertain people, whom they call "agnostics", and those who simply mark "none" under religious affiliation. Men are more likely than women to be all three, either atheist, agnostic or non-affiliated believer. Church attendance at age 12 was also negatively related to the likelihood of identifying as atheist, agnostic or none. Interestingly, thinking that the account of evolution by natural selection is true was positively associated with being an atheist, agnostic and none, though this relationship was most strong for the category "atheist". Those who self-identify as "atheist" were also more inclined to feel that religion and science are in conflict. Lim and colleagues (2010), searching for other differences, found that more uncertain "nones" who had switched into and out of a religion (compared to "stable nones") were less likely to be politically liberal and more likely to have a spouse with no religion.

Religious "nones" are predominately politically liberal, responding in part to the rise of the religious right in the 1990s (see Hout & Fischer, 2002; Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 2012), and this may be true of the more secular "nones" relative to the more spiritual. There may well be a constant causal line, with religious non-affiliates being more liberal and more individualistic than religious affiliates, and with the more secular "nones" being more liberal and individualistic still compared with less-secular "nones". All of this is still relatively speculative at this stage – again, almost no work exists in this area of research. Study 2 therefore makes no hypotheses, and leaves the analysis exploratory.

Data and Methods

As stated above, respondents in this survey were asked to categorize themselves in terms of their religious affiliation, from a list of 20 possible options. Of particular interest to Study 2 are those who marked "None". Study 2 will code religiously unaffiliated people into three tentative "types" based on their level of self-reported spirituality (belief in God or a 'higher power') and religiosity. Respondents were asked "Do you believe there is a God (a purposeful higher intelligence that created the universe)?" and were given Likert-scale response options ranging from "Definitely No" to "Definitely Yes," with higher scores representing higher levels of agreement that a God or higher power exists.. This question measures the individual's commitment to a spiritual worldview, without any of the overtones of commitment to an organization implied by the words "religion" or "religiosity" (Bruce, 2011). Respondents were also asked to place themselves on a continuum from 1-7 based on how religious they considered themselves to be, with 1 marked "Very Religious" and 7 marked "Not at all religious".

This analysis treats religious "nones" with *both* high scores for spirituality (>4) and high scores for religiosity (>5) as "unchurched believers" following Bruce (2011) and others. This means that "unchurched believers" will have given a self-report score of 5/7 or higher for religiosity (with 7 representing the highest level of religiosity) and reported that it was "very likely" or "definitely" true that a God or higher power exists. Thus, this group of "unchurched believers" represents religiously non-affiliated people

with attitudes towards religion and spirituality which are the most favorable among "nones".

Second, religious "nones" with high scores on spirituality (>4) but low scores on religiosity (<2) were isolated as a second type of non-affiliate—the "spiritual, but not religious" non-affiliate. This means that those categorized as "spiritual, but not religious" will have reported it being "very likely" or "definitely" true that god or a higher power exists, while giving scores of 2 or lower on religiosity (out of 7). Thus, these "nones" will be those who are fairly certain about the existence of a God or "higher power" while at the same time being disinterested, almost completely, in religion.

Lastly, religious "nones" with *both* low scores on spirituality (<2) and low scores on religiosity (<2) will be classified as "non-believers". This means that those categorized as "non-believers" will have reported that they are "definitely" certain that a higher power or god does *not* exist. Furthermore, they will have reported the lowest scores on religiosity -- only those respondents reporting a 1/7 as their self- reported religiosity (with higher scores representing a greater feeling of being religious) were included in this third category of "none". These "nones," then, will be *both* unconvinced in the existence of a higher spiritual authority, and disinterested in religion. Note that I am not here analyzing self-reported atheists. This is ideal, given the negative connotation of the word "atheist" in American culture (e.g., see Edgell et. al, 2006). Thus this analysis avoids any self-selection into or out of this response category. The "non-believers" in this analysis may be comfortable with the term atheist, they may not. What matters here is that the analysis is not colored by self-selection due to negative cultural connotations.

Thus, this last category of "nones" simply represents those non-affiliates who are the least faith-based in their worldview.

The coding scheme for non-affiliates[5] used in this analysis is depicted in Table 6.3. Coding non-affiliates in this way left a remaining sample size of N=2,396 (N= 447 "non-believing" nones; N= 1,823 "spiritual, but not religious" nones; N=126 "unchurched believer" nones).This study models religious non-affiliation using a multi-nomial logistic regression.

