

Faith, Fellowship, and Philanthropy: Giving Rates as a Function of Religiosity among Israeli Jewish Women

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Numerous surveys have demonstrated a sturdy positive correlation between religiosity and self-reported charity and/or volunteering rates. The relationship becomes more tenuous in experimental settings, however, as religion is stripped of features that encourage adherence to doctrine and convention, specifically communal ritual, which provides both peer pressure and a sense of fellowship, and scriptural content, which functions in part as a reminder of supernatural monitoring. This study begins by providing theoretical background on both the connection between religious belief and charity and the importance of external pressures in maintaining popular religious codes of conduct. It then presents evidence from an empirical examination of how Israeli Jewish women of varying religiosity compared to each other while playing a version of the dictator game in which they decided on a sum of money to donate to university students of varying economic need. The experiment was devoid of any religious priming or meaningful indication that religion was especially pertinent to the study. The results show no positive correlation between religiosity and inclination to donate, suggesting that reported generous behaviour among the religious is exaggerated because of a social desirability bias and/or triggered by various communal and theological cues built into religion's social infrastructure that popularize such behaviour and stigmatize departures from it.

Background

Historically and presently, social scientists examining religion have placed considerable importance on its role in manufacturing norms and maintaining order. Structural functionalism comes to mind as particularly relevant to this analytical approach (Durkheim [1912] 2001; Parsons [1951] 1991; Radcliffe-Brown 1952; Yinger 1970; Luhmann 1977), with sociobiologists having been especially enthusiastic about describing religion as an emergent and evolutionarily necessary form of communal ordering (Batson 1983; Wilson 2002; Leech and Visala 2011). However, we refer here to any school of thought that ascribes a social role to religion beyond its palliative and transcendental role in helping individual adherents cope with life's injustice, mystery, and/or mundanity. This includes the Marxist perspective on religion as a strategy for legitimizing and reproducing an oppressive social order, the Freudian argument that it is an infantile projection of unconscious needs that restrains base urges, and other openly hostile takes on belief.

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Because religion has been studied so thoroughly as a framework for preserving social relations and society at large, one of the most popular lines of investigation has been the link between religiosity and pro-social behaviour. Psychologists (James [1902] 2009), sociologists (Weber [1921] 1978), and political theorists (Grund 1837) have been prolific in their scholarship on this topic, noting again and again that holy books are often laced with exhortations to charity and celebrations of figures serving as models of selflessness and altruism, thereby facilitating communitarian sentiments.

Unfortunately, pro-sociality and helpfulness can be quite difficult to identify and evaluate empirically. However, there is a manifestation of altruism that is relatively easy to gauge: donation of money and time. In terms of measurable philanthropy, we have a consensus: on the whole, the pious report giving more charity and volunteering more time than their secular counterparts do (Hunsberger and Platonow 1986; Regnerus, Smith, and Sikkink 1998; Graham and Haidt 2010). The pattern holds across geography, having been identified in the United States (Brooks 2004), Canada (Berger 2006), New Zealand (Mylek and Nel 2010), the Netherlands (Bekkers and Schuyt 2008), South Korea (Kim et al. 2007), and well over one hundred other countries (Pelham and Crabtree 2008). There is also some evidence that it holds across generations. For example, McGranahan (2000) examines gifts to the poor in English wills written during the 1620s and 1630s, finding that more religious individuals tended to give more of their wealth to the poor.

Of course, with constructs as complex as religiosity and altruism there are bound to be subtleties and nuances that undermine oversimplified notions that belief in God necessarily makes someone a better person. The trend does fluctuate as moderating factors enter the picture. For example, Katz and Haski-Leventhal (2007) examine reports of charitableness from 1,000 Jewish households in Israel and find that, though the generally positive correlation between religiosity and philanthropy certainly exists, income, family status, and even certain aggregations of religiosity explain much of the pattern. Similarly, Wilson and Janoski (1995) discuss the significance of specific religious interpretations (rather than generic belief in theological doctrine) to volunteering and donation rates. Plagnol and Huppert (2009) highlight contextual factors such as a country's historical background and institutions as having an appreciable impact on volunteering. Still, these important caveats and qualifications aside, there appears to be a persistently positive correlation between faith and philanthropy. The question, then, is why.

