AN AMERICAN RELIGION? ASSOCIATIONS ABOUT CHRISTIANITY
AND ISLAM

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DEDICATION

This Thesis is dedicated to Pega Davouzedah. Living with you for the last two years has really made this whole process enjoyable! I will miss coming home and laughing with you after spending all day working in the lab. I love you and feel so blessed to have you as a friend!
ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

An American Religion? Associations About Christianity and Islam

by
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The United States of America is a secular nation with a separation of church and state and a commitment to religious freedom and tolerance. Although this country is religiously pluralistic, Christianity is still the largest and most influential religion in the public sphere. In considering the past and present influence of Christianity in this country, it may be perceived as more connected with the national identity than minority religions such as Islam. The goal of the present research was to examine the implicit and explicit interconnections between two major religions and the American identity. It was hypothesized that the concept “American” would be associated more strongly with “Christianity” than with “Islam” at both levels of responding (Hypothesis 1). Highlighting the perceived compatibilities between these religions and American values would reduce the tendency to equate American with Christianity (rather than Islam) at both the implicit and explicit levels (Hypothesis 2). Priming secularist views would undermine the propensity to link the American identity to Christianity (rather than to Islam) at the explicit level only (Hypothesis 3). Participants were randomly assigned to either a control condition or one of two experimental conditions seeking to manipulate their perceived compatibility between Islam and American values or their views concerning secularism. Afterwards, participants completed an Implicit Association Test assessing the direction and strength of associations between the concept “American” (relative to “foreign”) and the concepts “Christianity” and “Islam.” Explicit measures were then given to assess the perceived Americanness of each religion and the perceived compatibilities or conflicts between these religions and American values, as well as their relative views concerning secularism. Results revealed a strong implicit and explicit link between Christianity and the American identity. Receiving quotes concerning the perceived compatibility of Islam only reduced this tendency explicitly, while receiving quotes concerning secularism was unsuccessful in influencing the associations. Further results suggested self-reported levels of religiosity to moderate the relationship between receiving the perceived compatibility quotes and performance on the IAT. Those higher in religiosity after reading the perceived compatibility quotes, tended to more strongly associate Christianity with American than those with a lower level of religiosity. The present research revealed that Christianity is an important aspect of the American identity and that religiosity and the perceived compatibility of Islam are influential factors of this association.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In April 2009, San Diego State University’s magazine 360 featured an article regarding Muslim student’s lives stating that religious freedom in America comes with “strings attached”. Throughout this article, feelings of tension between being able to be seen as American and Muslim was voiced by many students interviewed (Geraghty, 2009).

“It has become a constant, this anti-Muslim feeling,” said Homayra Yusufi, a 21-year-old... “You have to prove your patriotism because it is questioned.” (p. 1)

“People see a Muslim on the trolley,” Abdullah said, “and they think, ‘Is this guy going to blow us up?’ As a minority, our voices are not heard, so people don't understand that we are Americans, too…” (p. 4)

To be an American seems to mean more than being born in the United States or having US citizenship. The United States of America may be a secular nation speaking to ideals of religious freedom, tolerance, and pluralism, but do they uphold these ideals they so strongly boast? Although it may seem that by claiming the United States as a secular nation religion can be kept separate, it has been argued that separating the two is nearly impossible. It is suggested that one cannot clearly categorize actions and beliefs as either religious or secular (Yinger, 1967). This has been seen recently with issues such as Proposition 8 in California which only recognizes and validates marriage between a man and a woman and controversies raised when President Barack Obama was said to be Muslim. Although the country is made up of many different religions, Christianity is still the largest and arguably the most influential religion in the public sphere. Christianity then may be seen as being connected with America while other religions are seen as in contention.

Despite what Americans may say regarding religious freedom and tolerance do they see holding to Christian beliefs and values as part of what it means to be an American? The goal of the present research was to examine the seeming relationship between religion and the American identity looking specifically at Christianity and Islam.
Looking back through American history, it seems apparent that there were strong Christian influences within the public sphere. Unlike today where there has been much contention between the influences of religion, there seemed to be no tension between state and religion. Religious principles derived from the Bible were part of the making of important historical documents which then laid the foundation for America such as the Declaration of Independence (1776) which speaks of “Nature’s God” and suggests “that all men are created equal” and that all have rights “endowed by their Creator.” George Washington (1796) alludes to cohesion of religion in America in his farewell address commenting on the necessary patriotism for America and the reassurance that all are of the same religion. Upon exploring politics in America, Alexis de Tocqueville (1831), a great political philosopher from France, felt that the people in America were very religious and very accepting of religion as truth (p. 290). In speaking with John Quincy Adams, Tocqueville noted that he seemed to view religion as an important aspect of American society (p. 51). The role of religion in the United States can even be seen in its more recent history with influential reform movements such as the civil rights for blacks deriving its basis from the beliefs of the Christian religion. Martin Luther King Jr., a Baptist minister, quoted direct scripture in his famous speeches which continue to move the people in this country today (Isaiah 40:4-5 and Amos 5:24; King, 1963). Our pledge of allegiance and currency even stress the notion of the United States of America as a nation under God that trusts in Him. Even today, this influence may continue to shape individuals’ perceptions of what it means to be an American.

Much speculation and observations have been made concerning the role of religion in American society today (Casanova, 2006; McClay, 2007; Seligman, 2008), but not much data has been collected on individuals’ attitudes towards religious groups in America and their roles in society. Recently, the Institute for the Study of Secularism in Society and Culture (Kosmin, & Keysar, 2009) released a summary report of their findings from the American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS) concerning the trends of religious affiliation in the United States of America. Between 1990 and 2001 there was an apparent
decline (roughly 10%) in the amount of people reporting to affiliate with Christianity as well as an increase in the proportion of non-religious, atheist, and agnostic individuals. According to data collected in 2008, this trend still persists but the decline is not increasing at a significant rate. In other words, religious affiliation within the U.S. has and is changing, but at a slow pace. Christianity is still the predominant religion and most likely will remain so for many years to come.

What then are people’s views as far as the role of religion within American society? In looking at polls produced by the media, possible discrepancies can be seen in relation to individuals’ views regarding religion in America. A Newsweek poll in 2002 showed that 45% of people viewed the United States to be a secular nation, whereas 45% viewed this country to be a Christian/Biblical nation. At the same time, the vast majority of people (89%) felt that the phrase “under God” should remain in the pledge (ABC News/Washington Post Poll, 2002) and 76% approved of the displaying of a monument to the Ten Commandments on government property (Associated Press, 2005).

As can be seen, there are many views and discrepancies today as far as the role of religion in American society. Despite the prevalence of the ideals of tolerance and freedom of religion, Christianity remains strongly linked to the American identity. This favoring of Christianity may lead to the derogation of other religions such as Islam within the United States leading those who affiliate with these religions to be seen as less American. As can be seen by the immense amount of patriotism, being an American is a very important aspect of most individuals’ identities. Thus, derogating one’s Americanness would be taking away a very valued aspect of their identity.

**Implicit Bias**

Because of the seeming differences in what people explicitly say regarding religion as it relates to the American society, it was advantageous to look at the relationship at an implicit level. Over the years, an expanding amount of research has been done in the area of implicit biases allowing researchers to examine attitudes and beliefs that occur at an automatic or unconscious level. The study of implicit biases is important as they have been shown to influence perceptions of others outside of an individual’s awareness. Implicit biases are believed to be rooted in one’s personal beliefs and values, the mainstream culture, past
and present experiences, as well as the desire to sustain cognitive consistency (Dasgupta, 2004; Rudman, 2004). Research has shown implicit biases to be related to those explicitly stated. However, this relationship has been shown to vary across studies and to be moderated by other variables such as the need to respond in a socially desirable manner for self-presentation purposes, a distinction between an individual’s beliefs and the cultures, the strength of the relative attitude, and a high contrast between the concepts being compared (Nosek, 2005).

Research concerning implicit biases has been done to examine prejudices and stereotypes toward different social groups such as ethnicities and gender, but there is a lack of research regarding implicit biases concerning religion. Only recently have there been studies that have looked at implicit biases towards religious groups. This research documented negative implicit attitudes towards Muslims (Gonsalkoral, von Hippel, Sherman, & Klauer, 2009), an implicit preference for Christians relative to Muslims (Rowatt, Franklin, & Cotton, 2005), and an implicit preference for unfamiliar names over Arab-Muslim names (Nosek et al., 2007). Concerning Judaism, one line of research comparing other religions simultaneously to Judaism, found that on average participants displayed greater preference for Judaism than for other religions (Nosek et al., 2007).

