

## ABSTRACT

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CONTEXT OF RACE AND PLACE

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This investigation examined the interaction between religion, race and urbanicity and their influence on delinquency. A sample of youth respondents ages 13-17 was drawn from ICPSR archival National Youth Survey data (Wave III) to examine the effect of these three independent variables on various forms of delinquent behavior. Given the lack of consensus in the literature regarding the effect of religion on delinquency, as well as on the effect of race and place on the exercise and influence of religious belief, this exploratory study sought to address questions raised by past research and improve on the designs of previous studies. Results showed direct effects of religiousness on all offense types examined, with religious salience exhibiting greater influence on delinquent behavior than participation overall. No interaction effects of religiousness by race or urbanicity were found. Implications of these findings for further research are discussed.

RELIGION AND DELINQUENCY IN THE CONTEXT OF RACE AND PLACE

By

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## Dedication

For my father, who has always wanted me to earn a Master's degree, and my husband, who has always believed I could.

## Acknowledgments

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## Chapter 1: Literature Review

This study investigates the possible influence of race and place on the effect of religion on delinquency. In reviewing the literature, research questions emerged that would guide the analysis in the study. The nature of the relationship between religion and delinquency will be examined, including measurement issues unique to the study of religion among youths. Research on the impact of race and place on religiousness will also be introduced. The following review is structured around the questions raised, and is followed by a discussion of the improvements this study makes on past research and the unique contributions of this study to the knowledge concerning the religion-delinquency link.

### The Religion-Crime Relationship

The simplest and most straightforward questions regarding the relationship between religion and delinquency are whether or not one exists and, if so, the direction of that relationship. Findings in this area are mixed. Several studies have found a relationship between religion and various types of criminal or deviant behavior. Few studies have shown that religion has an impact on preventing commission of most violent crime (Benda, 2002; Benda and Toombs, 2000). Sloane and Potvin (1986) utilized a national probability sample of Gallup poll data from 1975 on 1,121 adolescents aged 13 to 18. Subjects were interviewed in their homes and questioned regarding their background, personal goals, and relationship with their parents, as well as participation in both pro-social and anti-social behaviors. Twelve items were included for delinquency, only two of which (Serious Fight and Gang Fight) were violent offenses. For all offense measures, delinquency was negatively related to religion (operationalized by church

attendance and religious salience); the relationship was strongest for property and drug crimes, weakest for the two crimes against persons (1986:100).

Tittle and Welch (1983) argue that the effect of religion as a protective factor against delinquency or crime will only be seen for those acts that are uniquely prohibited or discouraged by religion. Crimes with widespread recognition as wrong or immoral acts, such as murder, assault and theft, will not produce a religion effect whereas such behaviors as drug use or underage drinking will likely show an effect. A sizable portion of the religion-crime literature focuses on these latter two behaviors (i.e., Hadaway *et al.*, 1984; Burkett and Warren, 1987; Mason and Windle, 2002; Nonnemaker *et al.*, 2003), likely because these types of deviant acts are thought to be especially susceptible to the influence of religion. These offenses, often referred to as “antiascetic” offenses, are discouraged by most Christian denominations (Mason and Windle, 2002). In their 2001 study, Jang and Johnson sought evidence of their hypothesis that, if neighborhood disorder increases the likelihood of illicit drug use, personal religiousness would mediate the effect of such disorder and would result in reduced drug use in religious individuals compared with the non-religious. They utilized data from the seven cohorts of the National Youth Survey (Waves III-V), which consisted of youngsters age 11-17 as of 1977; this study produced usable data for 1,087 respondents. Self-report drug use and parent reported perception of neighborhood disorder were compared with a measure of religiousness operationalized by church attendance, weighted for self-report importance of religion in the respondent’s life (salience). Measures of family and peer factors were also collected.

Results showed that perceived neighborhood disorder did result in higher self-reported use of illicit drugs, and that high personal religiousness was associated with significantly less drug use (2001:131). This finding held even when controlling for family and peer variables. The authors suggest that religiousness could act to reduce the effects of neighborhood disorder that would otherwise affect increased drug use, or it may simply be that individual religiousness is amplified and more pronounced as a protective factor in disorderly neighborhoods than it is in orderly neighborhoods (2001:132). They don't, however, determine why younger respondents would have a greater religiousness effect than older respondents, though they speculate a cohort effect may be at work, given the six-year spread in the ages of NYS respondents. Perhaps there is an age effect on the relationship between religion and delinquency, with the effect of religion on reducing crime diminishing with age. It may also be possible that the relationship between age and religion mirrors (and indeed may help explain in part) the established age-crime curve, with a religion effect being seen through childhood that diminishes into adolescence with the break from parental oversight (Lee, 2002) and reforms in early adulthood with marriage and the birth and rearing of one's own children (Wilson and Sherkat, 1994; Ingersoll-Dayton *et al.*, 2002).

However, the most influential findings ever produced on the effect of religion on crime found no relationship. Hirschi and Stark's study, published in the 1969 *Social Forces* article "Hellfire and Delinquency", utilized self-report and official delinquency data on 4,077 Californian junior and senior high school boys. They quantified religiousness as church attendance and found that it had no effect on criminal activity,

that youths who regularly attended church were just as likely to commit delinquent acts as those who rarely or never attended (1969:211).

Other studies have replicated the Hirschi-Stark finding. Evans *et al.* (1996) administered self-report surveys to the entire student population of a suburban Midwestern high school (N=263). Questions were asked regarding delinquency (general and antisocial offenses), social bonds (attachments with family, friends and teachers, commitment to school, stakes in conformity and general involvement and conventional beliefs) and religiousness (activity including church attendance, salience, “hellfire” beliefs and religious networks). Though religion had a direct negative effect on delinquency, upon controlling for social bonds the effect of religion was lost, instead acting through interaction with prosocial peers (1996:56).

Findings regarding a relationship between religion and delinquency are inconsistent. But why should there be a relationship? On what basis is it presumed that religion should promote prosocial behavior, or influence behavior at all? Of the many theories of causation put forth to explain crime among youths, one emerges more often in the literature on religion and delinquency than any other.

### *Religion as Social Control*

Despite his landmark finding of no relationship, and even though his theory does not specifically address religion as a controlling agent (Baier and Wright, 2001), Travis Hirschi’s social bonding theory is the most often cited theoretical perspective explaining how religion impacts delinquency (Baier and Wright, 2001; Elifson *et al.*, 1983; Hadaway *et al.*, 1984; Jang and Johnson, 2001; cf. Bainbridge, 1989). While most theories of causation suggest that humans are compelled or impelled to commit crime,

control theories view offending as the natural tendency, and therefore seek not to explain crime but to explain the absence of crime.

In his 1969 *Causes of Delinquency*, Hirschi published his theory on social control, in which he specifies four key concepts of social bonding. *Attachment* involves the extent to which a person is connected to conventional others. The primary and most influential attachments are with one's parents; youths who are weakly bonded or not bonded to their parents are more likely to deviate than attached youths. To the extent that religious faith is important in the family, religion can act as a source of bonding to the parents and will increase the likelihood that one will maintain the family faith throughout their lives (Wilson and Sherkat, 1994). Attachments may also be made to religious others like church leaders and other religious youths, which can inhibit deviance by increasing accountability (Evans, et. al, 1995).

*Commitment* is the investment of time, energy and resources one makes into conventional pursuits, like school, work and family (1969:20). To the extent that the benefits of delinquency outweigh the costs, deviant actions will be more likely. Stark and Bainbridge (1980) argue that religious commitment closely follows this logic, that people are rational and will select a religion with maximum rewards, modifying their behavior to conform to the requirements of that religion in order to collect those rewards. Sizable rewards like those offered through religion, such as immortality, reincarnation or salvation from eternal suffering in the afterlife, demand equally large commitments, which are jeopardized when the believer deviates from the religion's directives.

*Involvement* follows the simple logic that "idle hands are the devil's workshop," that those who are kept busy with conventional activities haven't the time or the energy

to engage in deviant ones (1969:22). While participation in church services and religious activities (like Bible study and church youth groups) has shown negative correlations with delinquency apart from the effect they have on increasing religious salience and private religious behavior (Tittle and Welch, 1983), no known study has shown that participation inhibits delinquency through involvement as described by Hirschi. That is, no known study has shown specifically that religious youths refrain from delinquency because they are too busy with involvement in church or religious activities.

The treatment of *beliefs* by the various control theories differs, says Hirschi. Operating under the assumption that there is one agreed-upon moral code, a control theorist cannot argue that a deviant person does not have morals or does not buy into the general interpretations of right and wrong. Hirschi suggests that it is not that people need to rationalize their wrong actions, but that some people feel less obliged to comply with the moral code than others (1969:26). In other words, people vary in the amount they feel they need to act morally. The argument is that religious youths feel obliged to act morally and therefore will refrain from delinquent activities.

In summary, social control is the theoretical perspective most often associated with religion and delinquency. Bonds to convention encouraged by religion are thought to discourage deviance. Specifically, it is anticipated that those who share a religion share a common set of fundamental beliefs, and may congregate in exercise of their shared faith and maintain close connections with one another.

Yet despite the agreement on a theoretical perspective, a clear lack of consensus remains as to the true influence of religion on delinquency based on the empirical evidence. This study addresses the nature of the relationship between religion and

delinquency, considering both criminal acts and the antiascetic and status offenses discussed above as being uniquely susceptible to the influence of religion.

### Operationalizing Religion

Another issue arising in studies on the effects of religion on behavior is how best to qualify religiousness. The most common measure used in sociological and criminological research is church attendance, the frequency with which one attends religious services. It is anticipated that those who attend church services with greater frequency will be more effectively conditioned by religion as a social control through greater exposure to prosocial religious messages, enhanced sense of obligation to adhere to moral standards and greater attachment to a church community. Consequently, the theory would suggest that the bonds forged through church attendance produce more lawfulness than would be expected in those who do not attend religious services. The landmark study by Hirschi and Stark utilized church attendance to measure religiousness.

Orthodoxy, or religious conservatism, is another measure of religiousness sometimes used in sociological study. Hirschi and Stark included a measure of belief in Heaven and Hell (in supernatural consequences for earthly deviance) as a measure of orthodoxy to further quantify religiousness. Notably, this belief was the only of the intervening variables investigated that was significantly impacted by church attendance. Despite finding a pronounced acceptance of the notions of Heaven and Hell by those who regularly attended church services (1969:208), the authors found no significant deterrent effect on delinquency, based on official records and self-report data. While recent research on religion and delinquency has not generally utilized fear of the afterlife to operationalize religiousness or account for any effect religion may have on conformity,

several contemporary studies collect data on religious denomination as a means of accounting for orthodoxy, with conservative sects being thought to produce greater conformity than liberal groups (Ellis, 2002).