Faith and Social Capital

Marshaling a substantial collection of data, Putnam (2000) identifies the place of worship as one of the most important nuclei of communal activity in the United States. He finds that, in addition to providing a training ground for civic participation in general, religious settings play a central role in fostering charity. Specifically, Putnam finds that about 75-80% of church members donate to charity, compared to 55-60% of nonmembers (p. 67). Additionally, 50-60% of church members volunteer, while only 30-35% of nonmembers donate their time (p. 67). Most interestingly, Putnam reveals that religious people are more likely than non-religious people to contribute their time and money to non-congregational activities and secular causes (p. 67).

While acknowledging that religious values are important for encouraging charity, Putnam emphasizes the matter of social ties, arguing that "connectedness, not merely faith,

is responsible for the beneficence of church people” (p. 67). His conclusion has surfaced in numerous other studies (Wuthnow 1991; Sherkat and Ellison 1999; Lyons and Nivison-Smith 2006; Reitsma, Scheepers, and Grotenhuis 2006; Brown and Ferris 2007; Monsma 2007). Gallup corroborated the trend and demonstrated its universality with a study involving 145 countries, in which religious service attendants reported higher rates of charitable generosity than coreligionists who did not attend services (Smith and Stark 2009). That charity flourishes in religious settings should come as no surprise to anyone with even a glancing acquaintance with major theological traditions and practices. For centuries prior to the rise of the modern welfare state, religious institutions were responsible for taking care of the afflicted and indigent (Loewenberg 2001). As a consequence, religions became effective at ritualizing charity, thus ensuring a steady stream of donations. A quaint example is the practice in some churches of “salting the collection plate,” in which clergy place a few bills and coins in the collection plate before passing it around to congregants. Aware that people are more inclined to give money if they are passed a plate that already holds some, church personnel subtly employ peer pressure to encourage charity (Levine 2003). Of course, if a believing Christian does not attend church, then he or she is not exposed to such persuasion.

As indicated previously, social scientists have had much to say about how ritual builds community. For example, the ethnographical studies conducted by Evans-Pritchard ([1937] 1976) and Geertz (1960) on tribal societies in central Africa and Southeast Asia reflect an incisive awareness of how ritualized belief helps to solve disputes, regulate sexual relations, and format the life cycle. According to Durkheim ([1893] 1984), religion’s roots in these traditional groups mark it as a feature of mechanical solidarity, which spawns in-group cohesion based on cultural homogeneity—similar work, lifestyle, religious education, etc. In *Professional Ethics and Civic Morals*, Durkheim argues that charity is most compatible with such societies specifically because one tends to feel most charitable to people most similar to one’s self (Schoenfeld and Metrovi 1989:115).

It is worth emphasizing, however, that functionalists do not consider religion an empty conduit that simply channels feelings of kinship into cooperative behaviour. Religion has an active role in producing that sense of mutual affinity by placing one’s personal sense of spiritual euphoria in a congregational matrix. Durkheim’s classic term “collective effervescence” is probably the best illustration. The energy in a gathering of people combined with the emotional intensity of religious experience “quashe[s] individuality by forcing people to resemble one another,” which “inspires moral feelings of charity towards one’s neighbor” (Fish 2005:96). More recent functionalist inquiry has followed Durkheim’s lead, showing that communal religious life maintains group solidarity (and, from a sociobiological perspective, survival and proliferation) by affirming common values while popularizing certain behaviours (Davis and Moore 1945; Kurtz 1958; Berger 1967; Lemert 1975; Batson 1983; Sosis 2003) and ensuring that deviations from these norms are sufficiently stigmatized (Freeman 1997).

Because charitableness is among those behaviours that religion normalizes and encourages for the benefit of the collective, the argument that follows is that the religious are more charitable because they are more often exposed to popular cultural cues that encourage charity than are the non-religious. This would also explain the giving differential between the religious who attend a place of worship and those who isolate themselves

from this most common locale of faith-based socializing and socialization.

Religion as an Inherently Moralizing Influence

The implication of arguing that religious community as opposed to simply religion is what gives rise to the believer's inclination to donate and volunteer is that God is peripheral to the discussion. The emphases in the social capital line of reasoning are community, peer pressure, and popular notions of decency. However, one could also argue that religion leads to charitable behaviour not only because of communal monitoring, but also because of the sense of supernatural monitoring. Here it is the scriptural content itself, coupled with God's judgment, that motivates charitable behaviour.