Implicit processes are not only important when assessing one’s attitudes or evaluations of different social groups, but can also be useful in identifying individuals’ perspectives regarding identity. An expanding amount of research is being done in this area specifically examining associations with the American identity. These studies so far have examined ethnicity showing a tendency to equate being American with being White (Devos & Banaji, 2005; Devos & Ma, 2008). The goal of the present research was to demonstrate that religion also plays a fundamental role in the American identity with Christianity being seen as more American than Islam. It may be argued that different religions are often linked with different ethnicities. Thus, with Christianity often being associated with Whites, it would simply be replicating the American = White effect. Although ethnicity may play a role in this relationship, the relationship between religion and American identity are met with distinct influences apart from ethnicity.
PERCEIVED COMPATIBILITY

A possible factor that may influence an individual’s perceived association between Christianity and America is their beliefs concerning the relative compatibility between beliefs and values. When the values of an outgroup are perceived as being incompatible with the values of the ingroup, the outgroup is viewed as a threat and elicit negative responses (Stephan, Diaz-Loving, & Duran, 2000; Stephan & Stephan, 1996; Stephan, Ybarra, & Bachman, 1999). Islam may be seen as less compatible with America as they may be seen as not encompassing the same beliefs, morals, and values that are strongly endorsed by most Americans.

The majority of studies concerning the role of symbolic threat has focused mainly on its influence on intergroup bias towards minority ethnic groups (Riek, Mania, & Gaertner, 2006), whereas those few studies concerning religion have been done in other countries such as Israel and India (Shimoni & Schwarzwald, 2003; Tausch, Hewston, & Roy, 2009). Although not labeled as symbolic threat, a recent study sought to examine predictors of anti-Muslim attitudes within the United States of America using a similar scale as a predictor variable and found that Christians’ perceived level of threat from Muslims towards their beliefs and values was correlated with prejudice towards Muslims (Raiya, Pargament, Mahoney, & Trevino, 2008). Similarly, Edgell, Gerteis, and Hartmann (2006) in surveying individuals found that the majority of people viewed Muslims (26.3%) and Atheists (39.6%) as not at all agreeing with their vision of America. Christians and Jews were also seen as not at all agreeing with their vision of America but to a lesser extent (13.5%, 7.4%, respectively).

SECULARISM

Also playing into the role of whether or not religion is seen as part of the American identity are individuals’ views regarding secularism. It has been suggested that individuals hold either a passive or assertive view on this issue. Those who are passive agree that religions may remain publicly visible, but endorse the idea that the state should not support the establishment of religions. In contrast, those who hold an assertive view on secularism subscribe to the idea that religion should be kept private. Passive secularism is said to be the dominant position in the U.S., but there are differences in individuals’ interpretations of this principle. Those who have been referred to as accommodationists feel that there can be an
interaction between church and state, whereas separationists consider that this interaction should be extremely limited (Kuru, 2007).

If religion is seen as a valuable asset to American society, it is possible for the dominant religion to be seen as more connected with America. In other words, if religion is not just seen as a personal matter, but also as a valuable influence within the public sphere, then it is expected that Christianity would be seen as more connected with America. On the other hand, if religion is perceived as a personal matter, requiring a high wall of separation between religion and the public sphere, then a connection between America and religion would not be seen. To the best of our knowledge, there are no known empirical studies that have sought to examine systematically the influence of secularist ideals on associations between religion and American identity.

**COMMON VS. DISTINCT IDENTITIES**

Lastly, it is important to examine the influence of identity on biases as well as means of reducing the expected bias. An individual’s identity is constructed of many different groups he or she belongs to. Some of these groups can be conceived as subgroups within a superordinate group. For example, students at San Diego State University belong to different colleges (i.e. education, science, arts and letters, etc.), but they also identify with being a part of the University as a whole. Research has found this complex system composing an individual’s identity to influence bias towards groups specifically arguing the best means of reducing intergroup bias through differential activation of different aspects of an individual’s identity.

Colorblind ideology suggests that intergroup bias can best be decreased if there is complete assimilation of the subgroups to form a single superordinate group. Studies have shown that after receiving messages convincing participants of a colorblind framework, intergroup bias was decreased (Wolsko, Park, Judd, & Wittenbrink, 2000). Similarly for many years the Common Ingroup Identity Model has been used as a framework to decrease outgroup derogation (Gaertner et al., 2000). Although dual identities can increase biases toward outgroups and making salient a superordinate identity can decrease biases, the impact of these factors can be unstable and may, under some circumstances, produce opposite effects (Dovidio, Gaertner, & Saguy, 2009).
Recently research has shown that those who have stronger dual identities find their group to be more prototypical of the superordinate group often leading to the derogation of other subgroups. For example, West Germans in comparison to East Germans were seen as the more prototypical German (Ingroup Projection Model; for a review see Wenzel, Mummendey, & Waldzus, 2007). It may be suggested that the tendency to associate Christianity with American is simply due to ingroup projection as those who affiliate with Christianity hold the majority status in the United States. But, if individuals who associate with another religion or do not associate with a religion make this association, then it can be said that ingroup projection is not the mechanism at work.

Multiculturalism in contrast to colorblind ideology argues for the importance of maintaining multiple identities and appreciating diversity. The same studies showing a decrease in bias after receiving a message concerning colorblindness has shown a decrease in bias after receiving a message concerning multiculturalism (Wolsko et al., 2000). While decreasing biases, multiculturalism enhanced acknowledgment of differences between groups. Research looking at the role of a common identity found an increase in bias when there was a sole activation of the superordinate category and a decrease when a simultaneous activation of both the individual’s subgroup and the superordinate group were activated (Hornsey & Hogg, 2000b). It has been suggested that focusing on a superordinate identity can be seen as a threat to some groups if individuals feel a strong need to be distinctive from other groups (Optimal Distinctiveness Theory; Brewer, 1991).

When applying these ideas to the issue of religion and American identity, alternative predictions can be made. On one hand, fostering a common identity (in this case the American identity) could decrease seeing one religion as more American than another. On the other hand, it could create biases towards different religious groups given a strong desire for the religions to remain distinct from one another. One study did find multiculturalism to reduce implicit prejudice towards Arab-Muslims, but this study focused more on the role of ethnicity (contrasting Arab-Muslim names to Black names) than on the role of religion (Park, Felix, & Lee, 2007). The present research in contrast put the emphasis on religion and identity (rather than ethnicity and attitude). Although multiculturalism may appear to be a more efficient approach to reduce intergroup biases, finding some common grounds between religions may also be beneficial or optimal to reduce tensions between groups. In fact,
Wolsko et al. (2000) when explaining multiculturalism in their article referred to statements by Yinger (1967) which suggested not just appreciating diversity, but also finding similarities. Yet, in their studies as well as other studies concerning multiculturalism, manipulations used have only focused on celebrating group differences (Correll, Park, & Smith, 2008; Richeson & Nussbaum, 2004; Wolsko et al., 2006). However, research by Hornsey and Hogg (2000a) has examined bias reduction specifically in the context of similarity or dissimilarity while having either dual identities or common identities activated. In their experiments, they used the University of Queensland (UQ) as the superordinate category and humanities and math-sciences as two subgroups. Participants were either led to believe that math-sciences and humanities students differ in what they study, but were similar as far as their ideals regarding the world or that they were different in both aspects. Their results showed that those in the condition where both their subgroup and the superordinate group were simultaneously activated showed less bias when they were led to believe the subgroups shared some similarity.

Christianity may be seen as more American than Islam partly because people may feel that the principles held by these religions are not compatible with those that Americans consider important aspects of being an American. It may be possible then to reduce bias by using not only a multicultural approach (which allows for the maintaining of distinct identities), but also finding similarities between religious values, morals, and beliefs with American values, morals, and beliefs. In other words, increasing the perceived compatibility between the religions and America may decrease intergroup biases. In addition, as previously mentioned, principles of secularism also may be a viable alternative to reducing intergroup biases. In agreeing with a clear separation between religion and the public sphere, individuals may be less likely to differentiate religions in terms of their association with America.

**GOALS OF THE PRESENT RESEARCH**

As can be understood by the evidence provided above, religion may in fact be an important aspect of the American identity. Christianity specifically with it holding the majority and seemingly having a large influence in society may be seen as more American than minority religions such as Islam. Although it has been suggested that ethnicity plays a role in the American identity, and religion is often times attributed to different ethnicities,
there seems to be other distinct influences such as perceived compatibility (symbolic threat) and secularist views. The present research sought to examine systematically the link between two major religions (Christianity and Islam) and the American identity, as well as the possible factors underlying these associations. In order to get a comprehensive view on individuals’ perspectives, these associations were examined at both implicit and explicit levels of responding.

In regards to the link between religion and the American identity, we hypothesized that Christianity would be seen as more American than Islam (Hypothesis 1). Implicitly, it was expected that participants would exhibit a greater automatic tendency in associating American with Christianity than with Islam. This seemed probable because of the mainstream cultures seeming tendency in favoring Christianity as well as their majority status and the derogation of Islam. With respect to explicit measures of Americanness, it was expected that the same pattern would emerge but to a lesser extent. Despite adherence to American ideals of pluralism, freedom, and tolerance, it may still be socially acceptable to express the idea that Islam is less American than Christianity in part because of events such as 9/11.