The logistic regression model assumes the independence of multiple categories in the dependent variable and, indeed, this study treats religious non-affiliation as a nominal-level variable (Bull & Donner, 1987). When the dependent variable is not ordinal or linearly measured, ordinary least squares calculations cannot be conducted. Instead, logistic regression can compare strengths of effects of categorically distinct groups (such as race/ethnicity, gender or, in this case, types of religious "none") using a maximum likelihood estimator. In the case of this study, this estimator is a multinomial logit (Cohen et al., 2003). Probit regressions, though able to assess categorically distinct groups in the dependent variable, are not able to handle more than two groups and this study uses three measures of religious non-affiliation.

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[5] Various cut-off points for the coding of non-affiliates in this sample were explored. Regardless of how strict coding was done (with regard to categorizing nones by their religiosity and spirituality/belief in God self-report scores), results revealed consistent differences between types of non-affiliate (results available on request). Also, non-affiliated respondents who reported being very religious, but not at all spiritual/god-believing, were too rare to include in this study, with a sample N= 19. As a result, only three "types" of none were retained for analysis.

This multinomial logit treats non-believing "nones" as the baseline nominal category. That is, the baseline category of non-affillitate for this analysis includes those "nones" who reported the lowest levels of both religiosity and spirituality/belief in God. These non-believing "nones" are compared to the spiritual but not religious "nones" and the unchurched believer "nones" with regard to demographic profile (e.g., SES, age, gender), family background/upbringing, and political and moral worldview. Additionally, two index variables are added to the model, which measure specific political attitudes towards individual freedoms in relationships/marriage (e.g., homosexuality, birth control, divorce) and support for government intervention to solve social problems (e.g., foreign aid, biodiversity, corporate corruption). All independent variables included as controls in Study 2 are the same variables, and measured the same way, as those used above in Study 1. Coefficients in this multi-nomial logistic regression will be expressed as relative risk ratios for ease of interpretation. Relative risk ratios estimate the probability of inclusion into a nominally measured dependent variable with more than two categories. Whereas odds ratios are appropriate for estimating a dichotomous dependent variable, relative risk ratios estimate the "risk" or likelihood of being included in one of three nominally measured dependent variable categories (i.e. types of, non-affiliate), based on respondents' average scores on any given independent variable.

Results

The summary statistics for this sample of religious non-affiliates are depicted in Table 7.3. Turning to these summary statistics, this sample of religious non-affiliates is overwhelmingly female, quite socially liberal and interested in science. Furthermore, this sample of "nones" generally felt quite adamant that moral principles were not god given and that, even without a God, moral principles were still applicable to human affairs. Religious non-affiliates in this sample were also generally very supportive of individual freedoms in relationships/marriage (i.e., divorce, birth control, homosexuality) as well as very supportive of using the government to intervene to solve social problems (i.e., biodiversity, inequality and corporate corruption).

A correlation matrix of independent variables for this sample of non-affiliates was also constructed, and results reveal several strong and statistically significant correlations. The strongest correlation in this table an association between belief that moral principles come from God and conservative/traditional views about the family $(r=.67, p<.001)$. Socially conservative politics was also highly correlated with both belief that moral principles come from God $(r=.62, p<.001)$ and traditional attitudes towards relationships/family $(r=.66, p<.001)$. Unsurprisingly, social politics were positively correlated with fiscal politics such that higher scores on liberal social politics co-occurred with higher scores on liberal fiscal politics $(r=.52, p<.001)$.

Additionally, people in this sample who came from larger families tended to be much more likely to have been later-born, relative to their siblings $(r=.60, p<.001)$.

Strength of parental moral convictions (as recalled by respondent) were strongly positively related to one another as well, such that having a father with a very strong moral conviction also predicted having a mother with such a disposition as well (r=.57, p<.001). Lastly, parental SES was strongly correlated with respondent SES, as would be expected (r=.57, p<.001).

Table 8.3 shows results from a multinomial logistic regression modelling types of religious non-affiliates, with "non-believing" nones (i.e., the most secular of non-affiliates) serving as the baseline category. Results from Table 8.3 show several distinguishing characteristics separating "types" of religious non-affiliate. With regard to demographic background, each one unit increase in SES decreased the probability that a respondent would be "spiritual, but not religious" by 30% (*rrr*=.70; p<.01) and decreased the probability that the respondent would be an unchurched believer by 27%. (*rrr*=.73; p<.05). Gender also appeared to be playing a very important role with male respondents in this sample 95% less likely to be "spiritual, but not religious" nones (*rrr*= .05;p<.001) and 85% less likely to be "unchurched believer" nones (*rrr*=.15;p<.001) compared to "non-believing" nones.