Bolstering this side of the argument, Malhotra (2010) assembles an elegant study demonstrating the so-called "Sunday Effect," the tendency for the religious to exhibit behaviour deemed positive by religious norms when faith is "salient." In the case of Malhotra's experiment, religious auction participants were more likely than non-religious participants to respond to an appeal for charity only on days during which they visited their place of worship. At first glance, the study seems to lend support to the claim that the religious are more charitable because of community pressure, as the main observation underlying the claim is that church-goers are more charitable than adherents who do not attend services. The implied assumption here is that those church-goers who give a high amount of charity do so while at church (when the collection plate is passed around, when a call is put out for volunteers, etc.) because there is a sense of congregational expectation. However, Malhotra's experiment does not measure charitableness of religious individuals while at church. The finding is only that religious people were more likely to give on days during which they attended services. The issue of which aspect of the church-going experience activated heightened generosity is an open question. It is entirely possible that the matter of interest is religious imagery and personal connection to God peaking during worship ceremony rather than a feeling of obligation to give produced by a desire to fit in.

The Sunday Effect is also demonstrated by Edelman (2009), who finds that subscription rates to adult entertainment websites do not differ between regions where people attend religious services regularly versus non-regularly, but a significantly smaller proportion of subscriptions among those who attend regularly are initiated on Sundays. In this case, there is virtually no chance that the variable concerned is peer pressure, as consumption of pornography is a private affair. Edelman's study suggests that religious individuals who attend services give more charity than others because of more than just social cues and peer pressure.

Priming experiments have been the method of choice to test religion apart from its social packaging. These experiments subliminally transmit religious concepts and images to participants, whose behaviour is then studied. Randolph-Seng and Nielsen (2007) show that people exposed to religious words cheated less on a subsequent task than those who had not been primed similarly. Shariff and Norenzayan (2007) and Ahmed and Salas (2008) also find that priming people with religious terms made them more cooperative and selfless in games that followed. Pichon, Boccato, and Saroglou (2007) reveals that students who had been primed later took more charity pamphlets before leaving a classroom than those who had not been primed.

The evidence drawn from priming and other similar experiments seems to assemble a conclusion distinct from that concerning human relational networks. People are no longer the subject of concern, having been replaced by a celestial observer. On the other hand, numerous scholars (Gervais and Norenzayan 2011; Waytz et al. 2010; Barrett 2000; Bering 2011; Boyer 2001, 2003; Gray and Wegner 2010; Schjoedt et al. 2009; Kapogiannis et al. 2009) have demonstrated that people relate to supernatural agents in much the same way as they interact with fellow humans, including the tendency to alter behaviour in order to conform to dictates and norms when one senses that he or she is being observed (Bateson, Nettle, and Roberts 2006). In this sense, external pressure to obey rules remains the driving force behind charitableness.

There is also the matter of scriptural content itself. It would be a grave oversight to discuss religion without addressing the diversity of value systems found in the world's panoply of theological traditions. Various studies have shown that attitudes among the religious vary according to the religions to which they subscribe (Schwartz and Huismans 1995; Guizo, Sapienza, and Zingales 2003; Patterson 2004; Lefkowitz et al. 2004; Conkle 1994; Brammer, Williams, and Zinkin 2007). It makes sense that charity would also vary by religious group. For example, Hoge and Yang (1994) find that American protestants tend to give more money and volunteer more time than catholics, even though the two groups attend services at comparable rates. It stands to reason, then, that religious community alone cannot explain giving rates; religious content also wields influence. It is interesting to note, however, that in experiments without any religious cues the religiosity-charity positive correlation generally either vanishes or recedes to insignificance (Cline and Richards 1965; Darley and Batson 1973; Smith, Wheeler, and Diener 1975; Annis 1976; Batson and Ventis 1982; Orbell et al. 1992; Anderson, Mellor, and Milyo 2009), suggesting that faith's influence does not reach far beyond the period in which it becomes particularly salient (most prominently through organized religious ritual).

Social Desirability Bias

The major weakness in large studies comparing donation and volunteering rates of the religious to the non-religious is that they rely on self-reporting, which often falls victim to the tendency of respondents to answer questions in a manner that is viewed favourably by others (over-reporting of good behaviour and/or under-reporting of bad behaviour). Numerous studies on religious conduct have demonstrated the need to take social desirability bias into account (Batson, Schoenrade, and Ventis 1993; Chung and Monroe 2003; Saroglou et al. 2005; Bekkers and Wiepking 2008). The most famous cautionary tale is probably C. Kirk Hadaway's study on American church attendance. For decades it was taken as a given as shown by surveys that 40 percent of Americans attended church every Sunday. To find out whether this unusually high figure was accurate, Hadaway assembled a large team of data collectors and had them count every person in every Protestant church in an Ohio county. The resulting report (Hadaway, Marler, and Chaves 1993) exposes that just 20 percent of eligible church members were present. Even with the project's limitations, the discovery amounted to significant evidence that Americans were over-reporting their church attendance.