Not only was the goal of the present study to establish empirically the existence of this American-Christianity linkage, but also to examine experimentally whether or not perceived compatibility and views concerning secularism could be used as means to reduce individual’s implicit and explicit perceived associations between religions and American identity. This was done by means of an experimental manipulation. In one experimental condition, we manipulated participants’ views of the relative compatibility between Islam and American identity. In another experimental condition, we primed principles of secularism (separation of religion and state). These two experimental conditions were contrasted to a control condition.
CHAPTER 2

PILOT STUDY

A pilot study was conducted to establish the expected associations between religion and American identity and to explore possible factors underlying these associations. More precisely, in there being no known empirical studies examining the link between Christianity and the American identity, a pilot study was conducted to document a strong association between Christianity and American identity and to determine whether perceived compatibility and secularist ideals might be underlying this association. Along with examining cognitive and affective responses to Christianity and Islam, the pilot study also examined similar responses toward Judaism.

PARTICIPANTS

Participants were 139 undergraduate students (35 men and 104 women) at San Diego State University. Partial course credit was received for participation. Participants’ age ranged from 18 to 25 with a median age of 19. Ninety participants (64.7%) reported affiliating with Christianity, 5.0% with Judaism, 7.2% with other religions, 20.9% non-religious, atheist or agnostic (referred to as Nones), and three did not specify. No participants reported affiliating with Islam. Participants reported being slightly to moderately religious ($M = 2.676$; 1 being strongly religious, 4 being not at all religious). A majority of the participants were U.S. citizens (91.4%) with 8.6% being non-U.S. citizens. In terms of political orientation and affiliation, the sample was slightly liberal ($M = 3.460$; 4 being neutral) and democratic ($M = 3.532$; 4 being neutral).

PROCEDURE

The design of this study included three Implicit Associations Tests completed by each participant followed by a series of questionnaires which sought to measure participants explicit Americanness, perceived compatibility, secularism, and familiarity.
Implicit Associations

Each participant completed three Implicit Association Tests (IATs; Greenwald, McGhee, & Schwartz, 1998) assessing the direction and strength of associations between the concept American (relative to foreign) and the concepts Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. The American-foreign IAT was adapted from that developed by Devos and Banaji (2005) with six pictures being used to represent the concepts “American” and “foreign”. Three pictures and three words were used for stimuli to represent each religion with all being independent of each religion (some pictures were taken from Nosek, Banaji, & Greenwald, 2006). (See Appendix A for all relevant stimuli)

Before being asked to complete the IATs, participants were shown the stimuli for each religious concept along with a description to ensure that participants understood what each symbol was and to which religion it belonged. After being shown descriptions, participants were shown the individual stimuli for each category.

In the IAT, the labels of the concepts were displayed in the upper right and upper left hand of the screen and categorizations were made by pressing the corresponding keys on the keyboard. For example, in one series of trials the concepts American and Christianity would be presented in the upper left hand of the screen with participants being asked to categorize relevant pictures and words, as quickly as possible, using the “a” key. In addition, the concepts foreign and Islam would be presented in the upper right hand of the screen with participants being asked to categorize relevant pictures and words, as quickly as possible, using the “5” key. In another block of trials, the concepts would be switched with Christianity now being paired with foreign and Islam with American. The three IATs were a combination of all possible comparisons between the three religions of interest (i.e., Christianity vs. Islam, Christianity vs. Judaism, and Judaism vs. Islam). The order of the blocks, trials, and tests were counterbalanced across participants.

Explicit Americanness

After completing the three IATs, participants were given a series of measures in order to assess the perceived Americanness of each religion. Participants were asked the extent to which they saw each religion as “connected with America and all things American” (1 = Not at all American, 7 = Absolutely American).
**Perceived Compatibility**

A series of items, adapted from Stephan, Ybarra, and Bachman’s (1999) symbolic threat measure, was given in order to assess the perceived compatibilities or conflicts between the three religions of interest and American values. Items were adjusted to be relevant to religious groups. Similar items were completed for each religious group. For example, “The values and beliefs of Christian Americans regarding moral and religious issues are not compatible with the beliefs and values of most Americans.” Responses were coded so that higher scores reflected greater compatibility (in terms of values and beliefs) between the religion and America (see Appendix B for all relevant measures).

**Secularism**

A measure of secularism consisting of 11 items was created in order to assess individuals’ thoughts concerning religion’s role in American society. Questions were adapted from various public polls (ABC News/Washington Post Poll, 2002; Associated Press, 2005; Newsweek, 2002; for a compilation of public polls regarding religion see www.pollingreport.com). Sample items included “The government should provide financial support to all religious institutions.” High scores represent stronger agreement with separating church and state.

**Attitudes and Familiarity**

Participants were asked to report how warm or cold they felt toward each religion (Feeling Thermometer; 1 = Very Cold, 7 = Very Warm) in order to assess favorable and unfavorable attitudes towards the religions. Familiarity with each religion was assessed using a 4-point scale (1 = I know nothing, 4 = I know a lot).
CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

IMPLICIT ASSOCIATIONS

Implicit data were analyzed using the algorithm suggested by Greenwald, Nosek, and Banaji (2003). Trials with latencies > 10,000 ms were eliminated. Four participants were dropped as their response rate was faster than 300 ms on more than 10% of the trials. An IAT D index was computed for each IAT in order to assess the strength and direction of each IAT’s effect and was used for all statistical analysis as recommended. This was done by computing the difference between the mean response latency for the two blocks of trials and dividing it by its associated pooled standard deviation. When Christianity is compared to another religion (Islam or Judaism), a positive IAT D index indicates a stronger association between Christianity and American. In the context of the Judaism-Islam IAT, a positive IAT D index indicates a stronger association between Judaism and American. Reliability for each IAT was assessed by dividing each IAT into three parcels (trials 1-20, 21-40, and 41-60) from which IAT D effects were calculated. These were then used to calculate Cronbach’s α values. Reliability for each IAT is as follows: Christianity – Islam (α = .673), Christianity – Judaism (α = .811), Judaism – Islam (α = .708).

One sample t-tests revealed significant IAT D effects for all three IATs. The concept American was associated more strongly with Christianity than Islam [M = 0.780, SD = 0.326, t(138) = 28.21, p < .001] or Judaism [M = 0.679, SD = 0.404, t(138) = 19.81, p < .001]. In addition, the concept American was associated more strongly with Judaism than Islam [M = 0.293, SD = 0.365, t(138) = 9.48, p < .001].

A repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted in order to assess whether there were significant differences in performance on the three IATs. Using Wilk’s criterion (Λ) as the omnibus test statistic, a significant main effect for religion contrast was found, F(2, 137) = 83.016, p < .001, partial η² = .548.

A test of pairwise comparisons was performed using a Bonferroni adjustment in order to further investigate the difference in performance on the three IATs. Results showed IAT D
effects for all IATs to be significantly different from one another. The Christianity – Islam IAT D effect was significantly greater than the Christianity – Judaism IAT D effect, \( p = .03 \), as well as greater than the Judaism – Islam IAT D effect, \( p < .001 \). Furthermore, the Christianity – Judaism IAT D effect was significantly greater than the Judaism – Islam IAT D effect, \( p < .001 \) (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1. IAT D effects for each religion contrast. Positive scores reflect a stronger association between Christianity and American in the Christianity – Islam and Christianity – Judaism contrasts. Positive scores reflect a stronger association between Judaism and American in the Judaism – Islam contrast.**

**EXPLICIT AMERICANNESS**

A repeated measures ANOVA was conducted in order to assess differences in explicit responses regarding the extent to which Christianity, Judaism, and Islam were seen as being connected with America. A significant main effect for religion was found, \( F(2, 137) = 217.573, p < .001 \), partial \( \eta^2 = .761 \). A test of pairwise comparisons\(^1\) showed that the extent to which individuals rated each religion as being connected with America was significantly different for each religion. Christianity \((M = 5.942, SD = 1.141)\) in comparison to Judaism \((M = 4.115, SD = 1.460; p < .001)\) and Islam \((M = 3.014, SD = 1.394; p < .001)\) was rated as

\(^1\) All pairwise comparisons reported were conducted using the Bonferroni adjustment procedure.
significantly more connected with America. Furthermore, Judaism in comparison to Islam was rated significantly more connected with America, \( p < .001 \).

As stated previously, it may be suggested that these implicit and explicit associations may merely be a result of ingroup projection. Although there were not enough participants affiliating with Islam and Judaism to make a direct comparison, a comparison could be made between the Nones (non-religious, atheists, and agnostics; \( n = 29 \)). Independent t-tests were performed in order to assess whether there were differences in implicit and explicit associations made by participants affiliating with Christianity and Nones. In regards to implicit associations, no significant differences between groups were found in the extent to which Christianity and Judaism, \( t(117) = 1.277, p = .204 \) or Christianity and Islam, \( t(117) = .455, p = .650 \), were association to the concept American. Significant difference between groups emerged at the explicit level: Compared to Nones, Christian participants displayed a greater tendency to attribute the concept American to Christianity than to Judaism, \( t(117) = 2.080, p = .040 \) or Islam, \( t(117) = 2.271, p = .025 \). This being noted, even Nones rated Christianity as more American than Judaism, \( t(28) = 5.64, p < .001 \) or Islam, \( t(28) = 8.28, p < .001 \). These results suggest that only the explicit associations may be mildly influenced by ingroup projection as there was disagreement in the extent to which Christianity was seen as American. But, these associations cannot be reduced to this phenomenon as implicitly there was consensus and explicitly there was still a tendency to favor Christianity.