Almost nothing in the nones' family upbringings seemed to distinguish them. Most effects are non-significant with the exception of religious service attendance growing up. On average, a one unit increase in church attendance while growing up raised the probability of being a "spiritual, but not religious" non-affiliate by 36% (*rrr*=1.36, p<.001) than their non-affiliated peers. Outside of this effect, relationship to

parents and family context (i.e., family size and birth rank) are statistically non-significant predictors of variation among nones, at least in this sample.

Results do indicate some variation in political and moral worldview. Interestingly, increased scores on *fiscal* liberalism decreased the probability that a respondent was "spiritual, but not religious" by 25% (*rrr*= .75, p<01) compared to the other non-affiliates. Increased scores on *social* liberalism, on the other hand, actually raised the likelihood that a respondent would be categorized as "spiritual, but not religious" by 30% (*rrr*=1.30, p<.001) compared to the other non-affiliates. Political worldview thus selectively contributed to classification as a "spiritual, but not religious" respondent: one-unit increases in fiscal liberalism lowered the probability of inclusion in this category, but increases in social liberalism raised the likelihood of inclusion. Results also reveal that nones did not differ on their interest in science, indicating a source of agreement among them. It is plausible that being interested in science has influenced these non-affiliates to perceive conflicts between religious traditions and the claims of the scientific establishment (with regard to, for example, climate change or stem cell research).

With regard to their moral worldviews, respondents who believed that moral principles were rooted in the environment were 25% less likely to be classified as a "spiritual, but not religious" none (*rrr*=.75, p<.01). Even more substantively, respondents who believed that moral principles were absolute and universal had a 52% higher likelihood of being categorized as "spiritual, but not religious" (*rrr*= 1.52, p<.001). Furthermore, believing that morality comes from God raised the probability that respondents would be classified as "spirituality but not religious" or "unchurched

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believer" as compared to being a "non-believing" none. That is, viewing moral principles as *not* god given, reduced the probability that any given respondent would be a "spiritual, but not religious" none by 87% (*rrr=*. 13, P<.001) and reduced the probability of a respondent being an "unchurched believer" none by 94% (*rrr=*.06, p<.001). These findings indicate that a possible major source of disagreement among non-affiliates is the importance of God for moral principles, along with the role of the environment/culture (or lack thereof) in the teaching/learning of these moral principles.

Lastly, the analysis looked for differences among non-affiliates regarding specific political issues: the role of individual rights/freedoms in the family context and the role of government in solving social problems. Results show that more liberal attitudes towards marriage reduced the probability of classification as an "unchurched believer" (*rrr=*.45, p<.01). Specifically, a one unit increase in support for individual freedoms such as homosexuality, birth control and divorce, led to a marked 55% decrease in the likelihood of being an "unchurched believer," compared to a "non-believing" none. On the other hand, each unit increase in support for governmental intervention to solve social problems (i.e., inequality, corporate corruption, foreign aid) led to a 41% (*rrr=*1.41, p<.05) increased likelihood of being a "spiritual, but not religious" non-affiliate, compared to a "non-believing" none..

Discussion

Results from Study 2 reveal several sources of demographic and attitudinal variation in predicting categorization as a certain "type" of religious non-affiliate. Firstly,

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respondents with higher SES scores were less likely, and male respondents much less

likely, to be categorized as a "spiritual, but not religious" or "unchurched believer" non-

affliate. The clearest interpretation of this is that status characteristics may be playing a

role in delineating types of non-affiliate. Males and higher SES respondents, given their

status characteristics, may feel less socially and financially vulnerable, making belief in a

God or a sense of religious commitment (as forms of psychological and social support)

less relevant to them. This, of course, assumes that these self-identifiers (i.e., "religiosity"

and "spirituality") serve, in part, to signal membership within a social group and while

self-identified "religiosity" has been tied to community involvement in a church, the

social correlates of self-identifying as "spiritual" have not yet been systematically

identified.

In Study 2, respondents' family background contributed almost nothing to the

probability of inclusion as one type of "none" over another. Only one variable emerged to

distinguish the family upbringing of none: that of childhood religious service attendance.

Attending church as a child increased the probability of being a "spiritual, but not

religious" non-affiliate by 36%, (rrr=1.36,p<.001) though further research is needed to

both corroborate this finding, and explain its relevance. That is, though people are

differentially exposed to religious services as children, it is unclear how this differential

exposure contributes to later orientations to non-affiliation, specifically.