Like service attendance, charitableness is a religiously encouraged behaviour, which is why it is no surprise that the above-cited studies provide reason to question the construct

validity of religious self-reporting of charitableness. Of course, this again calls to mind the importance of the popular and the need to conform to it, though in this case the implication is self-deception due to external pressure to adhere to a norm.

Purpose

As stated previously, there is widespread agreement that religious people tend to be more charitable than non-religious people are, but understanding the nature of the interaction between faith and philanthropy requires that researchers expand this subject's experimental reach, especially because we are dealing here with complex constructs vulnerable to a number of confounding variables—gender, age, family status, geography, etc. There has been an abundance of scholarship on the subject conducted in North America, but replicating such studies in other countries may temper and refine our knowledge and conclusions (Hofstede 2001). Reports on Israel's nonprofit sector replicate the positive correlation between religiosity and self-reported charitableness prevalent throughout the world (Katz, Levinson, and Gidron 2007; Schmid 2011); however, there has been relatively little work done in Israel on why this correlation exists.

Ruffle and Sosis (2003; 2007; 2010) have contributed informative studies looking at religion and cooperative behaviour in Israel. Their two studies (2003; 2007) comparing cooperative behaviour on secular and religious kibbutzim (collective communities) provide compelling evidence that time-consuming communal religious practice yields economic benefits through higher levels of collaboration during the workday. Their later study (2010), examining how religious settings influence altruistic decision-making, also indicates that religious environments elicit pro-social attitudes.

Our study sheds more empirical light on this topic by analyzing giving trends among women of varying religiosity in a controlled laboratory space empty of any religious cues, including any meaningful indication that the experiment focuses on religion. We did ask participants to report their religiosity before the experiment, but this was one of several demographic categories on which they were asked to comment, and there was no subsequent mention of Judaism or religion in general. Because religion has no significant salience in the experimental design, the results help to illuminate faith's role in charitableness. By observing outcomes occurring in the absence of religious imagery and terminology, we can better assess what theology adds to charity.

To clarify, we are not interested in the question of whether religious people tend to donate and volunteer (or at least report to do so) more than non-religious people do. The experiment was conducted under this assumption, which, as mentioned before, is justified by a large body of sociological evidence. We are interested in understanding the mechanisms underlying this well-established pattern and involved participants of varying religiosity in order to test if, absent of religious cues, it abides.

Method

In their study comparing religious and secular kibbutzim in Israel, Ruffle and Sosis (2003) find that religious males were more cooperative than both secular males and religious females, the reason being that collective ritual boosts collaborative conduct. Accordingly,

Sosis and Ruffle surmised that religious females were less cooperative than their male counterparts because Orthodox Judaism's ritual requirements for men are publicly-oriented (the best example is communal prayer, which is performed three times daily), whereas female requirements are generally private. Based on both this finding and the phenomenon of the "Sunday Effect," the best research design for our purpose involves only women. Adding men to the sample would introduce the potential confounding factor that some of the males prayed in a group before participating in the experiment, thus undermining the condition of removing religious salience from the experimental conditions. By involving only women, we maximized the probability of both having religion removed from our participants' mindsets and evening the playing field between the religious and non-religious.

Women (N=185) were drawn from families participating in the Longitudinal Israeli Study of Twins and categorized by religiosity and socio-economic status (SES). In terms of SES, participants were sorted according to self-identification as considerably below average, slightly below average, average, slightly above average, and considerably above average. In terms of religiosity, participants were grouped according to self-identification as non-religious, traditional, orthodox, or ultra-orthodox. Though this might seem a crude and somewhat arbitrary taxonomy of religious identification, we contend (as will be discussed later) that it is useful.