Though seemingly the “last word” (Sloane and Potvin, 1986; Benda, 2002) on the relationship between religion and crime (such that Tittle and Welch (1983) describe the study as “so compelling that many have accepted it as definitive”), several researchers have set out to replicate the Hellfire and Delinquency findings, a turn which Hirschi and Stark anticipated. They point out that it is overwhelmingly assumed that religion should affect conformity to social and moral norms, and that “when social science reports against common sense, it is too often accused of falsehood, inadequate methods, or plain stupidity” (1969:212). As predicted, social science researchers have subsequently attempted to unseat the Hellfire and Delinquency findings on the grounds of inadequate methods.

Specifically, the use of church attendance as a measure of religiousness has sparked heated debate amongst researchers of the relationship between religion and crime. One issue with church attendance as the sole measure of religiousness is that mere attendance does not guarantee the internalization of morality and the utilization of that morality in guiding behavior. Benda and Corwyn make the analogy between church and class attendance, that simply showing up does not ensure “application of the content taught” (1997:89). Elifson *et al.* (1983) found church attendance to be only weakly correlated with delinquency compared to other measures of religiousness that produced a robust effect (like religious salience, belief in the power of prayer and one's orthodoxy). Hirschi and Stark's (1969) findings of no effect may result from a failure of study teens

to internalize the lessons taught in church and use them to guide their behavior, making the church attendance measure only that, and not an account of religiousness. In fact, Hirschi and Stark themselves find, based on their adolescent sample, that “(f)or all intents and purposes...church attendance does not affect acceptance of the moral values assumed to be important deterrents of delinquency” (1969:205), thereby questioning the validity of their own measure yet still confidently stating their results.

Another concern regarding research on religion using youth samples rests in how accurately measures of religiousness capture the youth’s own religious beliefs, apart from that of their parents. Research shows that a child’s religious practices and convictions tend strongly to mirror that of their parents (Kieren and Munro, 1987; Regnerus, 2003). Children are initially exposed to religion at the example or insistence of their parents (Stark *et al*, 1982), which likely confounds the use of attendance as a measure of a child's religiousness with the religiousness of the parent. Tittle and Welch (1983) cite this possibility, having found that most prior research finding weak or no relationship between religion and crime has been on youths, while studies with adult samples found strong negative correlations between the two.

Regarding the controversy over use of church attendance as a single proxy for religiousness, some researchers argue that religion has multifaceted effects on people’s lives (i.e., Evans *et al*, 1996) and that any one measure of it, church attendance included, is by nature truncated (cf. Gorsuch and McFarland, 1972). In reference to the Hirschi-Stark finding that church attendance does not affect moral values, it cannot be inferred from the “Hellfire and Delinquency” findings that another aspect of religiousness does not impact morality. A more appropriate way to the investigation of the religion-crime

effect, say many researchers (Elifson *et al*, 1983; Evans *et al*, 1996; Chadwick and Top, 1993; Benda, 2002), is to use a multi-item measure of religiosity, to include several dimensions of religious behavior and attitudes that may each have unique relationships with delinquency. Benda and Corwyn (1997) use separate items to differentiate attendance from religiosity (operationalized as time spent in prayer and religious study, etc.) and evangelism (operationalized as talking about religion with others, advocating for religion and trying to convert others). In doing so, the authors were able to show empirically that, while church attendance lost significance in light of control variables for family and peer influences, evangelism retained a strong negative relationship with some types of delinquent activity (1997:87).

While many researchers have incorporated these types of additional measures of religiousness along with church attendance in their studies of religion and delinquency, church attendance as the sole measure of religiosity continues to be used by social scientists in the study of religion and crime. Higgins and Albrecht (1977) found significant difference between religious and non-religious youths in their Atlanta study (as determined by church attendance) in self-reported delinquent behavior. Rodney Stark, in his research on religion and crime subsequent to the “Hellfire and Delinquency” study, in part defends the continued use of church attendance as the sole indicator of religiousness with the rationale that it facilitates direct comparison with previous studies (Stark, 1996). In some studies, church attendance was not found to be any less influential on delinquency than other measures of religiousness used and, granting “it is attractive in its simplicity” (1996:98), it is marginally supported as a singular proxy for religiousness.

Again, a lack of consensus emerges in the literature on religion and delinquency, with researchers in disagreement regarding the proper measurement of religiousness among youths. This study addresses the controversy by utilizing both behavioral and attitudinal measures of religiousness. The influence of participation and salience are examined side by side to determine if participation is truly an adequate single-item measure of religiousness among youths.

### Issues of Race and Place

Perhaps in order to uncover the impact of religion on crime it is necessary to address other social constructs that may moderate the effect of religion on behavior. While direct relationships between delinquency and such variables as race and place receive considerable attention in the criminology literature, the two have also been seen to influence religious expression and belief, and therefore may have an indirect effect on delinquency through religion. The following sections will investigate these possibly intervening variables.

#### *Religion and Race*

Before considering race in a study on religion and delinquency it is important to review the issues that arise when trying to quantify race and ethnicity. Race designations are generally based on overt physical differences between groups, while ethnicity refers to grouping based on common ancestry, though the terms are often used interchangeably (Edles, 2004:43). Measures of these constructs in social research are generally self-reported, and therefore represent the respondent's own view of his or her race without regard for the criteria upon which that view is based. For example, in America, persons with any known African descent have historically been classified as Black, while other

groups, such as Native Americans, reserve classification for only those with a sizable and documented ancestry. Growing acknowledgement of multiracialism has made the narrowing down of one's race to a single group all the more challenging (See LaFree and Hussong, 2000).

Despite the confusion regarding race in social study, researchers continue to examine differences in behavior between race groups. Studies on religiousness between the races have focused on religiousness among African-Americans specifically. African-Americans tend to place greater importance on religion and the church than whites (see review in Benson *et al*, 1989), a trait that is seen in adult as well as adolescent samples. One explanation for this difference put forth by some researchers is the distinction of the African-American church as a “semi-involuntary institution.” Theorists argue that participation in the current African-American religious community stems from the importance of the African-American church as a social institution during the time of slavery and later segregation in America. Early African-American churches emerged as slaves began to congregate to seek spiritual comfort during their hardship. Prior to the Civil Rights Movement, when African-Americans had no voice in local government and were denied access to public assistance, African-American churches became a source of community cohesion, providing opportunities for personal advancement and serving as a support system for church members. The church’s historical influence has carried on, with the church remaining an important part of the lives of contemporary African-Americans, such that Taylor describes its influence as second only to that of family (1988a:126). African-American churches are unique among American social institutions because they are often built, maintained, funded, staffed and patronized exclusively by

blacks, giving its members opportunities for civic involvement, leadership and advancement once prohibited and even still largely limited.

But for many, continued involvement in present-day African-American religious communities is a matter of racial solidarity and respect for ancestors and elders, thereby making church attendance largely artifactual and arguably forced, not a result of one's own personal religious faith. Given the church's semi-involuntary nature, African-Americans may exhibit less personal commitment through their religious involvement than other Americans. Specifically, Ellison and Sherkat (1990) argue that religious participation among urban blacks may more accurately mirror personal religiousness among churchgoers than does rural church attendance among African-Americans. They suggest that, while rural blacks may continue to experience the blocked access to advancement in the larger society and may require the services that the rural African-American church provides, urban African-Americans have easier access to public works and services thereby eliminating the reliance on the church for assistance.

The "semi-involuntary" thesis also anticipates regional effects. Stump (1987) found in the General Social Survey data that personal religious devotion played a much larger role in the church involvement of Northern African-Americans than of Southern African-Americans. He suggests that in the North, where the pull toward the church for social reasons is less strong, the anticipated requisite devotion is necessary to keep congregants showing up. In the South, he says, involvement is nearly compulsory, and therefore a compelling religious faith is not required to drive church attendance. It can be said, however, that the difference in religiousness (participation specifically) between regions spans races; that, indeed, religious participation overall is greater in the South

than in the Non-South, not only among African-Americans. As a result, one might either expand the semi-involuntary hypothesis and describe it as a national phenomenon, or discard the thesis outright as inaccurately representing a difference between the races that does not in fact exist.

In his study on National Survey of Black Americans data, Taylor (1988b) found that, of black Americans who do not attend church, most are young, male, uneducated and of low SES (see also Nelsen, 1988). These correlates are similar to those of delinquents, suggesting low involvement in religion among this population regardless of race. Though he found a trend toward uninvolved among young black males of lower education in urban areas (1988a), he did not find a general lack of personal religiousness in any subgroup of the sample. This may imply dissatisfaction with organized religion rather than an overall lack of religious devotion, and depending on what aspect of religiousness mediates deviant behavior, religion may still impact offending despite a lack of churchgoing.

### *Place Effects on Religion*

When issues of place emerge in studies on religion in America, they most often take the form of region effects. America is cordoned off into geographic regions that have arguably distinct religious characteristics (Stump, 1984), and many researchers have embraced these regional differences to explain the varied results in studies on religion and delinquency. Having retracted his initial claim of no relationship, Rodney Stark (of Hirschi and Stark and the “Hellfire and Delinquency” study) concluded based on more recent research (Stark *et al.*, 1982; Stark and Bainbridge, 1996) that religion could indeed impact delinquency. He suggests that the 1969 findings, which were based on a sample

of Californian schoolboys, failed to find a relationship between religiousness and delinquency because of an underlying contextual element that had been left unaccounted; Stark claims the West Coast is too “secularized” to produce an effect of religion on criminal behavior, that in order for the deterrent effect of religion to be seen, an emphasis on religion must be prevalent in the greater community. Stark and Bainbridge in 1996 compared 1971 data pulled from two university towns. Provo, Utah remained one of the most churched cities in the country, comprised nearly 97% by church members. Seattle, Washington remained among the least churched cities, where only 28% of the population were church members at the time of the study. Using church attendance as their measure of religiousness to maintain comparability with the 1969 “Hellfire” study, the results showed a significant negative relationship between religion and crime (both self-report and official records of delinquency) in Provo, whereas the slightly negative relationship in the Seattle sample did not reach significance (1996:66).