This study further revealed increased support to use government to solve social

problems predicted inclusion into the category of "spiritual, but not religious," which,

interestingly, seems to contradict the finding that more fiscally conservative respondents

experienced increased risk of being categorized the same way. As of yet, further research is needed to corroborate this finding that fiscal conservatism and the desire to use government to solve social problems selectively contribute to classification as a "spiritual, but not religious" non-affiliate.

Turning to respondents' moral worldview, the clearest predictor is that associating morality with God. Believing that moral principles are *not* God-given vastly reduced the likelihood of being either a "spiritual, but not religious" none or an "unchurched believer" none. A one-unit increase in belief that moral principles are *not* God-given, reduced the likelihood of being included in the "spiritual, but not religious" category by 87% (rrr=.13,p<.001) and reduced the likelihood of being included in the "unchurched believer" category by 94% (rrr=.06,p<.001). These findings provide preliminary support for the contention that different types of religious non-affiliates may be coming to different conclusions about the nature of moral principles – religious nones are likely not a monolithic group when it comes to their views about the nature of morality or of moral principles.

General Discussion and Conclusion

In sum, results from Study 1 reveal that marital status, interest in science, beliefs about the source of morality, views on family and family birth-rank growing up strongly predicted self-identification as a religious non-affiliate in this sample. The probability of being a religious affiliate in this sample increased primarily as a function of being married, less interested in science and viewing morality as god-given.

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Other findings from Study 1 showed that support for individual freedoms in relationships/marriage such as divorce, birth control, premarital sex and homosexuality increased the probability of being a non-affiliate by 33% (OR=1.33,p<.001). Scholars who study religion have long noted that religious commitments tend to involve adhering to certain norms about family. Weeden and Kurzban (2013) find, for example, that religiosity (regardless of religious tradition) tends to predict conservative/traditional views about family and child-rearing. Indeed, a primary function of religious affiliation appears to be the sanctification and justification of traditional ideas of marriage and family (Eberstadt, 2013). Lastly, being elder born among ones' siblings increased the probability of non-affiliation by 33%--a fairly substantial effect in this study. Research has previously shown that first-born children tend to be more conservative, as well as religious, relative to their younger siblings (Sulloway, 1996) due to the family niche they occupy. First-borns, in being tasked with socializing their siblings under parental rule, become closer to parents and more identified with their rules and family ideology. These results add to the literature by showing that, at least in this sample, religious affiliates were *less* likely to be first-borns.

Study 2 examined types of religious non-affiliates, distinguished by their relative levels of self-reported religiosity and spirituality. This study examined three types of non-affiliates: "non-believing" nones (with low self-report scores of religiosity and spirituality), "spiritual, but not religious" nones (with high self-report scores on spirituality, but low scores on religiosity) and "unchurched believer" nones (with high self-report scores on both religiosity and spirituality). Regarding these types of non-

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affiliates, results from Study 2 show that SES, gender, marital status, beliefs about family

and government and, especially, moral worldview are the strongest predictors for

inclusion in one category of "none" over another. In this sample, being male and having

higher SES lowered the likelihood of inclusion into the "spiritual, but not religious" and

"unchurched believer" none groups substantially.

It is, at this stage of empirical understanding, unclear how this plays out

behaviorally, but results from this study provide some preliminary findings about

potential variation in political worldview among religious non-affiliates. Results showed

that scores on fiscal liberalism negatively predicted, and scores on social liberalism

positively predicted, the likelihood of classification as "spiritual, but not religious" as

opposed to the other "types" of non-affiliates. It is possible that both fiscal conservatism

and low SES were predictive of inclusion into the category of "spiritual, but not

religious" due to an underlying variable, perhaps "perceived financial threat," but then it

is unclear why low SES, but not fiscal conservatism, was predictive of being an

"unchurched believer".

Also of interest were findings showing that one-unit increases in liberal attitudes

towards individual freedoms in relationships/marriage decreased the probability of

inclusion into the "unchurched believer" nones (those non-affiliates with high self-

reported religiosity and spirituality) category by 55%. This appears to indicate a fairly

religiously conservative influence acting on "unchurched believer" nones, despite their

being unaffiliated. Clearly, the above findings on political worldview and attitudes

support the interpretation that non-affiliates are likely not an ideologically homogenous

grouping. Lingering questions and uncertainties, of course, can only be addressed with further research that explicates the process by which non-affiliates' political worldview (i.e., with regard to money and individual liberty) feeds back on and influences their understanding of their identity as a person of faith (i.e., religious, god-believing, etc). Further systematic differences were observable regarding respondents' views of morality more generally. Believing that moral principles were rooted in the environment lowered the likelihood that the respondent would be classified as a "spiritual, but not religious" none. And, as mentioned above, these effects were substantial.