Subjects then played a variation of the dictator game, in which they were given a fixed endowment of 60 Israeli shekels (NIS) (≈ 15.75 U.S. dollars) and then were provided the opportunity to donate money to each of six students of varying age, year of study, and economic need (low, moderate, or high). It was made clear to participants that this was not merely a thought experiment; they were informed that actual students would receive the money they chose to donate. For each student, participants could contribute up to 10 NIS, and the experimenter explained that every shekel donated would be matched; that is, one shekel donated by the participant would amount to two shekels given to the student. Because we wanted to make donation costly in order to hone in on generosity as our dependent variable, participants kept money they chose to not donate. Though the experiment involved relatively low amounts of money, past reviews of game outcomes provide grounds to assume that patterns will hold linearly when larger amounts of money are at stake (Camerer and Thaler 1995; Camerer and Fehr 2001).

The percentage of the other subjects who donated was also reported for each of the six students, though these amounts were fabricated in order to assess the influence of social norms. We add a word of caution here about how useful these reported rates are. Whatever peer pressure arises from seeing others' giving rates in a laboratory is not necessarily the same as the pressure felt from a religious community's ritualized call to charity. We decided to include the reported rates because they had the potential to wield influence over the participants' decision making, but an absence of effect is insufficient to discount social norms.

Student economic need was a key influence on giving rates. A repeated measures analysis comparing average giving rates across the low, moderate, and high need conditions revealed a significant effect of economic need on giving $F_{1,177} p < .001$.

Next we examined if giving rates were influenced by the reported rates of other participants' giving. A comparison based on these numbers did not show a significant influence

Table 1. Reports of Giving Rates Shown to Participants.

Economic Need	Low Amount	High Amount
Low	Student D: 12%	Student B: 25%
Moderate	Student A: 38%	Student F: 51%
High	Student E: 64%	Student C: 77%

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Giving Rates.

Student	Need	Norm	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
D	Low	Low	181	3.6851	3.20507
B	Low	High	183	3.4863	3.1306
A	Moderate	Low	183	4.7596	2.93466
F	Moderate	High	183	4.8197	2.80605
E	High	Low	182	8.8462	2.23198
C	High	High	185	8.9946	2.04699

of high vs. low giving on donation rates for either the high or medium need conditions (paired t-test high giving norm vs. low giving norm: high economic need: mean difference = -0.13 , $SD = 1.57$, $N = 181$, $t = -1.13$, $p = 0.260$; medium economic need: mean difference = -0.09 , $SD = 1.73$, $N = 180$, $t = -0.686$, $p = 0.493$). There was a trend, however, for social norms negatively influencing giving rates in the low need condition presented in pair one (mean difference = 0.25 , $SD = 1.84$, $t = 1.86$, $p = 0.065$).

To capture the interdependencies within the different games and find common factors explaining giving rates, a principal component analysis with varimax rotation for the six giving tasks was performed. The analysis extracted two factors with an eigenvalue above one, explaining 84% of the variance. Factor loadings for the students are presented in the table below.

Table 3. Factor Loadings.

Student	Component	
	1	2
D	0.917	0.023
B	0.904	0.151
A	0.865	0.271
F	0.886	0.197
E	0.152	0.914
C	0.151	0.913

Based on the characterization of the questions, factor one, which captured 60.4% of the variance, can be interpreted as a general altruistic inclination. Factor two, which captured the remaining 23.6% of the variance, can be interpreted as responsiveness to economic need, as evidenced by the fact that it loaded above 0.9 for the two students characterized by high economic need and below 0.15 for the two students characterized by low need. These two factors (general altruism and responsiveness to need) will serve as measures for how SES and, more notably, religiosity influence giving behaviour.

To identify how religious identification is associated with giving levels we first examined

the association between religious identification and overall giving rates (total amount donated across all conditions). We then checked for an association between religious identification and our two motivational factors. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) revealed that overall giving rates were not associated with religious affiliation ($F_{3,151} = 0.306$, $p = 0.21$). Next, general altruism and economic need factors were each submitted to an ANOVA using religiosity as the independent variable. Results showed that the general altruism factor was not associated with religiosity ($F_{3,151}$, $p = 0.975$); however, there was an association between giving based on economic need and religious affiliation ($F_{3,151}$, $p = 0.038$). A comparison of self-identified ultra-orthodox individuals to all other groups revealed that ultra-orthodox giving is significantly influenced by recipient's economic need ($p = 0.034$). Specifically, the ultra-orthodox were less influenced by economic need than all other groups were. Mean values for the ultra-orthodox on the economic need factor were -0.44 , lower than the non-religious (0.05), traditional (0.17) and orthodox (0.16).

