

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

---

Sociology Department, Faculty Publications

Sociology, Department of

---

6-2022

## What Aspects of Religiosity Are Associated with Values?

Philip Schwadel

Sam A. Hardy

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/sociologyfacpub>



Part of the [Family, Life Course, and Society Commons](#), and the [Social Psychology and Interaction Commons](#)

---

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Sociology, Department of at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Sociology Department, Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.



Published in *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 61:2 (June 2022), pp. 374–388; doi: 10.1111/jssr.12777

Copyright © 2022 The Society for the Scientific Study of Religion. Published by Wiley. Used by permission.

Published online January 8, 2022.

## What Aspects of Religiosity Are Associated with Values?

Philip Schwadel<sup>1</sup> and Sam A. Hardy<sup>2</sup>

1. Department of Sociology, University of Nebraska–Lincoln, Lincoln, Nebraska, USA
2. Psychology Department, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, USA

*Corresponding author* – Philip Schwadel, Department of Sociology, University of Nebraska–Lincoln, 740 Oldfather Hall, Lincoln, NE 68588-0324, email [pschwadel2@unl.edu](mailto:pschwadel2@unl.edu)

### Abstract

A large body of research shows that religiosity in general is associated with values. Yet, we know little about the specific aspects of religiosity that drive this association. Using nationally representative data from a sample of young adults in the United States, we examined how various aspects of religiosity—religious tradition, service attendance, frequency of prayer, religious salience, belief in God, closeness to God, and number of religious friends—are associated with the 10 values that compose Schwartz’s circle of values. Bivariate results indicate that most measures of religiosity are correlated with Schwartz’s circle of values. Multivariate regression results, however, show that the relationship between religiosity and values is largely because of the positive associations between closeness to God and social focus values, the positive associations between number of religious friends and social focus values, and the negative associations between religious service attendance and personal focus values. We conclude by discussing why these aspects of religiosity appear to be most relevant to Schwartz’s circle of values and by suggesting directions for future research on religiosity and values.

**Keywords:** religion, values, dimensions of religiosity

## Introduction

A large body of research shows that religiosity is associated with values. For instance, in their meta-analysis of religiosity and Schwartz's circle of values, Saroglou, Delpierre, and Dernelle (2004) conclude that religiosity is positively associated with the social focus values of security, conformity, tradition, and benevolence. That religiosity is associated with values is not surprising, as many people see religion and values as intricately connected to one another. For instance, 45% of people across 34 nations say that belief in God is necessary "to be moral and have good values" (Tamir, Connaughton, and Salazar 2020). But the question remains, what aspects of religiosity are associated with which values? Is it affiliating with a specific religious tradition, attending worship services, praying, perceiving religion as important, believing in God, feeling close to God, having religious friends, or other aspects of religiosity that drive the religiosity-values association?

Most research on religion and values uses a single-item measure of religiosity, particularly affiliation, service attendance, or salience (e.g., Roccas et al. 2002; Schwadel et al. 2021; Schwartz and Huisman 1995), or scales that often assess intrinsic versus extrinsic religiosity or the inclusion versus exclusion of transcendence (e.g., Fontaine et al. 2005; Fontaine, Luyten, and Corveleyn 2000; Saroglou and Muñoz-García 2008; Schwartz 2012; see Roccas 2005 for a summary). While informative, these approaches tell us little about the specific aspects of religiosity, as practiced by affiliates and believers, that may affect values (see Pepper, Jackson, and Uzzell 2010 for an exception).<sup>1</sup> Sociological and psychological research has clearly shown that the various dimensions of religiosity have unique associations with secular behaviors, social and political perspectives, and psychological outcomes (Haber, Jacob, and Spangler 2007; Sabriseilabi and Williams 2020; for review, see Hardy et al. 2019). Religious affiliations, behaviors, motivations, and beliefs are not interchangeable, they have distinct influences. Moreover, the dimensions of religiosity that have tangible effects on outcomes, such as individuals' values, vary across subpopulations (Mockabee, Monson, and Grant 2001). Thus, a single-item measure or even a scale of religiosity may fail to pick up relevant associations, and, most importantly, such approaches shed little light on what about being religious leads to differences in values.