The results of Study 2 support the view that non-affiliation may be taking *at least* three forms, based on how people orient themselves to faith. Results show that higher status characteristics (i.e., being male and higher SES) lowered the probability of being "spiritual, but not religious" or an "unchurched believer". So, also, did a conviction that moral principles do not come from God. This study also shows that specific political issues differentially predict classification into a specific category of "none". For example, a one-unit increase in support for individual freedoms in marriage/relationships (i.e., homosexuality, divorce) actually decreased the probability that any given respondent would be classified as an "unchurched believer" by 55%.

There are at least a few weaknesses to the studies described above. In general, this sample of non-affiliates skewed female, which makes these results, as any results, tentative pending further replication. Furthermore interpretations of the motivations and views of religious non-affiliates remains difficult due to the general lack of qualitative research in this area. Much extant qualitative research (e.g., Guenther, 2013; Zuckerman,

2010) has focused on ways in which atheists create and maintain their identities, as opposed to why religious non-affiliates, as a block (and types of non-affiliates in particular) might differ politically and morally from affiliates. Furthermore, regarding Study 2, there are undoubtedly other ways one might classify religious non-affiliation. I have chosen two divide non-affiliated respondents by their self-reported religiosity and spirituality/belief in God or "higher power" simply because the religiosity/spirituality set of identifiers are very frequently used in the literature (see, for example, Reeves et al., 2012; Good & Willoughby, 2006; Egbert et al.., 2004; Fuller, 2001). Nevertheless, non-affiliation can be partiontioned in still other ways—for example by the socio-economic status, race, gender, political affiliation, or the religion the none grew up in (i.e., Mormonism vs. Hinduism). Ultimately treating non-affiliates as "types" has general limitations. The experience of non-affiliation in the United States likely varies as a spectrum along numerous dimensions (parental acceptance, peer acceptance, gender, social class). Yet, the nuance inherent in this spectrum can be better understood through qualitative research into the experience of non-affiliation in America. Quantitative research is well poised to test hypotheses about the role specific variables are playing in determining whether or not a person identifies as a non-affiliate. Nevertheless, given the small degree of qualitative scholarship on individual experiences of non-affiliation and dis-affiliation, few solid hypotheses can, as of now, be generated.

Also important is the fact that, this research, in dividing religious "nones" by their relative spiritual and religious commitments, affords a non-biased and fine-grained look into this group. This research moves beyond studying secularity by simply analyzing

self-identified "atheists" or "agnostics" thus eliminating problems of self-selection into or out of these categories (given the negative connotation of these words in popular culture – see Edgell et. al, 2006; Gervais et al., 2011). Indeed, there is every reason to believe that Americans are growing increasingly secular, even if the label "atheist" maintains its distasteful coloring. This research thus provides a wide look into a range of non-believers, without any of the problems inherent in self-reported categorization.

Perhaps most important of all, religious non-affiliates are subject to intense amounts of discrimination and dislike. Just recently, for example, a soldier in the US Army sued the organization, alleging numerous instances of reverse "religious discrimination" for being something like a "non-believing" non-affiliate (Banerjee, 2008). Yet, one needn't look to the US military to find discrimination against non-believers, as family and friends have been found to be frequent contributors to the social and emotional isolation of non-believers (see Ecklund & Lee, 2011). Outside of family and friends, however, evidence consistently finds that non-believers are the least trusted group in contemporary American society (Edgell et al., 2006; Hammer et al., 2012; Cragun et al., 2012; Gervais et al., 2011). Critically, non-believers also represent perhaps the fastest growing minority group in America (Hout & Fischer, 2002). Given the increasing relevance of non-believers, in terms of numbers and public visibility, the importance of understanding the moral and political outlook of these people probably cannot be understated. The research described here is consequently important for furthering the general understanding of the specifically moral and political outlook of one of America's (and the world's) most disliked, distrusted, and growing populations.