A chi-squared test revealed that SES is significantly associated with religious affiliation ($p < 0.0001$). Specifically, 21 out of 30 ultra-orthodox participants reported family income to be either considerably below or slightly below average, consistent with the broader socioeconomic phenomenon in Israel of ultra-orthodox Jews being relatively poor (Rebhun and Malach 2012). In contrast, for participants who identified as non-religious, traditional, or orthodox, 68 out of 129 reported having incomes slightly or considerably above average. This raises the question of a possible confound between SES and religious affiliation. To investigate the distinct effects of SES and religious affiliation more thoroughly, the influence of SES on giving rates was analyzed separately for two subsets of participants, ultra-orthodox and all others affiliations. In the ultra-orthodox cohort SES did not influence responsiveness to need-based giving ($F_{4,22}$, $p = 0.88$). Similarly, in the "all other" cohort SES was not a factor ($F_{4,117}$, $p = 0.566$). Thus, SES alone does not appear to have influenced responsiveness to economic need.

Discussion

Our results show that the religious and non-religious are essentially equal in their generosity when given an opportunity to donate, a direct contradiction of the several reports on Israeli philanthropy that suggest the generally positive relationship between religiosity and charitableness. It is noteworthy that the one proxy for external influence in our experiment—the reported giving rates—did not have an effect on how much money participants chose to donate. As explained before, the absence of effect should not lead us to discount the importance of external pressure to adhere to popular notions of decency. Lab experiments are a major source of knowledge in the social sciences (Falk and Heckman 2009), but their limitations must be acknowledged and taken into consideration. An observed effect would have been interesting and relevant to our interpretation of the findings, but the absence of the effect is not suggestive of any social fact.

We may conclude based on the results that reports show higher charity and volunteering among the religious not because they are more altruistic, but rather because these individuals live in an environment that more often pressures them to give, in accordance with popular moral codes. As explained previously, worship rituals and holidays often contain cues to give money and time (Shapiro 1971; Bird 1982; Cascio 2003). Without ex-

posure to customs designed in part to solicit donations, it is possible that the non-religious inclination to give often lies dormant.

To illustrate, Katz, Levinson, and Gidron (2007) found that, though ultra-orthodox Jews volunteer more often than secular Jews do in Israel: 72% of secular volunteers reported doing so of their own initiative, compared to 48% of ultra-orthodox volunteers. Again, the matter of interest might be instances of donation or volunteering per year rather than amount of money per donation or amount of time per volunteering stint. It is also possible that social desirability bias explains some of the gap between religious and non-religious reports of giving, also reinforcing the importance of pressure (here self-imposed) to conform to the popular, but our findings provide no support for this conclusion.

The combination of our results and our study design leaves us little room to comment on religion as an inherently moralizing influence. It is difficult to speculate as to what the religious giving rates would have been had the experiment involved a priming mechanism. That said, it is interesting that, while participants from every religious affiliation gave significantly more to students with high economic need, the role of the economic need factor in contributing to giving rates was less pronounced among the ultra-orthodox. A possible explanation for this result is that the ultra-orthodox see giving as valuable in and of itself and are therefore more inclined to donate for the sake of donating. Based on this trend, it is plausible that religious priming would have drawn out and accentuated this behaviour by reminding religious participants of supernatural monitoring. In other words, it could be that primed ultra-orthodox participants would have given substantially more than the others to students of lower economic need. Admittedly, though, our data do not justify much speculation, and we must therefore suspend judgment as to what the outcomes may have been had the experiment involved religious content.

It may be claimed that our methodology's hierarchy of religious orientation fails to capture enough of religiosity's distinct features to be meaningful. Indeed, the ongoing endeavour to codify religious sentiment has produced widespread agreement that it is a complex, multi-dimensional construct. Employing an array of psychometric instruments (Hill 2005) and theoretical paradigms (Donahue and Nielsen 2005), psychologists, sociologists, and academic theologians have offered up a number of multi-factor models (King 1967; Stark and Glock 1968; De Jong, Faulkner, and Warland 1973; Cornwall, Albrecht, Cunningham, and Pitcher 1986; Hill and Hood 1999; Kendler et al. 2003). Examining the scholarly record, Saroglou (2011) finds that these factors tend to comport with what he posited as "the big four" dimensions of religiosity: believing (having faith in the existence of a god, multiple gods, a life force, or some other form of external transcendence), bonding (sense of access to that transcendence), behaving (motivation to act in a certain way because of a religious doctrine's set of moral arguments and norms), and belonging (membership formal or informal in a religious community). It is necessary to consider whether the four conceptual compartments for Jewish religious identification in Israel used in this study touch on fluctuations in these four dimensions and whether they are relevant to the unique modes of Israeli Jewish life.