Even before Stark's reversal, Higgins and Albrecht (1977) interpreted the finding of significant negative relationship between religion (operationalized as church attendance and affiliation) and minor delinquency in their study of 1,383 Atlanta youths as an effect of religious experience in the South that is unlike religious experience in the West. Chadwick and Top (1993) sought to replicate the contextual findings of Stark by looking at a sample of 2,143 East Coast Mormon (LDS) adolescents. Despite the Stark contention that the Western United States is secularized, Mormonism is considerably more prominent in the West than in the East. Chadwick and Top anticipated finding a unique relationship between religiousness and delinquency in these youths, even though their faith was not prevalent in their home region. The authors found that those youths

who engaged in private religious behavior and those who felt integrated in their church communities were less delinquent than those indicating no such behavior or feeling (1993:64). This held true even when peer and family variables were added to the model as controls. They then used data from their own prior study on LDS adolescents in areas of the country where Mormonism is common (Utah, Idaho and California) and compared them to the group of East Coast LDS youths. Results showed that religiousness had as strong an effect on the behavior of the sample from the East as it did on the sample from the West, leading the authors to conclude that the effect of religion on adolescent behavior is not purely sociological, as Stark claims; the East Coast youths, they say, internalized their faith which influenced their behavior, making the relationship between religion and delinquency psychological as well. It may, however, be orthodoxy specifically, not religiousness generally, that produced this finding, with the Mormon Church being arguably more restrictive in its doctrines and practices than other more mainline denominations.

Stark's Moral Community thesis is further disputed by Tittle and Welch, who contend that norms in a highly-religious community will mirror those of greater society, and that the effects of religion are therefore trumped by a general respect for secular laws and norms. A religion effect would, however, be expected for deviances discouraged by the religious group but otherwise accepted by the community-at-large. This constitutes the primary finding of Tittle and Welch's 1983 study on survey data from Iowa, New Jersey and Oregon residents aged 15 and older (N=1,993). However, their research design is questionable. They use an indicator for anticipated future offending in an attempt to imitate in their cross-sectional study the temporal ordering of a longitudinal

design. By comparing present religiousness to a subject's estimate of future criminal behavior, findings indicated a general tendency for subjects not to anticipate (or more likely fail to admit anticipating) ever committing future criminal acts.

A less conspicuous notion of place in the study of religion is urbanicity, though it has received considerable treatment in the criminological literature. The city has often been equated with criminal activity. Indeed, some researchers have included the relative glut of deviant behavior in the city as one of its defining characteristics, that which makes a city “urban” (i.e. Tittle and Stafford, 1992). Despite the myriad theories about why the city fosters greater crime than the country (see Laub, 1983; Tittle and Stafford, 1992; Ingram, 1993; Stark 1987 for varying perspectives), it can be concluded that the city does experience more crime than the country. In fact, the issue appears to be merely one of magnitude (Laub, 1983), since while urban centers account for a predominance of crime, rural areas see the same types of offenders (based on age, race and SES) as urban areas. So it may therefore be unnecessary to address the distinction between urban and rural in a study on delinquency.

But there is healthy debate amongst religion researchers as to the nature of the relationship between urbanicity and religion, which has bearing on this investigation of religion, race and crime. The general perception is that religion has greater effect on the lives of adherents in the country than in the city, and some research has indeed found that, compared to urban residents, rural residents are more involved in religious activities (Taylor, 1988a; Taylor, 1988b). This is powerful when one considers that frequency of church attendance is directly affected by the frequency of church services offered in a subject’s place of worship; specifically, rural churches have fewer services than urban

churches, which Taylor attributes to the sharing of ministers between churches in small areas. It has also been found that country dwellers report more private religiousness than city dwellers (Taylor, 1988b). Additionally, Southern churches have fewer services per week than churches in other regions (Taylor, 1988b), which is equally intriguing given the greater emphasis on religion in the South.

Despite this consensus, Roger Finke and Rodney Stark (1988) have argued vehemently that the opposite is more likely: that cities are more likely to foster devout religious followers, and in greater numbers, than rural townships. Making reference to religion as an economy, Finke and Stark argue that the heterogeneity in the city increases the number of faiths practicing in an area. When these faiths are incompatible and vie for members, it creates a market economy in which competing religious groups are required to “cater to the special interests of specific market segments” (1988:42). Tailoring its appeal to one group invariably lessens the faith’s appeal to another group, but this specialization of many different faith groups will more effectively meet the needs of more people than a single large faith can.

This religious pluralism would arguably throw the certainty of any religion into question, thereby detracting from the appeal of religion to city dwellers and making the city decidedly secular. Finke and Stark contend, however, that cities with unanimous religious agreement (as such resulting from state sanction) exhibit exceedingly low levels of participation among citizens whereas nations characterized by religious diversity show very high rates of participation. The authors utilize census data from the early 1900s in researching urbanization and religious mobility, and say that urbanization increases religious mobilization (the activity within a church group to grow itself) as a result of the

religious pluralism in the city. They found that as Catholicism grew in popularity in American cities, Sunday schools in Protestant churches began to emerge, they say as a response to the insurgence of the competing faith. They use this as evidence that pluralism does not stunt religious growth by introducing doubt, but rather motivates growth through innovations in recruitment and retention tactics. They say Sunday school not only inculcated children into the faith, but also attracted their parents to the church.

Finke and Stark also note that, for practical reasons, it is more convenient to be religiously involved in the city than in the country. Rural residents often have to travel a great distance to get anywhere, including church. Defined in part by their density (Wirth, 1938), cities provide ease of access to religion that rural areas cannot. To the extent that religion perpetuates itself socially (see Stark *et al.*, 1982), density of population would arguably encourage the spread and maintenance of religious communities. This likely explains findings that rural churches have fewer services than urban churches.

### *Impact on Delinquency*

Race and religion have emerged as variables of interest in some published studies on delinquency. Johnson *et al.* (2000) utilize a sample of black inner-city males in their study on religion, crime and disadvantage. They found that church attendance was associated with fewer criminal acts, less drug use and less drug trafficking, even after controlling for material disadvantage and family. Therefore, they argued, religious participation is a protective factor against delinquency (more specifically, is a protective factor against the effects of social disorganization that leads to delinquency). No effect was found for religious salience on any of the measures of delinquency. The authors

hypothesize that participation in religious activities builds prosocial bonds within a church community that can help govern behavior.

At first glance, this study seems to present the single most representative study on the impact of race on the influence of religion on crime. However, their design does not specifically address the effect of race. The authors examine the effect of religion on crime only among African-American adolescents. Wallace *et al.*(2003), in their study on religion, race and substance use, look at 1997-2001 data from the Monitoring the Future study, which produces nationally representative samples of 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders. The authors use only African-American and white subject data, and utilize all three religiousness variables: religious salience, church attendance and denomination. Substance use variables included use of alcohol, cigarettes, marijuana and other illicit drugs. Results showed that high religious salience is related to abstinence, regardless of race, while high church attendance is significantly associated with abstinence only among white subjects; African-American subjects who report high church attendance are no more likely to abstain from substance use than those who never attend. While the African-American subjects reported significantly greater religiousness overall, the effect of religiousness on abstinence was stronger for white subjects than African-American subjects. The authors say, “although a larger proportion of the African-American youth population (compared to the white population) are considered highly religious, the strength of the relationship between religiosity and abstinence is substantially greater for white students than for African-American students” (2003:10). These are intriguing findings, though they say little about the relative effect of religion on delinquency by race. Whereas their study is limited to only white and black students, a stronger design

would have included students of other races or ethnic groups to further isolate if religiousness functions differently in guiding behavior among African-Americans than among other minorities.

Wallace *et al.* (2003) found that black youths report less substance use than do white youths, and that black youths are more likely to report total abstinence from substance use than their white counterparts (Wallace *et al.*, 2003). These findings are not altogether unexpected: African-Americans tend to report greater religiousness than white Americans overall, and as noted earlier there are consistent findings that the religious report fewer acts of antisocial deviance than do the non-religious (i.e., Hadaway *et al.*, 1984; Burkett and Warren, 1987).

Another important caveat to the findings in this study is the representativeness of the data used. While the Monitoring the Future study produces a nationally representative sample of American youths, religion data is not collected for West Coast subjects. This produces a non-representative sample in the Wallace *et al.* study, missing youths from an entire region of the country. Also, excluding subjects from the American West may produce differential religion effects (i.e. Stark *et al.*, 1982; Stark, 1996; Stark and Bainbridge, 1996), as was discussed in the previous section.

The semi-involuntary thesis implies a conditional explanation for the relationship between religion and delinquency among African-Americans. Should salience be found to exhibit a greater overall influence on delinquency than participation, the semi-involuntary thesis would predict religion having little impact on the delinquency of African-Americans compared to other race groups for whom salience is theoretically higher. Were the opposite found, verifying the conclusion of Johnson *et al.* (2000) that

participation is more influential than salience, then religion would be expected to have a greater impact on delinquency among African-Americans than those of races with theoretically lower participation. Contrary findings concerning the influence of religion on delinquency by race would jeopardize the semi-involuntary claim.

In order to observe whether race differentially impacts religion's effect on crime, we must compare religiousness between race groups. Johnson *et al.*(2000) utilized only black subjects, based on the widely held belief that African-Americans are more religious than non-blacks. It may be that the impact of personal religiousness on crime differs among races; perhaps the overall prevalence of religiousness among African-Americans does not directly translate to a greater effect of religion on crime among African-Americans than others. Again, the literature on the semi-involuntary thesis consists primarily of studies utilizing all-black samples. It seems especially necessary to compare African-Americans to others when putting forth a hypothesis that sets African-Americans apart as unique in their religiousness from other race groups. Wallace *et al.* (2003) do look at differences between races, but only black and white. Perhaps it is not religion among African-Americans that demonstrates a unique pattern, but religion among minorities. A comparison minority group is necessary to evaluate the contention that African-Americans are distinct in their religiousness.