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Table 1.3:R's current religious membership	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Baptist	1,335	12.29	12.29
Buddhist	64	0.59	12.88
Catholic	860	7.92	20.80
christian scientist	32	0.29	21.09
Episcopalian	109	1.00	22.10
Evangelical	139	1.28	23.38
Hindu	4	0.04	23.41
Humanist	32	0.29	23.71
Jewish	111	1.02	24.73
Lutheran	257	2.37	27.10
Methodist	228	2.10	29.20
Mormon	113	1.04	30.24
Muslim	10	0.09	30.33
None	5,551	51.11	81.44
Other	1,460	13.44	94.88
Pentecostal	111	1.02	95.90
Presbyterian	123	1.13	97.04

Protestant	239	2.20	99.24
seventh day adventist	11	0.10	99.34
Unitarian	72	0.66	100.00
Total	10,861	100.00	

Table 2.3: Principle Components Factor
Analysis for Views on Family and
Sexuality

Items	Factor Loading
Homosexuality	.82
Premarital Sex	.84
Divorce	.60
Birth Control	.55
Eigenvalue	2.033

Table 3.3: Principle Components Factor Analysis for Views on Government Intervention to Solve Social Problems

Items	Factor Loading
Biodiversity	.64
Corporate Corruption	.67
Political Corruption	.59
Human Rights	.56
Foreign Aid	.61
Income Inequality	.58
Eigenvalue	2.23

Table 4.3: Means and Standard Deviations of Variables (N=10,861)

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Min.	Max.
Religiosity	3.44	2.3	1	7
Spirituality/belief in God	4.02	1.35	1	5
SES	4.42	1.78	2	10
Gender	.45	.49	0	1
Age	34.14	10.39	21	80
Single	0.46	.49	0	1
Current Church Attendance	2.41	1.66	1	6
Strength of Father's Moral Convictions	5.17	1.75	1	7
Relationship with Father	3.26	1.92	1	7
Strength of Mother's Moral Convictions	5.46	1.65	1	7
Relationship with Mother	4.22	1.99	1	7
Church Attendance Growing Up	4.64	1.23	1	6
Family Birth Order	2.19	1.35	1	12
Family Size	3.39	1.45	1	10
ParentSES	5.42	2.11	2	10
Fiscal Politics	4.03	1.83	1	7
Social Politics	5.00	1.91	1	7
Interest in Science	5.18	2.10	1	7
Moral Principles are Absolute	4.45	1.60	1	7
Moral Principles Learned Through Environment	4.79	1.54	1	7

Moral Principles are Not God-Given	4.77	2.12	1	7
Morals Apply Only If God Exists	2.03	1.74	1	7
Family Views	5.31	1.44	1	7
Governments Role	5.28	1.10	1	7

Table 5.3: Logistic Regression Predicting Religious Non-Affiliation (N=10,861; baseline category=Affiliates)

	Model 1
	OR
Demographics	
SES	.90***
Gender (1=male)	.78**
Age	0.99
Single (dummycode)	1.80***
Family Background	
Father's Moral Convictions	1.11***
Mother's Moral Convictions	.89***
Relationship with Father	.92***
Relationship with Mother	1.07***
Religious Service Attendance Growing Up	.82***
Family Birthrank	.77***
Family Size	1.22***
Parent SES	.82***
Political Worldview	
Fiscal Politics	.94**
Social Politics	1.19***
Interest in Science	1.42***
Moral Worldview	

Moral Principles are Absolute	1.08***
Moral Principles Learned Through Environment	.89***
Moral Principles are Not God-Given	1.71***
Morals Apply Only If God Exists	1.07***
Views on Family and Government	
Family Views	1.33***
Government's Role	0.94

 * p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

Table 6.3 Coding Scheme for Religious "Nones" (n=2,396)
Unchurched believers (high scores on religiosity[>5], high scores on belief in god/higher power[>4])
Spiritual but not religious (high scores on belief in higher power[>4], low scores on religiosity[<2])
Non-believer (low scores on belief in higher power [<2], low scores on religiosity [<2])

Table 7.3:   Means and Standard Deviations of Variables for Study 2 (N=2,396)

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Min.	Max.
SES	3.89	1.25	2	10
Gender	.22	.41	0	1
Age	35.9	10.4	21	76
Single	.54	.49	0	1
Current Church Attendance	1.11	.49	1	6
Strength of Father's Moral Convictions	5.4	1.6	1	7
Relationship with Father	2.5	1.4	1	7
Strength of Mother's Moral Convictions	4.8	2.3	1	7
Relationship with Mother	2.7	1.5	1	7
Church Attendance Growing Up	4.65	1.02	1	6
Family Birth Order	2.35	1.45	1	12
Family Size	4.09	1.66	1	10
ParentSES	4.56	1.41	2	10
Fiscal Politics	4.50	2.37	1	7
Social Politics	6.57	1.17	1	7
Interest in Science	6.76	.81	1	7
Moral Principles are Absolute	5.02	1.37	1	7
Moral Principles Learned Through Environment	3.94	1.74	1	7
Moral Principles are Not God-Given	6.37	1.07	1	7
Morals Apply Only If God Exists	1.26	1.08	1	7
Family Views	6.42	.78	1	7
Governments Role	5.52	.83	1	7