**PERCEIVED COMPATIBILITY**

Reliability for the measure of perceived compatibility for each religion was as follows: Christianity (\( \alpha = .755 \)), Judaism (\( \alpha = .768 \)), and Islam (\( \alpha = .727 \)). A repeated measures ANOVA was conducted in order to assess whether there were significant differences in perceived compatibility of the religions with American values, beliefs, and morals. A significant main effect for group was found, \( F(2, 137) = 64.262, p < .001 \), partial \( \eta^2 = .484 \). A test of pairwise comparisons was performed in order to investigate further the difference in perceived compatibility. Larger means correspond with less symbolic threat thus more perceived compatibility. Results showed each religion’s perceived compatibility to be significantly different from one another. Christianity (\( M = 5.24, SD = 1.012 \)) in comparison to Judaism (\( M = 4.88, SD = 0.927, p = .001 \)) and Islam (\( M = 4.03, SD = 0.987; p \))
< .001) was rated significantly more compatible with American morals, beliefs, and values. Furthermore, Judaism was significantly rated as more compatible than Islam, $p < .001$.

**SECULARISM**

Reliability for this measure was $\alpha = .784$. Participants’ scores ranged from 1.30 to 6.40 with a mean score of 3.88 ($SD = 1.12$). This suggests that on average participants neither strongly agreed nor disagreed with statements concerning secularism.

**ATTITUDES**

A repeated measures ANOVA was conducted in order to assess whether there were significant differences in participants’ attitudes towards each religion. A significant main effect for religion was found, $F(2, 137) = 53.128, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .437$. A test of pairwise comparisons showed attitude ratings for all religions to be significantly different from one another. Christianity ($M = 5.633, SD = 1.495$) was rated as significantly more favorable than Judaism ($M = 4.878, SD = 1.338, p < .001$) and Islam ($M = 3.993, SD = 1.427; p < .001$). Furthermore, Judaism was rated as significantly more favorable than Islam, $p < .001$.

**FAMILIARITY**

A repeated measures ANOVA was conducted in order to assess whether there were significant differences in familiarity ratings of the religions. A significant main effect for group was found, $F(2, 137) = 145.792, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .680$. A test of pairwise comparisons showed familiarity ratings for all religions to be significantly different from one another. Participants indicated that they were more familiar with Christianity ($M = 3.331, SD = 0.675$) compared to Judaism ($M = 2.360, SD = 0.752, p < .001$) and Islam ($M = 2.022, SD = 0.747; p < .001$). Furthermore, they indicated being more familiar with Judaism compared to Islam, $p < .001$. (see Table 1 for relative means and SDs for each religion)

**CORRELATIONS**

Correlations and their relative significance can be found in the correlations matrices for each religion contrast in Table 2.
Table 1. Means and Standard Deviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Christianity</th>
<th>Judaism</th>
<th>Islam</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Measures</td>
<td>M  SD</td>
<td>M  SD</td>
<td>M  SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Americanness</td>
<td>5.94 1.14</td>
<td>4.12 1.46</td>
<td>3.01 1.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Compatibility</td>
<td>5.24 1.01</td>
<td>4.88 0.927</td>
<td>4.03 0.987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td>5.63 1.49</td>
<td>4.88 1.34</td>
<td>3.99 1.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiarity</td>
<td>3.33 0.675</td>
<td>2.36 0.752</td>
<td>2.02 0.747</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Implicit and Explicit Measures

Difference scores of the explicit measure of Americanness were computed to parallel the IAT D indexes (e.g., Americanness of Christianity – Americanness of Islam). Significant positive correlations emerged between implicit and explicit measures of Americanness for all three religion contrasts (Christianity – Islam, $r = .237$; Christianity-Judaism, $r = .191$; Judaism – Islam, $r = .424$). This suggests that while they are measuring two different constructs, implicit and explicit measures do overlap (for more information regarding correlations between implicit and explicit measures see Nosek, 2005).

Perceived Compatibility

Difference scores were computed in order that the scores would parallel the implicit and explicit measures of Americanness (e.g., compatibility of Islam – compatibility of Christianity). For the Christianity – Islam and Christianity – Judaism contrasts, positive scores reflect more perceived compatibility with Christianity. Positive scores in the Judaism – Islam contrast reflect more perceived compatibility with Judaism. Significant positive correlations emerged between perceived compatibility and implicit as well as explicit measures of Americanness for the Christianity – Islam contrast (implicit, $r = .266$; explicit, $r = .237$) as well as the Judaism – Islam contrast (implicit, $r = .283$; explicit, $r = .514$). For the Christianity – Judaism contrast only a significant positive correlation between perceived compatibility and the explicit measure of Americanness emerged ($r = .294$). Overall,
Table 2. Correlations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures 1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Christianity – Islam</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. IAT    ---</td>
<td>.237**</td>
<td>.266**</td>
<td>-.101</td>
<td>.189*</td>
<td>.237**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Americanness</td>
<td>.237**</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>.511**</td>
<td>-.232**</td>
<td>.484**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Perceived Compatibility</td>
<td>.266**</td>
<td>.237**</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>-.373**</td>
<td>.672*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Secularism</td>
<td>-.101</td>
<td>-.232**</td>
<td>-.373**</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>-.465*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Attitude</td>
<td>.189*</td>
<td>.484**</td>
<td>.672**</td>
<td>-.465**</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Familiarity</td>
<td>.237**</td>
<td>.235**</td>
<td>.235**</td>
<td>-.298**</td>
<td>.339*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christianity – Judaism</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. IAT    ---</td>
<td>.191*</td>
<td>.126</td>
<td>-.009</td>
<td>.304*</td>
<td>.396**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Americanness</td>
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<td>.294**</td>
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<td>.348**</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Perceived Compatibility</td>
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<td>-.321**</td>
<td>.567**</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Secularism</td>
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<td>-.321**</td>
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<td>-.434*</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Attitude</td>
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<td>.348**</td>
<td>.567**</td>
<td>-.434**</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Familiarity</td>
<td>.396**</td>
<td>.126</td>
<td>.343**</td>
<td>-.223**</td>
<td>.433**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Judaism – Islam</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. IAT    ---</td>
<td>.422**</td>
<td>.283**</td>
<td>-.081</td>
<td>.424**</td>
<td>.345**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Americanness</td>
<td>.422**</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>.514**</td>
<td>-.105</td>
<td>.504**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Perceived Compatibility</td>
<td>.283**</td>
<td>.514**</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>-.153</td>
<td>.632**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Secularism</td>
<td>-.081</td>
<td>-.105</td>
<td>-.153</td>
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<td>-.094</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Attitude</td>
<td>.424**</td>
<td>.504**</td>
<td>.632**</td>
<td>-.094</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Familiarity</td>
<td>.345**</td>
<td>.373**</td>
<td>.290**</td>
<td>-.112</td>
<td>.511*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
perceived compatibilities of religions were linked to explicit and implicit ratings of Americanness.

**Secularism**

No significant correlations emerged between secularism and the three IATs. A significant negative correlation was found between secularism and the explicit measure of Americanness for the Christianity – Islam contrast \( (r = -.232) \). Although no significant correlations between secularism and the explicit measure of Americanness for the Christianity – Judaism and the Judaism – Islam contrast, weak negative correlations did emerge \( (r = -.153 \) and \(-.105) \). In sum, at best secularism has a tenuous link with explicit ratings of Americanness.

**Attitudes**

Difference scores were computed in order that the scores would parallel the implicit and explicit measures of Americanness (e.g., attitude towards Christianity – attitude towards Islam). Significant positive correlations emerged between attitudes and implicit measures of Americanness for all three religion contrasts (Christianity – Islam, \( r = .189 \); Christianity-Judaism, \( r = .304 \); Judaism – Islam, \( r = .424 \)). Significant positive correlations also emerged between attitudes and explicit measures of Americanness (Christianity – Islam, \( r = .484 \); Christianity-Judaism, \( r = .348 \); Judaism – Islam, \( r = .504 \)). Correlations among attitude and the explicit measure of Americanness were consistently higher than those with the implicit measures across all three religion contrasts. This suggests that attitudes towards religions may be more influential in individuals’ explicit ratings of Americanness than their implicit associations.

**Familiarity**

Difference scores were computed in order that the scores would parallel the implicit and explicit measures of Americanness (e.g., familiarity with Christianity – familiarity with Islam). Similar significant positive correlations emerged between familiarity and implicit as well as explicit measures of Americanness for the Christianity – Islam contrast (implicit, \( r = .237 \); explicit, \( r = .235 \)) as well as the Judaism – Islam contrast (implicit, \( r = .237 \); explicit, \( r = .235 \)). For the Christianity – Judaism contrast only a significant positive correlation
between familiarity and the IAT emerged \( r = .396 \). Overall, these correlations suggest that familiarity with the religions accounts for implicit associations as well as explicit ratings of Americanness.