Little has been published to indicate how religion and urbanicity may interact to affect delinquency. This may result from the tendency of school-based youth studies to over-sample suburban youths. Johnson *et al.*(2000 ) argues that most studies on religion and delinquency fail to include enough urban youths, that given the literature on religion and crime it seems necessary to focus on inner city youth to find an effect of religion on

crime. Specifically, they argue that religion does not emerge as a protective factor unless its influence differs considerably from the general consensus regarding proper or moral behavior. Tittle and Welch (1983) argue that the effect of religion on delinquency or crime can only be seen in socially disorganized areas, where social control is low and there exists a lack of moral consensus. This would support the contention that religion will be seen as a protective factor in urban areas more so than in rural ones, as the city is often associated with normlessness and lack of social cohesion (see Wirth, 1938). In areas characterized by strong social cohesion, adherence to community norms is strong enough to encourage prosocial behavior, eliminating the need for religion to produce conformity. However, in socially disorganized, urban areas, a religion effect can emerge, with personal morality stepping in to guide behavior in the absence of a shared morality.

### Race, Place and Religion

A relevant correlation between race and place has emerged in much of the sociological and criminological literature. Stark recognizes in his 1987 look at black urban crime the reality that one's race can influence one's place of residence. He argues that black crime rates are the result of place more than race, drawing attention to the high crime rate of urban black residents in the North relative to those in the urban South. Based on data used in his 1986 study, Stark shows that, whereas around 10-15% of black Southerners live in cities, between 80-90% of black Northerners live in cities. Northern blacks are therefore concentrated in the high density, high disparity, dilapidated areas which Stark argues incite deviance, and black Southerners live in areas not characterized by these traits.

Contemporary researchers are also beginning to acknowledge an interaction between religion, race and place. Hunt and Hunt utilized General Social Survey and National Alcohol Survey data in a series of studies on religion among African Americans. Seeking to replicate the Ellison and Sherkat findings regarding the semi-involuntary institution, Hunt and Hunt (1999; 2000) aggregate data from 4,381 African Americans interviewed in the General Social Surveys from 1972 to 1994 and 1,947 African Americans sampled in the National Alcohol Survey. Their 1999 study does not find support for the semi-involuntary thesis in that it produced a general effect of the South on religious participation not limited to the rural South.

In a later study, Hunt and Hunt did find support for the semi involuntary thesis, with participation in the rural South being less influenced by denominational affiliation than it is in the urban areas of the North and the South where, they say, exists a “more complex marketplace of identities and institutional involvements” (2000:587). They also suggest that urban conditions may differ from those in rural areas, demanding a greater level of participation from believers in order to maintain what they call “respectable” status within the church community, and that in rural areas lesser involvement may be sufficient.

In a 2001 study examining race differences between African Americans and whites, Hunt and Hunt use General Social Survey data from 1974-1994. They argued a lack of evidence to support the semi-involuntary institution thesis contention that religious participation is higher among blacks, and sought to substantiate the claim that African Americans are more religiously involved than whites. They found that African Americans reported greater overall participation than do whites; though blacks and

whites were equal in their likelihood to report “weekly” church attendance, blacks were significantly more likely to report “intermittent” attendance than whites and were less likely to report “infrequent” attendance than whites. This tends to support the semi-involuntary thesis by showing that, compared to whites, blacks maintain greater involvement with a church community, arguably as a result of cultural pressure to sustain ties to the church.

Consider that in their 1999 and 2000 studies, Hunt and Hunt use a variable for “non-South” that includes Western states along with Northern states as a comparison region for the rural and urban South variables. In their 2001 study, they include urban areas of Western states in their “urban North” variable. Not only is it misleading to include Western states in studies designed to address a thesis which postulates a dichotomy between Northern and Southern states, but given Stark’s above-cited findings of a unique secularism in the American West (Stark *et al*, 1982; Stark and Bainbridge, 1996), it seems especially problematic to include those states in a measure of Northern urban religious participation. Indeed, secular Western states may amplify Northern secularism, or perhaps nullify an existing religious effect, particularly when only black or white respondents are considered. Also, the authors argue that religious participation among urban blacks represents a more voluntary participation than among rural blacks, as urbanites have greater access to other spiritual groups and secular institutions that can fill the needs for fellowship, material assistance and social or political advancement otherwise met by a church community. This finding, of course, can presumably be generalized to *all* urbanites, and therefore does not necessarily require a racial differentiation.

In light of these theories regarding the influence of race and place on religion, this study seeks to determine whether race and place may moderate the effect of religion on delinquency. To address the limitations in research on the semi-involuntary thesis, this study compares subjects of many races and ethnic groups to isolate differential effects of religiousness by race. Possible interactive effects of religion and place are considered by examining differential offending by settlement type.

### Purpose of Study

Interest among researchers has grown regarding the impact of religion on delinquency and the effect of race and place on individual religiousness. While published studies do acknowledge possible interactions between religion, race and place, no known published study has specifically examined the impact of place on religion's effect on delinquency, and the only study known to focus on differential effects of religion on delinquency by race looked solely at substance use among black and white subjects. This study attempted to fill these voids by investigating the potentially interactive relationships between religion, race and place and how those interactions may influence behavior.

This study also sought to improve on the designs of past studies on religion and delinquency and on religion and race, and addressed variations in the findings of past religion and delinquency studies. Specifically, the inclusion of both white and black subjects as well as a non-black minority group was meant to allow comparisons of the religion effect on delinquency between races. Various types of delinquency were examined independently to determine if religion effects differ by offense type. Also, the appropriateness of using church attendance as a single-item measure of religiousness was

examined, which has been condemned by some researchers as incomplete and insufficient when studying the effect of religion on behavior.

The following hypotheses were tested:

*1. Religiousness will have a direct negative effect on delinquency.* This study examined relationships between religiousness and delinquency for several types of delinquent behavior and in the presence of relevant control variables.

*2. Religiousness will have differential effects on delinquency by race and by place.* For this study, interaction terms were added to each regression model to examine possible moderating effects of race and urbanicity on the effect of religion on delinquency. Significant findings would suggest that religion affects delinquency differently for different groups based on race or place.

*3. Religious participation and religious salience will be differently influential on delinquency.* This hypothesis specifically addressed the claims by Stark *et al.* (1982) and others that church attendance is sufficient as a single-item measure of religiousness in sociological studies of delinquency. Dual regressions were run for each delinquency type, one each for participation and salience. The use of church attendance as a single-item proxy for religiousness would be questionable if an effect is seen for salience and not for participation.

## Chapter 2: Methods

This study utilized a sample of American youths to examine the relationship between religiousness and delinquency, and to investigate the possibility of moderating effects of race and place on that relationship. Both behavioral and attitudinal measures of religiousness were assessed. Control variables with known links to both delinquency and self-report religiousness were included to isolate significant effects among the primary variables of interest.

### Data

Self-reports by youths have been found to be reliable measures of youthful criminal activity across ages, sexes and races (Huizinga and Elliott, 1986:303). While also valid across ages and sexes, differential reporting has been found between races, with a greater tendency by black subjects to underreport known offenses compared to white subjects (1986:320). Despite this fact, self-report measures capture more delinquent behaviors than do official records or victimization data, and are generally embraced as the best measure of delinquency available (see Elliott and Ageton, 1980). Also, as noted earlier, self reports are the most convenient method of collecting data on religion; while aggregate data on religious participation could conceivably be captured through official church records, data on personal religious salience require surveying.

Since this study required information on delinquency as well as all three independent variables, it utilized self-report data from one of the few large-scale studies to capture both personal religiousness and criminal or deviant behavior. The National Youth Survey is a nationally representative longitudinal study started in 1977 to examine the behaviors, attitudes and beliefs of Americans from youth to adulthood. The items on

self-reported delinquency in the National Youth Survey were specifically crafted to allow comparison with official records using the Uniform Crime Report (UCR). These items include all offenses representing more than 1% of reported juvenile arrests between 1972 and 1974. All UCR Part I offenses (except homicide) and 60% of UCR Part II offenses meet these criteria and were included in the original survey, as well as several status offenses and delinquent lifestyle items (Elliott and Ageton, 1980).

One seeking to utilize NYS data to study delinquency must be careful to note that only the earliest waves of the study actually produced youth data. Indeed, the longitudinal nature of the study demands that the subject pool age from wave to wave. To limit one's study to a sample of youths using the NYS data requires the data be drawn from the earliest waves of the study.

Limiting the sample to only youthful respondents under the age of 18 allows for a broad definition of "delinquency". Among the offenses characterized as "delinquent" for the purposes of this study were status offenses, including alcohol and tobacco use, which are criminal acts for those under a certain age. Use of illicit drugs (marijuana) was also classified as a delinquent act, and is indeed unlawful for all citizens regardless of age, though researchers may tend to avoid listing drug use among criminal acts given its relative normativeness. As discussed earlier, substance use is described in the religion literature as an antiascetic offense, and has been found especially susceptible to the influence of religion, as it is generally proscribed despite any normative or legal allowances.

Ideally, this study would have included two variables to examine place. Data on urbanicity would address the contradicting literature on religiousness in urban areas

relative to that in rural areas. Adding geographic region would enable improvements on the existing studies that support the semi-involuntary thesis, and also allow examination of Stark's moral communities thesis. Unfortunately, the ICPSR National Youth Survey data does not include geographic location variables for privacy reasons, and therefore region cannot be included. A lack of consensus remains regarding the relationship between urbanicity and religion, so a study that looks at urbanicity should prove nonetheless enlightening. Also, as argued above, the semi-involuntary hypothesis does not appear on its face to require the South/Non-South dichotomy, and a look at urbanicity may be sufficient to address the thesis.

### Design

As a result of limitations in the available NYS data, this study utilized a cross-sectional design. While this design is common in research on religion and delinquency, causal relationships cannot be drawn from such studies. The specific weakness of this design when studying the impact of religiousness on behavior, one seldom addressed outright in the literature (Tittle and Welch, 1983), is comparing a measure of current religiousness to a measure of past delinquency to estimate a causal relationship between the two. Ultimately, the effect of religion on delinquency suggested in this study seems to require that religiousness precede the commission or non-commission of the delinquent acts. Given the longitudinal nature of the NYS data, the issue of causal direction can be addressed by using the religion data from one wave and the delinquency data from a later wave. For this study, the strategy would produce a comparison between Wave III religion data and Wave IV delinquency data. However, the ICPRS data being used here is void of any unique identifiers for the study participants, which precluded the

merging of data from various waves of the study and demanded the cross-sectional design.

In defense of the use of cross-sectional data, researchers in one prior study (Johnson *et al*, 2001) using the same two waves of NYS data chose to treat religiousness contemporaneously based on the findings of a 1991 Robert Agnew study that current beliefs affect delinquency more than past beliefs (2001:27). Importantly, they found that religiousness at Wave III was almost perfectly correlated with religiousness at Wave IV (2001:33), with stability coefficients substantially greater than those between delinquency measures at Waves III and IV (2001:36). Nonetheless, the contemporaneousness of measures in this study and the inability to assign causal direction may still limit the applicability of the findings of this study.