Table 8.3: Multinomial Logistic Regression Predicting Type of
Religious Non-Affiliate (Baseline= Secular Non-affiliates;
Coefficients are relative risk ratios)

	Model 1	
	S/NR	**UB**
Demographics		
SES	.70**	.73*
Gender (1=male)	.05***	.15***
Age	1.02	.99
Single (dummycode)	.80	.38
Family Background		
Father's Moral Convictions	1.03	.98
Mother's Moral Convictions	.80	.90
Relationship with Father	.86	1.03
Relationship with Mother	.86	1.02
Religious Service Attendance Growing Up	1.36**	1.35
Family Birthrank	.96	.88
Family Size	1.30	1.39
Parent SES	1.07	1.14
Political Worldview		
Fiscal Politics	.75**	.95
Social Politics	1.30*	.87
Interest in Science	1.13	.97
Moral Worldview		
Moral Principles are Absolute	1.52***	.88
Moral Principles are Learned Through Environment	.75**	1.15

Moral Principles are Not God-Given	.13***	.06***
Morals Apply Only If God Exists	.83	.84
Views on Family and Government		
Family Views	1.09	.45**
Government's Role	1.41*	1.13

 * p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

General Conclusion

The studies discussed in this dissertation took advantage of a variety of statistical techniques in order to assess the respective roles of demographic background, family upbringing and political and moral worldview on self-report identification and affiliation/non-affiliation among a large sample of Americans. Across studies, gender, marital status, belief in God/religiosity and views on family proved consistently important in discerning contemporary religious attitudes and affiliations in the United States.

Men across studies were more religious and more likely to be religiously affiliated with a church. However, when zooming in on just non-affiliates, males were the group most likely to have been categorized as non-believing "nones," or non-affiliates with the lowest levels of religiosity and spirituality/belief in God. This is interesting because it shows that gender is influencing contemporary religious identification in two ways—men were both the most religiously adherent *and* the most secular of the sample. Men, in other words, appear to be anchoring a spectrum measuring the importance of religion, at least among the white affiliates analyzed here. Traditionally, however, it was *women* who were the most religiously devout. As discussed in Chapter 2, much of the literature in sociology of religion shows females to be more invested in religious behavior and belief than men. The results of these studies provide some confirmation of this in that among non-affiliates, being female, conservative on family issues, and believing that moral

principles are God-given all independently increased the probability of a respondent being an "unchurched believer," or the most religious and spiritual of the nones.

Across studies, single respondents were found to be significantly less religious and, in fact, 80% more likely to be a "none". Socio-economic status played a consistent, though usually un-important, role in predicting variation across studies. Most substantively, increased SES predicted lower likelihood of categorization as a "spiritual, but not religious" or an "Unchurched Believer" none. The respondent most likely to have been categorized as a "non-believing" none was a higher SES man and this is a result that cannot be overlooked. Interpretations have been cautious and hesitant when it has come to the "nones" in this dissertation for the simple reason that so little literature exists. Nevertheless, to speculate, it seems that if religiosity is a sign of commitment to a community and spirituality/belief in God supplements one's sense of mastery/efficacy than it is plausible that white males of a higher SES would have the least practical need for a community of support or a supplemental boost of mastery.

It definitely appears as though family background growing up and attitudes towards family as an adult influence contemporary religious beliefs (or lack thereof). As discussed in Chapter 2, interesting support was found for an interpretation of Evangelical childhoods as conflicted due to living in a house with an overly-strict father. Of course, caveats abound. For one, effect sizes weren't terribly large and, second, the religious affiliation of the parents was not measured. As such, these results remain somewhat speculative, though there ought to be further research into how different Christian affiliates raise their children. This is so not only because it is interesting empirical work,

but also because having a conflicted relationship with parents likely influences the successful transmission of religious belief, thus influencing rates of secularization. Research on this would therefore answer actual theoretical questions, as well. Though effect sizes tended to be small, results showed, for example, that having had a more harmonious relationship with one's mother increased and having a harmonious relationship with one's father decreased the probability of being a "none" as an adult. Though the mother is traditionally assumed to be the primary religious socializing influence, results here, at least, show an association between harmonious mother-child relationships and later adult non-affiliation. Family size was also consistently important as hypothesized. Respondents from larger families were 22% more likely to be non-affiliates in Study 3, and coming from a larger family had a negative effect on respondent religiosity in Study 1. This supports the view of Eberstadt that larger families are now producing declines in religiosity due to the burdens of transmission in an increasingly cosmopolitan United States.