**DISCUSSION**

The results from this pilot study suggest that Christianity is seen as more American than both Islam and Judaism and Judaism as more American than Islam. This pattern emerged at both levels of responding (implicit and explicit). Christianity being seen as more American than Judaism provides evidence that Christianity being more strongly associated with American is not merely replicating the American = White effect. It appears that there may be some other underlying factors contributing to these associations. Based on the present data, likely candidates are attitudes towards each religion, familiarity with the religions, perceived compatibility with each religion and American values as well as views concerning secularism. Interestingly these possible influences may be different at the implicit or explicit level. For example, attitudes and secularism may be more potent predictors of explicit ratings of Americanness.

**HYPOTHESES**

The goal of the current study was to examine further the possible influences contributing to the association between Christianity and America. The Christianity – Islam contrast was the sole focus of this study as it yielded the strongest effect. We compared the impact of two experimental manipulations on the American = Christianity linkage. In one case, we attempted to increase the perceived compatibility between Islam and American values. In another case, we attempted to increase agreement with secularism. The goal of manipulating perceived compatibility was to show that there are in fact similarities between values held by the religion Islam and American values. It was hypothesized that participants in the perceived compatibility condition would have a significantly weaker tendency in associating Christianity with American (at both the implicit and explicit levels) compared to a control condition (Hypothesis 2). In addition, it was hypothesized that, compared to a control condition, participants in the secularism condition would have a significantly weaker tendency in associating Christianity with American only at the explicit level (Hypothesis 3).
CHAPTER 4

METHODS

DESIGN

Participants were randomly assigned to either a control condition or one of two experimental conditions (Perceived Compatibility vs. Secularism). With exception of those in the Control condition, participants first were given a task in which they read various quotes and headlines (depending on which condition they were assigned to) stressing compatibilities between Islam and American values or stressing ideals of secularism. An IAT was then given in which they were asked to associate the concepts “Christianity” and “Islam” with concepts “American” and “foreign.” Lastly, participants completed a series of questionnaires concerning explicit associations between religion and American identity, perceived compatibility, secularism, familiarity, and attitudes.

PARTICIPANTS

A total of 156 San Diego State University undergraduate students (112 women and 45 men) composed of those enrolled in an introductory psychology course and a cultural psychology course were recruited for this study2. Partial course credit was received for participation. Age ranged from 18 to 50 (median age of 21). The majority of participants reported affiliating with Christianity (64.7%), 3.2% with Judaism, 6.4% with other religions, 24.4% non-religious, atheist or agnostic (referred to as Nones), and two did not specify3. No participants reported affiliating with Islam. Participants reported being slightly to moderately religious ($M = 2.821$; 1 being strongly religious, 4 being not at all religious). A majority of the participants were U.S. citizens (91.7%) with 8.3% being non-U.S. citizens. In terms of

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2 No significant differences emerged between students in the introductory psychology course and the cultural psychology course in the results below. Thus, this factor was not introduced in analyses.

3 No association between religious affiliation and condition. All affiliations were evenly distributed across experimental conditions.
political orientation and affiliation, the sample was slightly liberal ($M = 3.417$; 4 being neutral) and democratic ($M = 3.391$; 4 being neutral).

**PROCEDURE**

Participants were randomly assigned to either the control condition or one of two experimental conditions (Perceived Compatibility vs. Secularism). In the Control condition, participants were not given a preliminary task serving as a manipulation, only completing the dependent measures.

Participants assigned to the Perceived Compatibility condition were lead through a task which served to increase the extent to which they perceived Islam to be compatible with American values. After being given the relative instructions, participants were shown quotes from newspapers and magazine articles which suggested compatibility between Islam and American values (e.g., “Islamic values are, by and large, very consistent with American values, with a focus on family, faith, hard work and an obligation to better self and society.”). Each quote was attributed to political figures (e.g., Hillary Clinton), Muslim American organizations and Muslim American citizens. After reading each quote, they were asked to rate on a 7-point scale (not at all compatible – absolutely compatible) the extent to which they thought that the quote reflected compatibility between Islam and American values. Quotes were slightly changed without altering their meaning in order to ensure clarity and expression of compatibility between Islam and American values. (See Appendix C)

Participants assigned to the Secularism condition were given a similar task. The goal of this task was to increase participants’ agreement with a high wall of separation between church and state. Quotes concerning a separation between religion and state were used and participants were asked to rate on a 7-point scale (not at all separate – absolutely separate) the extent to which they thought that the quote reflected a separation between religion and the public sphere (e.g., “Parents, not public schools, should teach religious beliefs to children—Governments and public schools have no business deciding which religious beliefs are true.”). Each quote was attributed to political figures (e.g., Barack Obama), American organizations and American citizens. (See Appendix C)
IMPLICIT ASSOCIATIONS AND EXPLICIT MEASURES

After reading the relevant quotes (with the exception of those in the control condition), participants were asked to complete the American-foreign IAT contrasting Christianity and Islam. This IAT was the same as that used for the pilot study. The order of the critical blocks was counterbalanced across participants. After completing the IAT, participants were given the explicit measures used in the pilot study. First, participants were asked to rate the extent to which they felt that Islam and Christianity is American. Next, in random order, they were asked their attitude towards each religion (feeling thermometer), and the perceived compatibility of each religion with American values. Following was the secularism questionnaire, ratings of agreement with the quotes used for the manipulations, and lastly demographics.
CHAPTER 5

RESULTS

MANIPULATION CHECKS

In order to determine the efficacy of the manipulations, several factors were considered. First, we examined the extent to which participants in the Perceived Compatibility (PC) condition rated the quotes as depicting compatibility between Islam and American values. We also looked at the extent to which participants in the Secularism (SC) condition rated the quotes as depicting a separation between church and state. In order for these manipulations to be effective, it was important for participants to view the quotes in the desired manner. On average, the PC quotes were rated as depicting compatibility between Islam and American values ($\alpha = .851$, $M = 4.704$, $SD = 0.944$). Participants receiving the SC quotes rated them on average as depicting a separation between church and state ($\alpha = .888$, $M = 5.269$, $SD = 1.127$). A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to test whether there were significant differences between the consistencies of the PC and SC quotes. Quotes in the SC condition were rated as more consistent with secularism than quotes in the PC condition were rated as consistent with perceived compatibilities, $F(2, 153) = 7.695$, $p = .007$, $\eta^2 = .07$. Consistent with the goals of the manipulation, overall participants agreed that the quotes depicted compatibility between Islam and American values and a separation between church and state.

It is possible that the source of the quotes, whether they were attributed to a Muslim source (an outgroup for participants) a source such as Hillary Clinton (who might be categorized as an ingroup member by most participants) could influence the effectiveness of the quotes. There are many possibilities as to how this could have affected the effectiveness of the manipulation. For example, reading quotes concerning compatibilities attributed to a Muslim source may be more effective as participants may realize that Muslims do express the same values as them. On the other hand, individuals may have very strong negative views towards Muslims and may be reluctant to believe what they are expressing to be the truth. For this reason, we attributed the quotes to a variety of sources, making sure that this factor
was not confounded with experimental conditions (PC vs. SC conditions). It is a matter for future research to examine potential differences in responses to quotes attributed to outgroup vs. ingroup members.

Next, we examined the extent to which participants personally agreed with the PC and SC quotes. Participants in each condition rated the extent of their agreement with each quote. Although participants may perceive these quotes as depicting compatibility and separation, if they did not agree with their premise, then the quotes may not have been successful in influencing their perceptions on the issues in the desired direction. When participants in each condition were asked the extent of their agreement with the quotes, on average they agreed with both the PC quotes ($M = 4.921$, $SD = 0.904$) and the SC quotes ($M = 5.481$, $SD = .81198$). A repeated measures ANOVA was conducted in order to assess whether there were significant differences in the extent to which participants in each condition agreed with the quotes. Using Wilk’s criterion ($\Lambda$) as the omnibus test statistic, a significant main effect for quote was found, $F(1, 153) = 51.399$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .251$. But, there was not a significant interaction between condition and quotes, $F(2, 153) = .731$, $p = .483$, partial $\eta^2 = .009$. Participants agreed more with the SC quotes than the PC quotes irrespective of the condition they were assigned to. These results suggest that participants more strongly agreed with the premise that religion and state should be separate than with the notion that Islam is compatible with American values. The initial exposure to and ratings of the quotes, as part of the manipulation, did not influence their relative agreement with the quotes.