#### Inclusion Criteria

Data on personal religiousness were not collected from the youth subjects of the National Youth Survey until the third wave of the study. These data were collected in 1979, at which time the participants were questioned about their attitudes, actions and beliefs in the previous 12 months. Seeking to maximize the youths sampled by using the data collected in the earliest possible wave of the National Youth Survey, this present study utilized responses collected in Wave III (apart from a measure of socioeconomic status collected from the parent interviews at Wave I). By this time, subjects ranged in age from 13 to 19, but for the purposes of this study on delinquency all survey respondents 18 years of age and older were purged from the data set to limit the sample to juveniles only. Limiting the study to youths only allowed items on delinquent acts such as alcohol and tobacco use that, while legal for adults, are illegal for juveniles. It

also allows for inclusion of youth-specific offenses like running away from home and skipping class.

Wave III of the National Youth Survey was funded by two primary sources, resulting in two subsamples of participants each receiving slightly different interview questions. Only one of the Wave III subsamples (funded by the National Institute for Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, or NIJJDP) underwent extensive questioning on substance use. Substance use is an antisocial offense seen to be especially susceptible to the influence of religion, making it an important measure of delinquency for the proposed study. For this reason, only the participants included in the sample funded by the NIJJDP will be utilized.

While the original study authors do not specify the NIJJDP subsample as nationally representative, analyses on age, gender, race and SES show no significant difference between the nationally representative full sample and the NIJJDP subsample. However, 30 respondents that met the inclusion criteria apparently attrited for Wave III, and have no data except age. As they have no data to analyze on the dependent variable, these respondents were dropped for the present study; their absence effected the representativeness of the study sample in regards to age, as these subjects were slightly yet significantly older than those who remained ( $t=2.42, p<.05$ ).

### Sample

The final study sample includes 484 of the 1,725 participants from the original Wave III National Youth Survey sample. This constitutes all subjects from the NIJJDP subsample 17 years of age and under, less the 30 respondents with no delinquency data

for Wave III. Study data were accessed through the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR).

## Measurement

### *Dependent Variable*

The dependent variable in this study is self-report delinquent behavior. Commission rates were constructed at the time of the interviews based on reported frequencies. Subjects were asked to specify how many times in the previous year he or she performed a certain behavior. The rate of “never” was indicated for subjects who reported no offenses, “once or twice” for subjects who reported one or two offenses, and “once every 2-3 months” for subjects who reported between three and nine offenses. When the reported frequency was 10 or more, the subjects were themselves asked to describe the general rate of their offending, from “once a month,” to “2-3 times a day” (see Elliott and Ageton, 1980).

For this study, the commission rates were used to build variety scales for four delinquency types (see Appendix) representing all delinquency items of each type included in the original survey,<sup>1</sup> except items for which all respondents reported no offenses (as noted). Each delinquency item was recoded, collapsing the rate score into a binary variable differentiating respondents who reported no offenses (=0) from respondents who reported some offenses (=1). Variety scales were created by adding these binary items by delinquency type into four scales, with the score for each scale

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<sup>1</sup> The remainder of the delinquency items in the NIJJDP survey, measuring “hard” drug use, were initially considered for this study in a fifth delinquency scale. Low variability in the items and low reliability in the scale led to the scale ultimately being dropped from the study.

representing a count of the different offenses in that scale committed by the respondent; therefore, the minimum possible score for any variety scale was 0, and the maximum possible score was the number of items in the scale. Consolidating the delinquency items into variety scales is preferable to utilizing the original frequency or rate scores, as variety scales prevent the overall delinquency type score from being overwhelmed by the more common, minor delinquency items in the scale. A respondent with a high score in a particular delinquency scale reported committing more acts in that scale than a respondent with a low score, and therefore is considered more delinquent than the low scoring respondent.

*Person Offense* was comprised of nine items, and included all person offenses surveyed except assault against a teacher and aggressive sexual demands. This scale had inter-item correlation of .143 and produced a Cronbach's alpha of .601. *Property Offense* consisted of 14 items, all property offenses surveyed. Inter-item correlation for this scale was .228, and the Cronbach's alpha was .792. *Substance Use* was a five -item scale and measured alcohol, tobacco and marijuana use. Inter item correlation for this scale was .385 and the Cronbach's alpha was .755. An additional scale for *Other Offense* included 15 items and captured all other non-use delinquent behaviors surveyed not represented in the preceding three scales, both criminal and non-criminal delinquent behaviors (such as public disorder and drug trafficking). This scale had inter-item correlation of .148 and produced a Cronbach's alpha of .733.

### *Independent Variables*

The primary independent variable in this study was personal religiousness. To avoid the criticisms regarding the use of one-dimensional measures, religiousness was

operationalized with both behavioral and attitudinal items. *Religious Participation* measured church or religious service attendance on a Likert Scale, from “Never (Once or Twice)” (=0) to “Several times a week” (=4). *Religious Salience* quantified the importance of religion in the respondent’s life and was also measured on a Likert Scale, from “Not important at all” (=0) to “Very important” (=4).

Variables for race and place were included to examine moderating effects. “Ethnicity” was represented categorically in the original instrument. This item was collapsed into three binary variables for the current study to accommodate regression analysis. *White* differentiated respondents indicating ethnicity as “Anglo or White” (=1), from all other respondents (=0). *Black* identified respondents indicating ethnicity as “Black” (=1), relative to all other respondents (=0). *Other Minority* denoted respondents indicating ethnicity as “American Indian,” “Asian,” “Chicano,” “Mexican-American,” “Puerto Rican,” “Spanish-American,” or “Other” (=1), apart from all other respondents (=0). *Urbanicity* was a binary variable differentiating respondents living in urban areas from other respondents, with “Non-Urban” (=0) and “Urban” (=1).

### *Control Variables*

Control variables were added to qualify any correlations seen between the primary variables of interest. *Age* was measured in years, and ranged from 13 to 17. *Sex* was indicated by a binary variable, male (=0) or female (=1). *Grade Point Average (GPA)* was measured on a Likert scale, from “Mostly F’s” (=0) to “Mostly A’s” (=4). *Socioeconomic Status (SES)* was quantified using the Hollingshead two-factor index based on the occupation and education of the primary wage-earner in the youth’s household (Elliott and Huizinga, 1983), with a low score representing higher SES.

### Analysis Strategy

Distributions were run and the necessary transformations made to establish normality among the cases and fitness of the data for OLS regression. Bivariate relationships were considered first as the correlations between all study variables. To isolate the influence of religion on delinquency, regressions on each delinquency scale were performed including the control variables and all independent variables of interest found significant at the bivariate level. Multiplicative interaction terms for religion by race and religion by place were then added to examine any moderating effects of race and place on religion's effect on delinquency.

## Chapter 3: Findings

Before analyzing the study data, the assumptions of Ordinary Least Squares regression were examined. The data were examined for outlying cases, and extreme values were trimmed to three standard deviations from the mean.<sup>2</sup> Property Offense suffered 15 extreme values, producing non-normality. Trimming these values to three standard deviations from the mean corrected the non-normality, and was found preferable to inverse or logarithmic transformation.

Linearity issues surfaced in the religion variables. Near-significance in the non-linearity analyses was found between Religious Salience and Substance Use ( $F=2.327$ ,  $p=.07$ ) and between Religious Participation and Other Offense ( $F=2.281$ ,  $p=.08$ ). These relationships are illustrated in Figures A and B. In these relationships, non-linearity resulted from differences in the means for highly religious respondents compared to the means for less religious respondents. Therefore, each religion variable was recoded as a binary. “Non-religious” (=0) comprised original scores of 0, 1 or 2, and “Highly religious” (=1) comprised original scores of 3 or 4. All analyses will be presented both for the scale religion variables and for the binary religion variables.

Very few missing values were found within the delinquency items. Less than 0.1% of all delinquency data points were missing from the data set, and no more than four points were missing for any one delinquency item. Missing values within the delinquency items were replaced with the series mean, rounded to the nearest integer, prior to constructing the delinquency scales; therefore, missing values for items with a

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<sup>2</sup> While one outlying case each was found for Person Offense and Other Offense, trimming these values did not substantially change the findings and therefore they were not transformed.

Figure A  
Linearity: Religious Salience x Substance Use

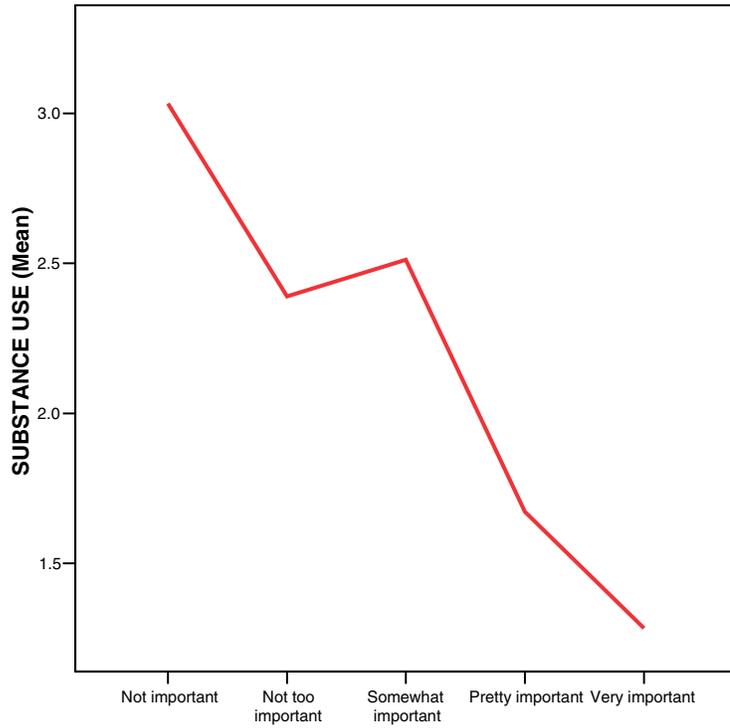
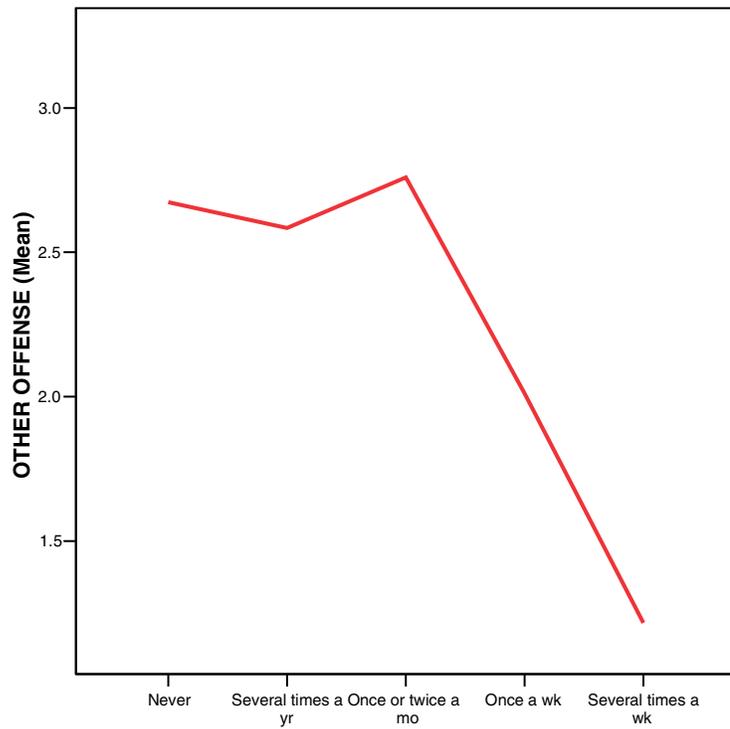