In the present study, we examined the associations between various aspects of religiosity and Schwartz's circle of basic values (Schwartz, 1992, 2016). Schwartz's circle of values is the predominant measure of values used by Western psychologists, and empirical research demonstrates that, among widely used measures of values, it most consistently predicts prosocial behaviors, mental health, and proenvironmental behaviors (Hanel, Litzellachner, and Maio 2018). The Schwartz model includes 10 values: self-direction, stimulation, hedonism, achievement, power, security, conformity, tradition, benevolence, and universalism. These values fall into four higher-order values—openness to change (self-direction, stimulation, and hedonism), self-enhancement (hedonism, achievement, and power), conservation (security, conformity, and tradition), and self-transcendence (benevolence and universalism)—that can be further aggregated into social focus values (conservation and self-transcendence values) and personal focus values (openness to change and self-enhancement values). Table 1 provides the question wording for the 10 value scales.

**Table 1.** Schwartz's value scales and descriptive statistics

	M	SD
<i>Security</i>	4.15	1.17
It is important to him to live in secure surroundings. She avoids anything that might endanger her safety.	4.30	1.38
It is very important to her that the government ensures her safety against all threats. She wants the state to be strong so it can defend its citizens.	4.00	1.46
<i>Conformity</i>	4.02	1.23
She believes that people should do what they are told. She thinks people should follow rules at all times, even when no one is watching.	3.92	1.44
It is important to her to always behave properly. She avoids doing anything people would say is wrong.	4.12	1.39
<i>Tradition</i>	4.13	1.09
It is important to her to be humble and modest and not to draw attention to herself.	4.43	1.30
Tradition is important to her. She tries to follow the customs handed down by her religion and family.	3.84	1.52
<i>Benevolence</i>	5.07	0.80
It is very important to her to help the people around her. She wants to care for their well-being.	4.91	1.00
It is important to her to be loyal to her friends. She wants to devote herself to people close to her.	5.23	0.91
<i>Universalism</i>	4.71	0.84
She thinks it is important that every person in the world be treated equally. She believes everyone should have equal opportunities in life.	4.94	1.09
It is important to her to listen to people who are different from her. Even when she disagrees with them, she still wants to understand them.	4.85	1.05
She strongly believes that people should care for nature. Looking after the environment is important to her.	4.35	1.28
<i>Self-direction</i>	4.86	0.92
Thinking up new ideas and being creative is important to her. She likes to do things in her own original way.	4.73	1.18
It is important to her to make her own decisions about what she does. She likes to be free and not depend on others.	4.99	1.09
<i>Stimulation</i>	4.40	1.13
She likes surprises and is always looking for new things to do. She thinks it is important to do lots of different things in life.	4.56	1.23
She looks for adventure and likes to take risks. She wants to have an exciting life.	4.25	1.34
<i>Hedonism</i>	4.20	1.13
Having a good time is important to her. She likes to "spoil" herself.	3.91	1.38
She seeks every chance she can to have fun. It is important to her to do things that give her pleasure.	4.49	1.20
<i>Achievement</i>	4.33	1.17
It is very important to her to show her abilities. She wants people to admire what she does.	4.32	1.32
Being very successful is important to her. She hopes people will recognize her achievements.	4.34	1.33
<i>Power</i>	3.59	1.14
It is important to her to be rich. She wants to have a lot of money and expensive things.	3.02	1.43
It is important to her to get respect from others. She wants people to do what she says.	4.15	1.34

**Notes:** PVQ formulation of scales;  $N = 1885$ ; questions prefaced with, "How much does each of the following statements sound like you?" The items shown use female wording, while males received items with male wording.