The PC measure (Christianity $\alpha = .706$; Islam $\alpha = .695$) and the SC measure ($\alpha = .809$), also included in the pilot study, were used to assess more directly the effectiveness of the experimental manipulations. If the PC manipulation was successful, then participants’ tendency in seeing greater compatibilities between American values and Christianity than Islam would be weaker in the PC condition than in the control condition and the SC condition. A marginal effect for differences between conditions was found, $F(2, 153) = 2.352$, $p = .099$, $\eta^2 = .031$. In order to understand this marginal effect further, opinions regarding the relative compatibility between each religion and American values were examined separately. Significant differences between conditions in the extent to which Islam alone is compatible with American values emerged, $F(2, 153) = 4.811$, $p = .009$, $\eta^2 = .059$. 
A test of pairwise comparisons was computed resulting with participants in the PC condition rating Islam as more compatible with American values ($M = 3.51, SD = .834$) than those in the control condition ($M = 3.96, SD = .902; p = .027$) and those in the secularism condition ($M = 3.97, SD = .836; p = .022$). This suggests that the reading of the quotes increased the extent to which participants perceived Islam as compatible with American values. No significant differences between conditions were found in the extent to which Christianity alone is compatible with American values, $F(2, 153) = .003, p = .997$ (see Table 3 for means and SDs). No differences in the extent to which Christianity is seen as compatible can be expected as the PC quotes used in the manipulation focused on the compatibility between Islam and American values. Based on these analyses, the PC quotes successfully increased the extent to which Islam is seen as compatible with American values. Given that the PC measure was not taken immediately after the manipulation, but instead after the IAT and other explicit measures, this shows that the increase sustained throughout the duration of the study.

In regards to the efficacy of the SC quotes, a significant difference between conditions did not emerge, $F(2, 153) = .050, p = .951, \eta^2 = .0006$ (see Table 3 for means and SDs). This suggests that the manipulation was not successful in increasing the extent to which participants endorsed secularist views. Overall, these various results give support for the efficacy of the PC quotes in increasing the extent to which participants viewed Islam as compatible with American values. But, although there was agreement with the SC quotes and participants felt they portrayed separation between religion and state, they were not successful in increasing the extent to which they felt religion and state should be kept separate.

**Implicit Associations**

Implicit data were analyzed using the algorithm suggested by Greenwald, Nosek, and Banaji (2003). An IAT D index was computed for the Christian-Islam IAT in order to assess the strength and direction of the IAT’s effect and was used for all statistical analysis as recommended. This was done by computing the difference between the mean response latency for the two blocks of trials and dividing it by its associated pooled standard deviation. When Christianity was compared to Islam, a positive IAT D index indicated a stronger
association between Christianity and American. Reliability was assessed by dividing the IAT into three parcels (trials 1-20, 21-40, and 41-60) from which IAT D effects were calculated. These were then used to calculate Cronbach’s $\alpha$ value ($\alpha = .759$).

Supporting Hypothesis 1, Christianity in comparison to Islam was associated more strongly with the concept American [$M = 0.904, SD = 0.295, t(155) = 38.329, p < .001$]. No significant differences between the three conditions on the IAT emerged, $F(2, 153) = 0.079, p = .924, \eta^2 = .001$ (see Table 3 for means and SDs). There was no support for the idea that receiving quotes stressing compatibilities between Islam and American values decrease participants’ tendency to implicitly associate American with Christianity relative to Islam. As expected, receiving quotes regarding secularism also did not decrease this tendency. This suggests that this implicit association was strongly embedded and difficult to manipulate.

**EXPLICIT AMERICANNESS**

Participants’ explicit responses regarding the extent to which Christianity and Islam are seen as being connected with America were assessed. Difference scores were computed to parallel the IAT D indexes (i.e., Americanness of Christianity – Americanness of Islam). Also supporting Hypothesis 1, explicitly participants rated Christianity in comparison to Islam as American, [$M = 2.79, SD = 1.56, t(155) = 22.370, p < .001$]. In contrast to the IAT D effect, significant difference between conditions emerged, $F(2, 153) = 4.773, p = .010, \eta^2 = .059$.

A test of pairwise comparisons resulted with participants in the PC condition displaying a weaker tendency in rating Christianity (relative to Islam) as American ($M = 1.17, SD = 1.63$) than those in the control condition ($M = 1.42, SD = 2.08; p = .013$) and those in the SC condition ($M = 1.52, SD = 1.81; p = .055$). These results provide partial support for Hypothesis 3 as participants in the PC condition displayed weaker tendencies in rating Christianity (relative to Islam) as American than the control condition, but those in the SC condition did not display a weaker association. One-way ANOVAs were performed on each religion in order to investigate further what specifically was driving these differences. Significant differences emerged in the extent to which Islam is seen as American, $F(2, 153) = 7.808, p = .001, \eta^2 = .093$. Those in the PC condition rated Islam as more American ($M = 4.19, SD = 1.24$) than those in the Control condition ($M = 3.58, SD = 1.35; p = .001$) and the
SC condition ($M = 3.75$, $SD = 1.12$; $p = .011$). No significant differences emerged between conditions in the extent to which Christianity is seen as American, $F(2, 153) = 7.808$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2 = .093$ (see Table 3 for means and SDs).

### Table 3. Means and Standard Deviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Control</th>
<th>PC</th>
<th>SC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$\alpha$</td>
<td>$M$</td>
<td>$SD$</td>
<td>$M$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IAT D</td>
<td>.759</td>
<td>0.899</td>
<td>0.252</td>
<td>0.917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Americaanness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Christianity-Islam)</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>2.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Americanness of Christianity</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.62</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>5.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Americanness of Islam</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>3.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Compatibility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Islam-Christianity)</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.907</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>0.465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Compatibility</td>
<td></td>
<td>.706</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>0.988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of Christianity</td>
<td></td>
<td>.695</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>0.902</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perceived Compatibility</td>
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<td>.809</td>
<td>3.99</td>
<td>1.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of Islam</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Moderation Effect**

As can be seen in the results above, there was no support for the idea that receiving quotes stressing compatibilities between Islam and American values decrease participants’ tendency to associate implicitly American with Christianity relative to Islam (Hypothesis 2). Given this fact, other variables were examined as possible moderators. One possible candidate was participants’ self-reported level of religiosity as it may have influenced the impact of the manipulation. Participants who are more religious may have seen Islam as
more of a threat and thus less compatible with American values. This then may have affected their response to the manipulation which was designed to increase the extent to which Islam is seen as compatible with American values. Self-reported levels of religiosity were measured using a 4-point scale (not at all religious to highly religious). Using this scale allowed us to examine meaningful variations in participants’ responses to the experimental manipulations. Although the meaning of participants’ response do the level of religiosity item may differ as a function of their religious identity, this measure is less crude than categorizing participants as Christians or Nones.

A hierarchical regression was performed with the IAT D effect as the dependent variable and condition and religiosity\(^4\) as independent variables. The PC condition and the SC condition variables were dummy coded with the control condition being used as the comparison group. They were then both multiplied by religiosity to formulate two interaction terms. The interaction between condition and level of religiosity yielded a significant increase in proportion of variance explained \([\Delta R^2 = .055, \Delta F(2, 150) = 4.381, p = .014]\). Further analysis of the simple slopes revealed a significant slope for the PC condition (\(\beta = .206, p = .004\)) which was also shown to be significantly different from the slope of the control condition (\(\beta = .179, p = .024\)). When participants were exposed to quotes stressing the compatibilities between Islam and American values, more religious participants displayed a greater tendency to associated Christianity with American, whereas less religious participants displayed a weaker tendency to associate Christianity with American. In contrast, the relation between religiosity and associations made after exposure to quotes priming secularism was not reliable (\(\beta = .071, p = .234\)) and was not significantly different from the slope in the control condition (\(\beta = .040, p = .542\)). These results suggest that self-reported levels of religiosity moderates the impact of the experimental manipulation (See Figure 2). In particular, responses to quotes priming the notion that Islam is compatible with American values were in the direction of our hypothesis for participants who were not very religious, but were opposite to our predictions for participants who were very religious.

\(^4\) Mean centering was performed on religiosity scores for all regression analyses.
This moderation effect was also tested on explicit levels of Americanness. Unlike with the IAT, no significant interaction emerged, $[\Delta F(2, 150) = .367, p = .694]$. This suggests that the moderation effect of level of religiosity was limited to implicit associations.

Lastly, the effect of level of religiosity was tested on the perceived compatibility measure (the extent to which Christianity, relative to Islam, is seen as more compatible with American values). Again, the interaction was not significant, $[\Delta F(2, 150) = .451, p = .638]$, but religiosity alone did account for perceived compatibility, $[\beta = .443, \Delta R^2 = .106, \Delta F(1, 152) = 18.552, p < .001]$. This suggests that participants’ level of religiosity influences their perceptions regarding the perceived compatibility of Islam with American values, but this relation is not contingent upon condition. As level of religiosity increased, Islam was viewed as less compatible with American values.
CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

The goal of this thesis was to examine the possible influences contributing to the association between Christianity and the American identity. Specifically, the research sought to increase the extent to which Islam (relative to Christianity) is seen as American by increasing participants’ perceived compatibility between Islam and American values or increasing agreement with secularism. It was hypothesized that participants in the perceived compatibility condition would have a significantly weaker tendency in associating Christianity (relative to Islam) with American at both the implicit and explicit levels of responding compared to a control condition (Hypothesis 2). In addition, it was hypothesized that, compared to a control condition, participants in the secularism condition would have a significantly weaker tendency in associating Christianity with American only at the explicit level (Hypothesis 3).