Figure B  
Linearity: Religious Participation x Other Offense



series mean of .49 or lower were coded as 0 for the variety scale, with all others coded as 1 for the scale. Missing values for grade point average and socioeconomic status were addressed through pairwise deletion in each multiple regression model to retain as many cases as possible in the overall study.

**Table 1**  
**Mean, Standard Deviation, Range and N for All Variables**

Variable Name	Mean	Standard Deviation	Range	N
<u>Dependent Variables</u>				
Person Offenses	1.07	1.27	0 – 7	484
Property Offenses	1.27	1.88	0 – 7	484
Other Offenses	2.26	2.27	0 – 11	484
Substance Use	1.99	1.70	0 – 5	484
<u>Independent Variables</u>				
Religious Participation	2.05	1.34	0 – 4	484
Religious Participation <sup>2</sup>	.48	.50	0 – 1	484
Religious Salience	2.47	1.21	0 – 4	484
Religious Salience <sup>2</sup>	.52	.50	0 – 1	484
Urbanicity	.25	.44	0 – 1	484
Ethnicity				
White	.79	.41	0 – 1	484
Black	.15	.36	0 – 1	484
Other Minority	.06	.24	0 – 1	484
<u>Control Variables</u>				
Age	14.99	1.15	13 – 17	484
Sex	.45	.50	0 – 1	484
Grade Point Average	2.65	.82	0 – 4	476
Socioeconomic Status	44.02	16.69	11 – 77	463

<sup>2</sup>Transformed Variable

## Bivariate Results

The results of the correlation analyses of the study variables are listed in Table 2, which includes original and transformed variables. Notable relationships were found between and amongst the dependent variable and the primary independent variables. Significant negative correlations exist between each of the delinquency scales and each of the religion measures, as prior research in this area would predict. Correlations were slightly higher for religious salience than for religious participation. No significant correlations were found between Person Offenses and any of the included races groups. Significant (though slight) inverse relationships were found for the Black variable relative to Other Offense and Substance Use, corresponding with small but significant positive correlations between those delinquency scales and the White variable. The only delinquency variable that reached significance for the Other Minority group was Property Offense ( $r=.095, p<.05$ ).

While the semi-involuntary thesis would predict high religious participation compared to religious salience among blacks, these data show the opposite. Significant positive correlations were found between blacks and both original religion items, the correlation with religious salience ( $r=.165, p<.01$ ) being slightly higher than religious participation ( $r=.155, p<.01$ ); analysis utilizing the transformed religion variables shows significant correlation only for salience ( $r=.106, p<.05$ ). Significant negative correlations were found for the other race groups based on the original religion variables, between whites and religious salience ( $r=-.107, p<.05$ ) and between Other Minority and religious

Table 2  
Correlation Matrix

	Person Offense	Property Offense	Other Offense	Substance Use	Religious Particip.	Religious Particip. <sup>2</sup>	Religious Salience	Religious Salience <sup>2</sup>	White	Black	Other Minority	Urban.
Person Offense												
Property Offense	.523**											
Other Offense	.593**	.633**										
Substance Use	.330**	.386**	.647**									
Religious Participation	-.132**	-.166**	-.184**	-.269**								
Religious Participation <sup>2</sup>	-.133**	-.160**	-.191**	-.256**	.866**							
Religious Salience	-.212**	-.247**	-.303**	-.309**	.568**	.496**						
Religious Salience <sup>2</sup>	-.202**	-.226**	-.310**	-.309**	.495**	.473**	.864**					
White	.080	.022	.105*	.155**	-.066	-.014	-.135**	-.107*				
Black	-.059	-.089	-.116*	-.164**	.155**	.068	.165**	.106*	-.811**			
Other Minority	-.048	.095*	-.006	-.019	-.119**	-.076	-.016	.025	-.494**	-.108*		
Urbanicity	.021	.068	-.001	-.028	.048	.012	.044	.036	-.326**	.354**	.028	
Age	.037	.057	.245**	.321**	-.111*	-.085	-.080	-.088	-.007	-.035	.063	-.009
Sex	-.268**	-.172**	-.143**	.002	.081	.088	.067	.062	.077	-.105*	.025	-.011
GPA (N=476)	-.228**	-.210**	-.180**	-.162**	.159**	.152**	.076	.073	.043	-.020	-.045	-.037
SES (N=463)	.079	.014	-.014	-.108*	-.013	-.020	.040	.052	-.231**	.201**	.096*	.002

Pearson's r; Pairwise N=484 (except as noted)

<sup>2</sup>Transformed Variable

\*\* $p < .01$ , 2-tailed \* $p < .05$ , 2-tailed

participation ( $r=-.119, p<.01$ ). Urbanicity was not significantly correlated with the religion items.

Prior research has found distinct differences in the relationship between religion and delinquency for the various offense types, and as significant correlations were found between each religion item and all four delinquency scales, they were all retained as dependent variables. The items for religious participation and religious salience were also significantly correlated, both among the original variables ( $r=.568, p<.01$ ) and the corrected variables ( $r=.473, p<.01$ ); the relationship is not perfect however, and each item describes a different aspect of religiousness that should be examined separately one from the other.

Several significant relationships were found in the bivariate analyses, but correlations may be spurious. Additional tests were required to isolate the impact of religion on delinquency from other influential factors. Through regression analyses, the relationships between the delinquency variables and religion could be examined in the context of race and place, and relative to exogenous factors.

### Multivariate Results

Four main effects models were tested through OLS multiple regression for each delinquency type. One model each was analyzed using the original religious participation and religious salience variables, and then reanalyzed using the transformed religion variables. In each, all non-religion independent variables and control variables that showed significant correlation with the delinquency variable at the bivariate level were included.

Interaction terms were then added to each model for the corresponding religion variables by urbanicity and by race to address the possibility that religion may affect delinquency through race or place. The addition of these interaction terms necessitated the inclusion of the race and urbanicity variables in the interaction effects models, even if found insignificant in the preceding correlation or regression analyses. When full models including all three interaction variables were run, prohibitively high multicollinearity resulted for the interaction terms and the corresponding main effect variables (including the religion variables), with tolerance values less than .05 and variance inflation factors (VIFs) in excess of 25 in some cases. Therefore, to examine the interactions, three separate interaction effects regressions were performed for each delinquency scale, one for each interaction term.

Normality was confirmed for the residuals of each model. Each model lacked serial correlation, as determined by Durbin Watson statistics for each regression that fell within the acceptable range. Tolerance values and variance inflation factors (VIFs) show no multicollinearity in any of the initial models, though collinearity increased as expected with the addition of the interaction terms.

Based on regressions not presented here, it was found that none of the interaction terms for religion by race or religion by urbanicity were statistically significant. This was true for both religious participation and religious salience. Therefore, the results from the main effects regressions are presented in the following tables. The binary religion variable analyses are presented in each table in parentheses. In comparing the scale religion variable and the binary religion variable regressions, some differences in the standardized Betas were seen. As the variables were transformed to address non-linearity

with the delinquency variables, and as the binary and scale regression results were not consistently similar, it appears that linear regression did not accurately measure the relationship between religion and delinquency using the original religion measures. Therefore, only the regression results based on the binary religion variables will be discussed.

Table 3a  
 Regression Results:  
 Person Offense – Religious Participation

	Standardized Coefficients (B)	Unstandardized Coefficients (b)	Standard Error	t
<u>Independent Variables</u>				
Religious Participation	-.088 (-.089)	-.083 (-.225)	.042 (.112)	-1.997* (-2.013*)
<u>Control Variables</u>				
Sex	-.224 (-.223)	-.571 (-.569)	.114 (.114)	-5.008** (-4.988**)
GPA	-.163 (-.163)	-.252 (-.253)	.070 (.070)	-3.609** (-3.629**)
Constant		2.165 (2.104)	.195 (.189)	11.092** (11.157**)

( ) = based on binary religious participation variable  
 Adjusted R<sup>2</sup>=.103; F=19.159, *p*<.001 (Adjusted R<sup>2</sup>=.103; F=19.183, *p*<.001)  
 Pairwise N=476  
 \*\**p*<.01, 2-tailed \**p*<.05, 2-tailed

Table 3b  
 Regression Results:  
 Person Offense – Religious Salience

	Standardized Coefficients (B)	Unstandardized Coefficients (b)	Standard Error	t
<u>Independent Variables</u>				
Religious Salience	-.185 (-.177)	-.195 (-.449)	.045 (.109)	-4.314** (-4.103**)
<u>Control Variables</u>				
Sex	-.218 (-.219)	-.557 (-.560)	.112 (.112)	-4.959** (-4.979**)
GPA	-.164 (-.165)	-.254 (-.255)	.068 (.068)	-3.721** (-3.735**)
Constant		2.475 (2.230)	.208 (.189)	11.871** (11.775**)