As a matter of fact, this four-pronged conceptualization is very accessible to Israeli Jews, whose vernacular generally classifies one as *chiloni* ("secular"), *masorti* ("traditional"), *kippa sruga* ("knitted kippa," referring to the crocheted skullcaps typically worn by modern orthodox Jews) or *dati leumi* ("national religious," referring to the political

sentiments generally espoused by this community), or *haredi* (an adaptation from Biblical Hebrew used to describe ultra-orthodox Jews). Israeli Jews are familiar with this graded conception of religiosity and generally have a ready answer to inquiries as to where they fit.

In addition to colloquial legitimacy, influential Israeli institutions employ this scale for demographic research, including the Central Bureau of Statistics and the organizations responsible for both reports on volunteering and donating in Israel referenced above (Katz, Levinson, and Gidron 2007; Schmid 2011). Additionally, the Israel Democracy Institute (one of the country's most prestigious think tanks) has released three major reports over the past twenty years profiling Israeli Jews' beliefs and values that not only use the scale (though secular is broken down into anti-religious and not anti-religious), but also demonstrate that religious belief, practice, and general engagement decline as one moves along the scale from ultra-orthodox to secular. This includes study of religious texts, praying in a *minyan* (group of Jewish males), adhering to dietary restrictions, observing holidays, self-reported levels of "feeling religious," and other indicators (Arian et al. 2012). In other words, the taxonomy is not only conventional; it is also meaningful with respect to Saroglou's four dimensions, all of which increase in intensity as Israeli Jews shift at the aggregate level from secular towards ultra-orthodox.

Of course, relying on means of distributions leaves out information, but the Israel Democracy Institute's reports suggest that there is enough significant difference among these four communities to make the scale appropriate, especially given the restriction concerning salience under which we operated. This is certainly the case in comparing the ultra-orthodox to the secular, but it also holds for the intermediate categories.

Another point of potential contention is our having involved only females in the study group. Though it helped to reduce the problem of religious salience, this methodological feature also possibly narrows the experiment's interpretational scope to only women, particularly Israeli women identifying as Jews. The state of knowledge on gendered patterns of volunteering, donation to charity, and general altruism is inconclusive (Eisenberg, Fabes, and Spinrad 2006). Some studies find that there are no meaningful gender differences in generosity. Others find that men and women differ in helping style rather than in an all-encompassing measure of pro-social behaviour. Still others identify either men or women as constituting the more selfless sex. For details on this debate we recommend an excellent literature review assembled by Pan and Houser (2011).

In lieu of consensus, we urge both a prudent reception of our findings that restricts applicability to only women (if not Israeli Jewish women) and future research on the gender-religion-altruism nexus in different parts of the world. As touched on before, issues as complex as the interaction between religiosity and pro-sociality demand multiple studies, including replications. As a reminder, however, our finding that there is no correlation between religiosity and inclination to donate is consistent with the results of most other studies testing for this pattern in a laboratory setting without religious cues, regardless of whether the studies involve men, women, or both.

The possibility of an in-group/out-group effect is another possible cause for concern in the study design. For example, it is plausible that ultra-orthodox Jews would be less inclined to donate to university students since a majority of *haredim* do not attend university and, therefore, may view these students as members of an out-group. Given

that donation rates were uniform across religiosity, however, it is unlikely that such an effect occurred.

We conclude our discussion by again calling attention to the point that our experiment was conducted in the culturally-sterilized setting of a laboratory, free of religious signalling and any meaningful suggestion that religion specifically was the subject of study. The fact that the more religious match the less religions in terms of giving points to dynamics at play in religious life that stimulate philanthropy.

Salomon Israel completed his undergraduate education at UCLA with a B.S. in Cognitive Sciences and specializations in computing and business administration. After a brief stint in management consulting he moved to Israel in 2003, where he completed his Master's Degree in Cognitive Sciences at the Hebrew University under the supervision of Professors Richard Ebstein and Gary Bornstein. Currently a PhD candidate in Psychology at the Hebrew University, Salomon's dissertation focuses on the molecular genetics of social cognition with a particular interest in candidate genes associated with altruism and moral sentiment.

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