Respondents' attitudes towards family were also predictive of important variation in their expressions of faith across studies. Each one-unit increase in liberal attitudes towards family relationships raised the probability of being a "none" by 33%. Perhaps most interesting of all was the small differential effect on self-reported religiosity and spirituality. This effect was small, but it remained controlling for a suite of other independent variables—nevertheless, recall that Study 1 showed each one-unit increased in liberal attitudes towards family/relationships increased respondent self-reported spirituality/belief in God but *decreased* self-reported religiosity, hinting that political

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attitudes towards the family are a driving wedge in American faith. Americans may not be turning to atheism, but they may be turning away from considering themselves "religious" or committed to a church in favor of conceiving of themselves as organizationally un-tethered believers in a "higher power". Interest in science is another such wedge. Being more interested in science increased the probability of being a non-affiliate by 42%, and science interest also helped distinguish Christian affiliates from one another. Specifically, respondents who were more interested in science and more socially liberal were also more likely to be a Catholic or a Mainline Protestant compared to an Evangelical Protestant.

Last but definitely not least, moral worldview played a substantial role in results across studies, though especially with regard to non-affiliates. Perhaps unsurprisingly, belief that moral principles are God-given reduced the probability of being a "none". Yet, among non-affiliates, for example, believing that moral principles were God-given increased the likelihood of being a "spiritual, but not religious" none by 87% compared to a "non-believing" none.

It is probably worth re-stating the limitations of these studies, along with some suggestions for future research. Only white respondents were retained for analysis, unfortunately, and recall that the general sample skewed slightly educated. Perhaps most important, the sample of religious non-affiliates was highly female proportionally. This study also didn't measure the religious affiliation of respondents' parents—a major weakness, especially for Study 2. In Study 2, one interpretation of the results was that having a conflicted relationship with parents, along with a father who had strong moral

convictions, was more characteristic of Evangelicals in the sample because Evangelicals were more likely to have experienced a "strict father" household context. This "strict father" household context is one in which moral authority is unilaterally located in the father and children are assumed to be innately lazy and selfish. Only through strict discipline by the father, can children grow to be principled and giving. The results of Study 2 do, in fact, tentatively support the contention that Evangelicals may be at an increased risk of having been subjected to a strict father" household context, and that this may be producing conflict with both parents. Ultimately, further research is needed as all findings are relative to the probability of being a Catholic or a Mainline and little comparative work like this exists.

As for future directions, many unexplored avenues exist. First, it would be great to see more studies exploring the attitudinal and behavioral correlates of subjective measures of faith, such as self-reported religiosity or spirituality. Regardless of how subjective and arbitrary these identifiers are, they are nevertheless how individuals actually understand and report their faith-based identities. For this practical reason alone, it is important to know whether or not and what sort of variation underlies different subjective religious/spiritual self-identifiers. Later on, meta-analyses can parse through the most important structural and behavioral differences among those identifying as religious, spiritual, or non-affiliate, revealing a clearer picture of the American landscape of "sacredness". Too often is religiosity and spirituality merely an independent variable in some regression or structural equation model—it is high time these two self-identifiers become the dependent variables in more studies.

Of course, it is also important to study religious "nones" in more ways than by typing them. Qualitative research is needed to identify possible underlying dynamics driving non-affiliation. Critically, however, researchers have to be careful enough to discern the differences between those who self-identify as atheist or agnostic and those who are simply not affiliated. The results of Study 3 show that many "nones" believe in God and feel that God plays an important role in establishing moral principles.

What is the best way to study non-affiliates? I suggested that one avenue is, at least until theory can be built and spectrums established, to "type" them. The conclusion of Study 3 is not that "types" of non-affiliates, in fact, exist. They do not. There are sociological and psychological dynamics operating which are variously influencing people depending on the structural placement of the individual. Nevertheless, "typing" nones at this early stage of secular theorizing may help to discuss their differences and similarities. Social science has a tendency to over-emphasize subjectivity and indeterminacy. Thus, of course, strict "types" of nones don't actually exist—yet "typing" non-affiliates is merely one way to begin the theoretical conversation about variation, and this is all that the conclusions of Study 3 suggest.