( ) = based on binary religious salience variable  
 Adjusted R<sup>2</sup>=.130; F=24.581, *p*<.001 (Adjusted R<sup>2</sup>=.126; F=23.922, *p*<.001)  
 Pairwise N=476  
 \*\**p*<.01, 2-tailed \**p*<.05, 2-tailed

Table 4a  
 Regression Results:  
 Property Offense – Religious Participation

	Standardized Coefficients (B)	Unstandardized Coefficients (b)	Standard Error	t
<u>Independent Variables</u>				
Religious Participation	-.122 (-.118)	-.170 (-.444)	.063 (.168)	-2.700** (-2.639**)
Other Minority	.077 (.082)	.596 (.638)	.346 (.344)	1.724 (1.852)
<u>Control Variables</u>				
Sex	-.128 (-.128)	-.483 (-.480)	.171 (.171)	-2.826** (-2.810**)
GPA	-.158 (-.160)	-.362 (-.365)	.105 (.105)	-3.459** (-3.488**)
Constant		2.762 (2.630)	.295 (.285)	9.348** (9.235**)

() = based on binary religious participation variable  
 Adjusted R<sup>2</sup>=.075; F=10.657, *p*<.001 (Adjusted R<sup>2</sup>=.075; F=10.569, *p*<.001)  
 Pairwise N=476  
 \*\**p*<.01, 2-tailed \**p*<.05, 2-tailed

Table 4b  
 Regression Results:  
 Property Offense – Religious Salience

	Standardized Coefficients (B)	Unstandardized Coefficients (b)	Standard Error	t
<u>Independent Variables</u>				
Religious Salience	-.225 (-.209)	-.350 (-.783)	.067 (.163)	-5.190** (-4.793**)
Other Minority	.087 (.096)	.679 (.746)	.337 (.338)	2.017* (2.209*)
<u>Control Variables</u>				
Sex	-.123 (-.125)	-.462 (-.470)	.167 (.168)	-2.759** (-2.796**)
GPA	-.161 (-.162)	-.368 (-.371)	.102 (.102)	-3.623** (-3.631**)
Constant		3.281 (2.828)	.312 (.284)	10.500** (9.940**)

() = based on binary religious salience variable  
 Adjusted R<sup>2</sup>=.112; F=15.930, *p*<.001 (Adjusted R<sup>2</sup>=.105; F=14.866, *p*<.001)  
 Pairwise N=476  
 \*\**p*<.01, 2-tailed \**p*<.05, 2-tailed

Table 5a  
Regression Results:  
Other Offense – Religious Participation

	Standardized Coefficients (B)	Unstandardized Coefficients (b)	Standard Error	t
<u>Independent Variables</u>				
Religious Participation	-.117 (-.136)	-.198 (-.620)	.076 (.199)	-2.616** (-3.107**)
Black	-.033 (-.045)	-.208 (-.287)	.477 (.470)	-.437 (-.610)
White	.086 (.082)	.478 (.453)	.411 (.409)	1.163 (1.109)
<u>Control Variables</u>				
Sex	-.093(-.092)	-.425 (-.419)	.204 (.203)	-2.082* (-2.062*)
Age	.228 (.229)	.451 (.453)	.086 (.086)	5.236** (5.284**)
GPA	-.149 (-.148)	-.414 (-.409)	.124 (.123)	-3.334** (-3.308**)
Constant		-3.150 (-3.272)	1.408 (1.396)	-2.238* (-2.344*)

( ) = based on binary religious participation variable  
Adjusted R<sup>2</sup>=.119; F=11.737,  $p<.001$  (Adjusted R<sup>2</sup>=.125; F=12.268,  $p<.001$ )  
Pairwise N=476  
\*\* $p<.01$ , 2-tailed \* $p<.05$ , 2-tailed

Table 5b  
Regression Results:  
Other Offense – Religious Salience

	Standardized Coefficients (B)	Unstandardized Coefficients (b)	Standard Error	t
<u>Independent Variables</u>				
Religious Salience	-.255 (-.264)	-.480 (-1.200)	.080 (.192)	-5.968** (-6.240**)
Black	-.026 (-.054)	-.165 (-.340)	.458 (.455)	-.361 (-.748)
White	.064 (.048)	.356 (.268)	.398 (.397)	.895 (.675)
<u>Control Variables</u>				
Sex	-.084 (-.086)	-.382 (-.395)	.198 (.197)	-1.926 (-1.999*)
Age	.221 (.217)	.438 (.430)	.083 (.083)	5.247** (5.164**)
GPA	-.149 (-.149)	-.414 (-.412)	.119 (.119)	-3.466** (-3.459**)
Constant		-2.101 (-2.452)	1.379 (1.363)	-1.524 (-1.798)

( ) = based on binary religious salience variable  
Adjusted R<sup>2</sup>=.170; F=17.173,  $p<.001$  (Adjusted R<sup>2</sup>=.175; F=17.801,  $p<.001$ )  
Pairwise N=476  
\*\* $p<.01$ , 2-tailed \* $p<.05$ , 2-tailed

Table 6a  
 Regression Results:  
 Substance Use – Religious Participation

	Standardized Coefficients (B)	Unstandardized Coefficients (b)	Standard Error	t
<u>Independent Variables</u>				
Religious Participation	-.201 (-.202)	-.255 (-.686)	.055 (.145)	-4.636** (-4.730**)
Black	-.005 (-.032)	-.025 (-.151)	.345 (.341)	-.072 (-.441)
White	.118 (.107)	.490 (.445)	.301 (.300)	1.628 (1.485)
<u>Control Variables</u>				
Age	.301 (.305)	.445 (.451)	.062 (.062)	7.123** (7.245**)
GPA	-.175 (-.176)	-.362 (-.364)	.091 (.091)	-3.964** (-3.999**)
SES	-.125 (-.124)	-.013 (-.013)	.005 (.005)	-2.810** (-2.787**)
Constant		-3.009 (-3.241)	1.061 (1.054)	-2.810** (-2.787**)

( ) = based on binary religious participation variable  
 Adjusted R<sup>2</sup>=.201; F=20.126, *p*<.001 (Adjusted R<sup>2</sup>=.203; F=20.305, *p*<.001)  
 Pairwise N=457  
 \*\**p*<.01, 2-tailed \**p*<.05, 2-tailed

Table 6b  
 Regression Results:  
 Substance Use – Religious Salience

	Standardized Coefficients (B)	Unstandardized Coefficients (b)	Standard Error	t
<u>Independent Variables</u>				
Religious Salience	-.251 (-.250)	-.354 (-.851)	.059 (.142)	-5.964** (-5.980**)
Black	-.024 (-.052)	-.115 (-.245)	.337 (.336)	-.340 (-.729)
White	.084 (.070)	.348 (.291)	.295 (.295)	1.179 (.984)
<u>Control Variables</u>				
Age	.302 (.299)	.447 (.443)	.061 (.061)	7.287** (7.214**)
GPA	-.185 (-.184)	-.383 (-.381)	.089 (.089)	-4.299** (-4.280**)
SES	-.120 (-.114)	-.012 (-.012)	.004 (.004)	-2.720** (-2.592**)
Constant		-2.539 (-2.874)	1.053 (1.044)	-2.411* (-2.752**)

( ) = based on binary religious salience variable  
 Adjusted R<sup>2</sup>=.224; F=22.968, *p*<.001 (Adjusted R<sup>2</sup>=.225; F=23.005, *p*<.001)  
 Pairwise N=457  
 \*\**p*<.01, 2-tailed \**p*<.05, 2-tailed

The multivariate findings address the three hypotheses posed earlier. First, a direct negative effect of religion on delinquency was found in the study data; religious participation and religious salience each retained their significant negative relationship with all delinquency types in the main effects models. Religious youths reported less delinquent behavior than non-religious youths.

Second, no significant interactive effects of religion by race or religion by urbanicity were found in the study data. Although binary variables for Black and White were significant at the bivariate level relative to Other Offense and Substance Use, neither remained significant in the multiple regressions. The binary variable for the comparison minority group did maintain its slight yet significant positive relationship with Property Offense in the religious salience multivariate analysis but not in the religious participation analysis. All control variables significant in the initial multiple regressions maintained significance in the full models.

Finally, results showed a differential effect of participation and salience on delinquency. Comparing the unstandardized betas for the regressions on the transformed religion variables shows that the coefficients for the salience models are larger than for the participation models for all four delinquency types. For example, based on the Substance Use regression, a one-unit increase in participation corresponds with a decrease in offending of .686 units, while the same increase in salience corresponds with a decrease of .851 units. However, since religious participation did show significant negative relationships with all delinquency types, these data suggest that a single-item measure of church attendance may be sufficient to quantify religiousness for sociological or criminological study of the effects of religion on behavior.

The regression models account for only a modest amount of the variance in delinquency. Overall, the strongest models were produced for the Substance Use scale, with adjusted r-squares of .203 for participation and .225 for salience. Significantly, the next most representative models were for Other Offense, with adjusted r-squares of .125 for participation, .175 for salience. These two scales include the status offenses and other non-criminal delinquent behaviors thought by some researchers (Tittle and Welch, 1983; Hadaway *et al*, 1984; Cochran *et al*, 1994; Evans *et al*, 1996) to respond most to the deterrent influence of religion.

## Chapter 4: Discussion

This study utilized a sample of youths ages 13-17 to determine the nature of the relationship between religion and various types of delinquency relative to the influences on religion of race and place. The literature regarding the impact of religion on crime and regarding the impact of race and place on religion lacks consistency. Here, direct relationships between delinquency and religion, race and place were examined, as well as interactions between religion, race and place. Control variables were included to establish the impact of religion net the effect of other common predictors.

For all delinquency types, religious youths reported significantly less delinquency than non-religious youths. The models tested explained more variance in offending for Substance Use and Other Offense, the scales included to examine status and anti-ascetic offenses found especially susceptible to the influence of religion. Of particular interest in the findings is the quality of religiousness that was found most influential. Religious salience was more important relative to delinquent behavior than religious participation for all delinquency types examined. It can be said, then, that the importance one places on their religious faith is more influential in preventing delinquency than the rate with which one attends religious services. However, since religious participation did show significant negative relationships with all delinquency types, these data suggest that a single-item measure of church attendance may be sufficient to quantify religiousness in sociological or criminological study of the effects of religion on behavior.