EFFECTIVENESS OF MANIPULATIONS

Before testing these hypotheses, the efficacy of the PC and SC manipulations were determined by examining their ratings on the PC measure and SC measure. On average, participants did agree with and rate the PC quotes as depicting compatibility between Islam and American values. Results provided support for the efficacy of the PC manipulation as participants in the PC condition perceived Islam to be more compatible with American values than those who did not receive the PC quotes.

In regards to the SC manipulation, participants did agree with and rate the quotes as depicting separation between religion and the public sphere, but it did not influence participants’ ratings on the SC measure. After reading the SC quotes participants in the SC condition did not agree more with a separation between religion and state than those who did not receive the quotes, suggesting that the manipulation was not successful. Views regarding secularism then may not be easily moved in comparison to perceptions regarding the relative compatibility between Islam and American values.
INFLUENCE OF MANIPULATIONS ON IMPLICIT AND EXPLICIT ASSOCIATIONS

Although the PC manipulation seemed to be effective, there was no support for the idea that receiving quotes stressing compatibilities between Islam and American values decreased participants’ tendency to implicitly associate American with Christianity relative to Islam. Previous research has suggested that implicit associations are in fact malleable. There is evidence that presenting positive members of the targeted group or counter stereotypes to participants is a successful way to alter implicit associations (for a review see Blair, 2002). Similarly, this research used positive affirmations regarding Islam to effectively alter participants’ implicit associations, but instead was unsuccessful. This provides evidence that this particular association is not very malleable, and thus possibly deeply embedded within the psyche. The terrorist attacks on 9/11 evoked a great sense of fear and threat from Muslim extremists. There have been attempts to show that not all Muslims are terrorists (e.g., Council on American Islamic Relations, see http://www.cair.org for several articles and initiatives that have taken place). But, recurring events of Muslim extremists such as the man who boarded a plane with a bomb in his underwear (Esposito & Ross, 2009) and the man who planted a bomb in a car in New York Times Square (Times Square suspect, 2010) continually make salient the idea that Muslims are a threat. With the recurring events of possible threats by Muslim extremists to the United States, it is possible that the tendency to exclude Islam from the American identity is strongly embedded within the psyche. These recurring events that continue to take place only reinforce negative attitudes towards Islam and the desire to exclude them.

In regards to participants’ explicit ratings of the Americanness of each religion, there was partial support for Hypothesis 3. Participants who received the PC quotes had a weaker tendency in rating Christianity (relative to Islam) as more American than those who received no quotes or the SC quotes. Specifically, when examining the differences in the ratings of each religion’s Americanness separately, participants in the PC condition significantly rated Islam as more American than those in the SC and control condition.

Contrary to Hypothesis 3, there was no support for the idea that receiving quotes stressing secularist ideals decreased participants’ explicit tendency to associate American with Christianity relative to Islam. This may be due to the fact that the manipulation was not
successful in moving participants’ views on secularism. Another speculation as to why this may be is because participants may not have been able to make the link that if there should be a high wall of separation between religion and state then one religion should not be seen as more American over another. These inconsistencies seem to be prevalent in the United States as the nation boasts ideals of religious freedom, tolerance, and pluralism yet seems to favor Christianity over other religions. For example, religious concerns in the issues surrounding Proposition 8 in California and the controversies that were raised when President Barack Obama was said to be Muslim. These inconsistencies may be a result of social desirability as individuals may want to put their best foot forward by claiming that you should be free to practice any religion you desire, but personally still exclude members of other religions. If participants were made aware of these inconsistencies then the manipulation may have been more successful.

**Religiosity as a Moderator**

As there was no significant effect found for the PC manipulation on participants’ implicit associations, other potential variables were examined as possible moderators. One variable of interest was participants’ self-reported level of religiosity. In fact, results provided evidence for religiosity influencing the effectiveness of the PC quotes. The relationship suggests that when given quotes expressing compatibilities between Islam and American values, participants’ level of religiosity increases the implicit tendency to associate American with Christianity relative to Islam. Receiving quotes stressing compatibilities between Islam and American values may induce threat to individuals higher in religiosity which in turn may lead to their greater exclusion of Islam.

Often religions profess that their values and beliefs are the only values and beliefs that should be followed. There is a sense that their worldview is more righteousness than others. Previous research has shown that when individuals hold this belief concerning their worldview, then other worldviews and belief systems may induce threat (Stephan & Stephan, 1996; Stephan et al, 1999; Stephan et al, 2000). Those higher in religiosity may hold onto their values and beliefs more strongly than those lower in religiosity and thus experience a greater amount of threat leading them to feel the need to protect their worldview. In believing that their values are the morally righteous values, suggesting that the religion they do not
affiliate with to be compatible with American values may elicit threat and thus the need to defend their own worldview. In our case, the defense was excluding Islam from the American identity.

In addition, religiosity was a significant predictor of participants’ perceived compatibility with those higher in religiosity viewing Islam as less compatible with American values. The particular measure used to assess perceived compatibility was a measure adapted from Stephan et al.’s (1999) symbolic threat measure. Higher ratings of threat on the measure were referred to as lower ratings of perceived compatibility throughout the study. This provides further evidence for the idea that participants higher in religiosity view Islam as a greater threat than those lower in religiosity. Thus, reading the PC quotes seems to be inducing this threat perceived by individuals higher in religiosity leading to a greater exclusion of Islam and a greater implicit association between Christianity and American.

Interestingly, this moderation was exclusive to the implicit association as it did not influence significantly the relationship between receiving PC quotes and explicit ratings of Americanness. But, participants who received the PC quotes significantly explicitly rated Islam as more American than those who did not receive the PC quotes. Previous research has shown that the relationship between implicit and explicit associations is influenced by several different factors. A weaker relationship between implicit and explicit associations may be characterized by the participants’ self-presentational concerns as explicit associations tend to be more vulnerable to these concerns than implicit associations (Nosek, 2005). It is possible that participants were unable to control the tendency to exclude Islam implicitly, but explicitly may have felt it inappropriate to affirm a strong exclusion of Islam as they had just read many quotes stressing compatibility between Islam and American values.

LIMITATIONS

There are limitations that should be taken into consideration when drawing implications from these results. First, the quotes of the SC manipulation did not directly relate to the statements used in the SC measures. The questions in the measure asked participants to give their opinion on more specific issues such as the government providing support for religious institutions and whether their should be displaying of religious symbols
on government and public property. Whereas the quotes used in the manipulation were
vaguer in the sense that they only expressed the idea that religion should be kept private and
that it is important that state and religion should be kept separate. If the quotes focused more
directly at specific issues much like that of the SC measure it may have been more effective
in increasing participants’ agreement with secularist ideals.

Another limitation to this study is the low percentage of participants who affiliated
with religions other than Christianity such as Islam and Judaism. Because neither the pilot
study nor the current study obtained participants who reported affiliating with Islam, it is not
known for sure whether they would make the same associations between American and
Christianity as well as their response to the manipulations. If it is assumed that participants
affiliating with Islam would make similar associations, it is possible that level of religiosity
may not have been a moderator or would have provided a boost. Since their religion was
endorsed and uplifted in the quotes, those who were higher in religiosity may have then more
strongly associated Islam with American than those who were lower in religiosity.

**Research Implications**

As previously mentioned, research has shown implicit beliefs and attitudes to be
related to those explicitly stated and this relationship has been shown to vary across studies
and to be moderated by other variables (Nosek, 2005). The present research confirms that
there is in fact some overlap between implicit and explicit associations, but also a clear
distinction. The convergence can be seen in the fact that participants associated American
with Christianity more strongly than with Islam at both levels of responding. The distinction
emerges when one considers the influence of the PC manipulation on this association.
Explicitly, participants’ inclusion of Islam into the American identity was influenced by
receiving the quotes, but implicitly the effectiveness of the quotes was moderated by
participants’ level of religiosity. It is possible that strong personal beliefs have more of an
impact at the implicit level than at the explicit level. Explicitly participants may be able to
look beyond their personal beliefs and consider alternatives, whereas implicitly they are more
prone to being influenced by their personal beliefs. In particular for very religious
individuals, ideas that may deliberately be endorsed under some circumstances (having read
a series of quotes increases the perceived compatibility between Islam and American values),
may produce more defensive reactions that operate at a level that is not consciously controllable.

In addition, there is evidence from this research that it may be difficult to alter individuals’ perceptions towards Islam and increase inclusion of Islam into the American identity. This may especially be true for those individuals high in religiosity as even positive affirmations regarding Islam may induce threat. But, if they are able to take time to reason and overcome threat experienced, then they may act in a more inclusionary manner.

Although this is a step in the right direction, the tendency to exclude Islam from the American identity is not fully eliminated. Much more positive affirmations of Islam would need to be continually given in order to overcome this tendency more effectively. Unfortunately, as mentioned previously, the constant recurring threat to the United States from Muslim extremists will only make it more difficult to instill positive attitudes towards Islam and a greater inclusion of them into the American identity. This may have extensive negative effects for Muslim Americans who are not extremists or terrorists who consider being American as an important aspect of their identity. As can be see in the quotes cited in the beginning of this thesis, Muslim Americans feel they must “prove their patriotism” and feel that people do not understand that they are also Americans. It is important to continue research on this issue in order that individuals’ Americanness may not be based solely on their religion.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

STIMULI FOR IMPLICIT ASSOCIATION TEST
Figure 3. American stimuli used in the American-Foreign IAT.
Figure 4. Foreign stimuli used in the American-Foreign IAT.
Words used: Easter, Church, Christian.

Figure 5. Christian stimuli used in the American-Foreign IAT.

Words Used: Ramadan, Mosque, and Muslim.

Figure 6. Islam stimuli used in the American-Foreign IAT.
APPENDIX B

EXPLICIT MEASURES
PERCEIVED COMPATIBILITY CONDITION

We are interested in the extent to which various quotes suggest that Islamic values, morals, and beliefs are compatible with American values, morals, and beliefs. A high degree of compatibility would indicate that there are no conflict between values endorsed by the religion Islam and values endorsed by most Americans.

Please indicate the degree of compatibility you feel each quote suggests by clicking on the appropriate number from 1 to 7.

1. “We are committed to work toward societies that ensure social, political, educational, and economic opportunities for all.” The organization Muslims for Progressive Values

2. “Freedom of expression too is a fundamental value of Islam. It was practiced by the Prophet, who proclaimed that differences of opinion within the community are a blessing.” Pamela K. Taylor, co-founder of Muslims for Progressive Values

3. "[Islam’s] Devotion to family and to society, to faith and good works-are in harmony with the best of Western ideals.” Bill Clinton, former US President

4. "Islamic values are, by and large, very consistent with American values, with a focus on family, faith, hard work and an obligation to better self and society.” Shahed Amanullaha, an engineer and editor-in-chief of web site altmuslim.com

5. "[Islam] a faith that honors consultation, cherishes peace, and has as one of its fundamental principles the inherent equality of all who embrace it.” Madeline Albright, first female Secretary of State

6. "[Islam’s] universal values-love of family and community, mutual respect, education, and the deepest yearning of all-to live in peace ... can strengthen us as a people and-as a nation.” Hillary Clinton, Secretary of State

7. "…most Americans and most Muslims share fundamental values such as peace, justice, economic security, and good governance.” Department of State

8. "There is no conflict between Islam and such Western ideals as personal freedom or individual choice.” John Beyrle, United States Ambassador

9. "… values of democracy, critical thinking, freedom and personal liberty so often connected to the West-can be interpreted to be compatible with Islam.” Asra Nomani, American Muslim journalist

10. "We're all very much Americans-we vote, wake up in the morning for work-are concerned about health care in America and about the same things most other Americans are concerned about.” Sadaf Khan, American Muslim
We are interested in the extent to which these various quotes suggest that religion and state should be kept separate. A high degree of separation would indicate that there is freedom to practice or affiliate with any religion and that the government does not favor or support one religion over another. Please indicate the degree of separation you feel each quote suggests by clicking on the appropriate number from 1 to 7.

1. "... By maintaining the separation of church and state the United States has avoided the intolerance which has so divided the rest of the world with religious wars.” Barry Goldwater, former US Senator

2. "…the First Amendment guarantees freedom of religion-it prohibits the government from passing legislation to establish an official religion or preferring one religion over another.” Cornell University Law School

3. "The separation of church and state actually strengthens our freedom to believe—or, as the case may be, our freedom not to believe.” Carole Shields, member of People for the American Way

4. "Today, people of many faiths are able to worship freely in the United States because of “a rich tradition of religious tolerance.” President Barack Obama

5. "Parents, not public schools, should teach religious beliefs to children-Governments and public schools have no business deciding which religious beliefs are true.” Dr. T. Jeremy Gunn, Director of the American Civil Liberties Union’s Program on Freedom of Religion and Belief

6. "What makes the US great—is freedom! My friends can send their children to public schools and know that what they are taught at home about religion will not be contradicted.” Eloise Dezwarte, American Citizen

7. "The government should not be in the business of promoting religious viewpoints. In our country, people should be free to express their faith - or to exercise their right to hold no belief at all.” Daniel Mach, Director of Litigation for the American Civil Liberties Union Program on Freedom of Religion and Belief

8. "Government should not fund a homeless shelter that requires residents to take part in religious services and discriminates in religious hiring. Religious activities should be funded with voluntary donations.” Reverend Barry W. Lynn, Executive Director of American’s United for the Separation of Church and State

9. "…America - achieves what so many other countries seem unable: diverse religious populations that live in harmony with a state that protects the rights of all people regardless of religion.” Thomas L. Steiger, Professor of Sociology and Women’s Studies at Indiana State University
10. "I believe that we have a strong freedom of religion in America. Anybody is welcome to worship how they want, who they want or not at all.” Gilbert Baker, US Senator
APPENDIX C

MANIPULATIONS
EXPLICIT AMERICANNESS


We are interested in the extent to which various religions are perceived as being part of America. That is, we are interested in the extent to which each religion is identified with America and all things American. Please indicate your opinion for each religion or religious group. Not at all American– Absolutely American, 7-point scales

11. In your mind, to what extent is Christianity connected with America and all things American?

12. In your mind, to what extent is Islam connected with America and all things American?
PERCEIVED COMPATIBILITY


Rate the extent to which you agree with the following statements, where Christian Americans are Americans who practice the religion Christianity and Muslim Americans are Americans who practice the religion Islam. Strongly disagree to strongly agree: 7 point scale

13. Christianity has a positive influence on American society.
14. Islam has a positive influence on American society.
15. Christian Americans are undermining American culture.
16. Muslim Americans are undermining American culture.
17. The values and beliefs of Christian Americans regarding work are basically quite similar to those of most Americans.
18. The values and beliefs of Muslim Americans regarding work are basically quite similar to those of most Americans.
19. The values and beliefs of Christian Americans regarding moral and religious issues are not compatible with the beliefs and values of most Americans.
20. The values and beliefs of Muslim Americans regarding moral and religious issues are not compatible with the beliefs and values of most Americans.
21. The values and beliefs of Christian Americans regarding family issues and socializing children are basically quite similar to those of most Americans.
22. The values and beliefs of Muslim Americans regarding family issues and socializing children are basically quite similar to those of most Americans.
23. The values and beliefs of Christian Americans regarding social relations are not compatible with the beliefs and values of most Americans.
24. The values and beliefs of Muslim Americans regarding social relations are not compatible with the beliefs and values of most Americans.
SECCULARISM


Rate the extent to which you agree with the following statements. Strongly disagree to strongly agree: 7 point scale

25. The United States is a secular nation (not a specifically religious nation).
26. The United States is a Christian/Biblical nation.
27. Religion is a personal matter which should be kept private.
28. The phrase “In God we trust” should be removed from American currency.
29. The phrase “under God” should be removed from the United States pledge of allegiance.
30. I do not approve of the displaying of any religious symbols on government or public property.
31. The government should avoid promoting religion in any way.
32. What religion the president of the United States affiliates with is not important.
33. The government should provide financial support to all religious institutions.
34. The government should not provide financial support for any religious institutions.
35. Religious institutions should only be involved in issues concerning themselves and not American society.

ATTITUDE (FEELING THERMOMETER)

We are interested in the feelings that people have toward different groups. People may feel warm or favorable toward a group, or may have more cold and unfavorable feelings toward that group. Please indicate your opinion for each group. How cold or warm do you feel toward the following groups? Very cold – Very warm, 7-point scales

36. How cold or warm do you feel toward Christianity?
37. How cold or warm do you feel toward Islam?
FAMILIARITY

To what extent do you feel you have knowledge of the religions Islam and Christianity?

Christianity:
1 = I know nothing about Christianity
2 = I know a little about Christianity
3 = I know a moderate amount about Christianity
4 = I know a lot about Christianity

Islam:
1 = I know nothing about Islam
2 = I know a little about Islam
3 = I know a moderate amount about Islam
4 = I know a lot about Islam

RELIGIOSITY

How religious are you?
1 = Not at all religious
2 = Slightly religious
3 = Moderately religious
4 = Highly religious
DEMOGRAPHICS

1. How old are you?
2. What is your gender? (1 = Male; 2 = Female)
3. What is your ethnicity?
4. Are you a US Citizen? (1 = Yes; 2 = No)
5. What religion do you personally affiliate with?
6. What religion does your mother affiliate with?
7. What religion does your father affiliate with?
8. What is your political orientation? (7-point scale; Strongly liberal to strongly conservative)
9. What is your political affiliation? (7-point scale; Strongly democratic to strongly republican)