This study sought also to investigate the nature of religiousness in the various race groups. The bivariate regression analyses showed that Black respondents did not exhibit the high participation and low salience suggested by the semi-involuntary thesis, and in

fact showed greater salience than participation. However, none of the race by religion interaction terms were significant in the final models. Therefore, despite differences in religiousness by race, no differential effect of religion on delinquency by race was uncovered in this study; religion appears to reduce delinquency consistently regardless of race.

Interesting findings were produced regarding race and offending which require some attention. While both Black and White were significant at the bivariate level for Other Delinquency and Substance Use, no race effects were found in the multivariate analysis. However, Other Minority, which was found significantly correlated with Property Offense, maintained its significant positive relationship in the religious salience multiple regression. Despite the small sample of non-black minorities included in this study (n=30), it was found that Black and White respondents reported fewer property offenses than those of other ethnicities.

The lack of consensus in the literature regarding the relationship between urbanicity and religiousness lent an added dimension to this study. No significant correlations were found between urbanicity and religiousness for either religion measure; neither Stark and Bainbridge's contention that religiousness is more pronounced in cities nor the common expectation that religiousness is more pronounced in the country were supported by the findings. Additionally, no interactive relationships between religiousness and delinquency through urbanicity were uncovered. Religiousness does not appear to differentially affect delinquency through urbanicity.

## Limitations

The design of this study and the data used were carefully considered and specifically chosen to improve on the existing research on religion and delinquency. However, several limitations should be acknowledged when interpreting the findings. Limitations stem both from the data and its analysis as well as from the theoretical basis for the study.

In this study on race and religion, the small samples of blacks and non-black minorities are especially problematic. The full Wave III National Youth Survey sample was reduced here in order to examine status and antisocial offenses found especially influential to the effects of religion in other studies, at the expense of larger minority group samples. No significant interaction effects for religion by race were found in the present study; it is possible that the minority samples were too small to detect a relationship that in fact exists.

Another issue concerns the validity of self-report delinquency data when examining offending by race. As noted earlier, past studies on the reliability and validity of delinquency self-reports utilizing National Youth Survey data have found that compared to whites, blacks significantly underreport known offenses (Elliott and Ageton, 1980; Elliott and Huizinga, 1983). The present study produced findings of no significant difference in offending between blacks and non-blacks for any of the four delinquency types examined, which may not be the case if black respondents underreported their offending. Of course, had official records been utilized for this study, the opposite finding may have resulted; due to overrepresentation of blacks in official records, an artificially large difference in offending by race would likely have surfaced. Interestingly, in this study non-black minorities were found in the property offense

analysis to report significantly more offending than the other respondents. This suggests that underreporting of delinquency may be limited to blacks and not generalizable to all minorities. In any case, the possibility of underreporting by black respondents in the data used for the present study qualifies the findings herein.

It is important to again acknowledge the limitations of the cross-sectional design of this study and the contemporaneousness of the measures of religiousness and delinquency. While most published studies on the subject also utilize cross-sectional designs, a conservative interpretation of the finding of a religion effect in this study recognizes that religiousness at the time of data collection may have differed from religiousness at the time of offending. Indeed, while the expectation that religion will reduce delinquency is reasonable given its reputation as a social control agent, the opposite is also possible, i.e. that increased delinquency may result in reduced religious behavior. Using ICPRS archival data, it was not possible to merge various waves and therefore this study utilized a cross-sectional design to examine data that was originally collected longitudinally. Past research on Wave III and Wave IV National Youth Survey data established considerable stability in religiousness from year to year (Johnson *et al*, 2001), which makes the use of a cross-sectional design in this study less egregious. Nonetheless, empirically testing the relationship between religiousness and offending to determine a causal link requires a longitudinal design, and future studies should utilize such a design to draw the most definitive conclusions.

While significant religion effects were found for all delinquency types examined, even when controls were added for other relevant factors, there remains the possibility that the findings are biased by omitted variables. This study addressed the influence of

religion on delinquency in Social Control terms, the theoretical perspective most often associated with religion in criminological study. Hirschi's original conception of social bonding specifically addressed juvenile delinquency, which added to the appropriateness of Social Control for this study on youths ages 13-17. However, another prominent theory on juvenile delinquency, Social Learning, emphasizes the importance of peer association in the learning of delinquent behaviors. To specifically address the tenants of Social Learning in this study, measures of peer delinquency would be required, which were not included among the controls.

However, Social Control theory would predict prosocial peer association for religious youths based on the social bonding notions of attachment and involvement. Specifically, religious youths will be expected to maintain close relationships with other religious youths and to form attachments with those conventional peers and seek to maintain those connections by also behaving conventionally. And although the results of this study do not find religious participation to be uniquely influential on delinquency relative to religious salience, it may be expected that religious youths would be more involved in religious communities through church or youth group participation, where bonds to other religious youths would form.

### Conclusion

This study produced findings that religion has a significant and direct influence on all delinquency types investigated. This influence remained robust in the presence of intervening variables also known to affect delinquency. The results contradict the touchstone 1969 finding of Hirschi and Stark that religion has no effect on delinquency, as well as the claim of Tittle and Welch (1983) and others that a religion effect emerges

for only anti-ascetic offenses, although the effect of religion on delinquency was larger for these types of offenses. Differential effects of religiousness on offending by race and place were not found. These findings are tempered by somewhat limited generalizability, concerns regarding the validity of self-report delinquency measures for black subjects, and concerns regarding the contemporaneity of the religion and delinquency measures.

Perhaps more than studies that produce differential religion effects by offense type, the findings of the current study support the characterization of religion as an agent of social control. Both religious participation and religious salience were significantly and negatively related to each delinquency scale. This may suggest any combination of social bonds, not only to a moral code as indicated through the importance of salience, but also possibly commitment, attachment and even involvement as evidenced by significant effects for participation. Consistent negative relationships between religion and all delinquency types are anticipated by a theory that conventional behavior results from interpersonal bonds forged through shared beliefs, commitments and community. Indeed, variation in the religion effect by delinquency type would be difficult to define in terms of Social Control theory. Of course, in the absence of controls for competing causal theories, the findings of the current study, while not contradicting the theoretical perspective investigated, does not disprove other perspectives.

These results suggest some specific implications for future research in the area of religion and delinquency. While religious salience emerged as more influential on offending than participation, both measures were found influential on all types of offending examined. This finding supports the use of church attendance as a single

measure of religiousness, appealing for its parsimony and potential cost effectiveness. However, as the effect for salience was larger than for participation, a measure of salience may be more robust when considered with other known correlates of delinquency like parent attachment or peer delinquency (see also Benda and Toombs, 2000).

Also, the failure of this study to uncover interactive effects of religion by race or place should not preclude additional inquiries into those potentialities. No other known published study has examined the possibility of a differential effect of religion on various types of delinquency by race. While no interactive effects between race and religion relative to delinquency were uncovered in this study, the findings of this study may have resulted from the small minority samples and should not preclude additional inquiries into the relationship. Differential religiousness was observed between the race groups in the bivariate analyses, and future studies with larger minority samples may yet reveal differences between the races in the effect of religion on offending that were not seen in this study. And while no interactions between religion and urbanicity were found, this study lacked data to investigate possible interactions between religion and geographic region. Considerably more research measures place by geographic region than by urbanicity when investigating the exercise and importance of religion in America, and future studies should look to see if religion might affect offending through region.

Stark *et al.*(1982) suggest that the social scientist's general secularism and “irreligious or even anti-religious” nature has stymied sociological inquiry into the effect of religion on crime. Nevertheless, a small but constant stream of research persists, asking how religion impacts lives and guides behavior. While this study supports the

view that religion inhibits delinquency, until and unless a consensus is reached, that stream of interest and inquiry will continue to flow.

## Appendix

### Delinquency Scales

*“How many times in the LAST YEAR have you:”*

#### Person Offenses

1. Thrown objects (such as rocks, snowballs, or bottles) at cars or people?
2. Attacked someone with the idea of seriously hurting or killing him/her?
3. Been involved in gang fights?
4. Had (or tried to have) sexual relations with someone against their will?
5. Hit (or threatened to hit) at teacher or adult at school?
6. Hit (or threatened to hit) one of your parents?
7. Hit (or threatened to hit) other students?
8. Pressured or pushed someone such as a date or friend to do more sexually than they wanted to do?
9. Used force (strong-arm methods) to get money or things from other students?
10. Used force (strong-arm methods) to get money or things from other people (not students or teachers)?

#### Property Offenses

1. Purposely damaged or destroyed property belonging to your parents or other family members?
2. Purposely damaged or destroyed property belonging to a school?
3. Purposely damaged or destroyed other property that did not belong to you (not counting family or school property)?

4. Stolen (or tried to steal) a motor vehicle, such as a car or motorcycle?
5. Stolen (or tried to steal) something worth more than \$50?
6. Knowingly bought, sold or held stolen goods (or tried to do any of these things)?
7. Stolen (or tried to steal) things worth \$5 or less?
8. Stolen money or other things from your parents or other members of the family?
9. Taken a vehicle for a ride (drive) without the owner's permission?
10. Avoided paying for such things as movies, bus or subway rides, and food?
11. Stolen (or tried to steal) something worth between \$5 and \$50?
11. Stolen (or tried to steal) something at school, such as someone's coat from a classroom, lockers, or cafeteria, or a book from the library?
12. Broken into a building or vehicle (or tried to break in) to steal something or just to look around?
13. Failed to return extra change that a cashier gave you by mistake?

#### Other Offenses

1. Run away from home?
2. Lied about your age to gain entrance or to purchase something; for example, lying about your age to buy liquor or get into a movie?
3. Carried hidden weapon other than a plain pocketknife?
4. Been paid for having sexual intercourse with someone?
5. Had sexual intercourse with a person of the opposite sex other than your wife/husband?
6. Sold marijuana or hashish ("pot," "grass," "hash")?

7. Cheated on school tests?
8. Hitchhiked where it was illegal to do so?
9. Been loud, rowdy, or unruly in a public place (disorderly conduct)?
10. Sold hard drugs, such as heroin, cocaine, and LSD?
11. Bought or provided liquor for a minor?
12. Been drunk in a public place?
13. Begged for money or things from strangers?
14. Skipped class without an excuse?
15. Been suspended from school?
16. Made obscene telephone calls, such as calling someone and saying dirty things?

#### Substance Use

*“How many times in the LAST YEAR have you (used):”*

1. Beer
2. Wine
3. Hard Liquor
4. Tobacco
5. Marijuana

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