The extant literature provides some expectations about the associations between religiosity and values that we can build on. For instance, when examining religious disaffiliation and values, Schwadel and colleagues (2021) note that former evangelical Protestants are relatively likely to endorse the social focus values of security, conformity, tradition, and benevolence. On the other hand, given the insular nature of evangelical Protestantism (Smith 1998), we expect that evangelicals are relatively unlikely to endorse the universalism value, which emphasizes equality and the validity of alternative viewpoints. Conversely, mainline Protestants ascribe to a “golden rule” theology that prioritizes the value of others (Ammerman 1997) and they often see working for social justice as an expression of their religious faith (Todd, Houston, and Odahl-Ruan 2014), which could lead them to be more supportive of universalism. Service attendance and prayer might have different effects as the former is a communal activity that could lead to greater support for social focus values, while the latter is an individual activity that could be associated with personal focus values. Belief in and closeness to God may be associated with the conservation values, particularly conformity and tradition. The closer one feels to God, the more they feel God plays a role in everyday affairs (Froese and Bader 2008). Viewing God in this active way is likely to lead people to prioritize obedience, a key aspect of the conformity and tradition values (Pepper, Jackson, and Uzzell 2010).

Our analysis expands on previous research by demonstrating the independent effects of distinct aspects of religiosity—religious tradition, service attendance, prayer, salience, belief in and closeness to God, and having religious friends—on universal human values. We used data from a nationally representative survey of young adults in the United States to assess bivariate and multivariate associations between religiosity and Schwartz’s circle of values. We conclude by emphasizing that religion is not a monolithic phenomenon—some aspects of religiosity are relevant to values, while others are not.

## Data and Methods

We used data from the fourth wave of the National Study of Youth and Religion (NSYR, [www.youthandreligion.org/](http://www.youthandreligion.org/)). The NSYR began as a survey of a nationally representative sample of adolescents in 2002–2003. The Wave 1 response rate was 57%, according to Response Rate 4 as defined by the American Association for Public Opinion Research. Respondents were surveyed again in Wave 4, in 2013, when they were between 22 and 29 years of age ( $N = 2071$ ).<sup>2</sup> There was 37% attrition between Waves 1 and 4. Wave 4 was administered primarily online. Wave 4 is the only wave with extensive measures of both religiosity and values (see Smith and Denton 2008, for more information on the NSYR).

Wave 4 of the NSYR survey includes 21 items adapted from the Portrait Values Questionnaire (PVQ-21; Schwartz 2003).<sup>3</sup> The 21 questions assess 10 distinct personal values falling under four higher-order values, and can be further aggregated into values with either a personal or social focus. Respondents were asked, “How much does each of the following statements sound like you?” After that, they received 21 items describing different types of people (see Table 1 for item wording and descriptive statistics).<sup>4</sup> Each item has six response options: very much like me, like me, somewhat like me, a little like me, not like me, and not like me at all (reverse coded). Each value is an additive scale composed of

two (or three) items, and then divided by two (or three) so the potential ranges are comparable. The 10 values were analyzed separately but are often discussed in terms of the four higher-order value dimensions, or the two competing value foci. Although hedonism conceptually overlaps openness to change and self-enhancement values, we grouped it with openness to change as has been done previously (see Schwartz 2016).

The focal independent variables assessed religiosity. First, religious tradition was measured with seven dummy variables, based on the classification developed by Steensland and colleagues (2000): Evangelical Protestant, Mainline Protestant, Black Protestant, Catholic, Other Religion, Unaffiliated (aka “Nones”), and Indeterminate Religion.<sup>5</sup> Second, religious service attendance was rated on the following four-point scale: do not attend (1), attend a few to many times a year (2), attend one to three times a month (3), and attend weekly or more (4). Third, frequency of prayer was rated on a seven-point scale from never (1) to multiple times a day (7), based on the question, “How often, if ever, do you pray by yourself alone?” Fourth, religious salience or importance of faith was measured with a single item with responses from not at all important (1) to extremely important (5), based on the question, “How important or unimportant is religious faith in shaping how you live your daily life?” Fifth, a dichotomous variable contrasts those who believe in God (1) with those who do not believe or are unsure (0). Sixth, closeness to God was rated using a six-point scale from extremely distant (1) to extremely close (6) (only asked of those who believe in God or are unsure). Seventh, number of religious friends reflects the proportion of a respondent’s five closest friends who are religious, and ranges from zero to one. This variable is based on a series of questions about respondents’ five closest friends, which includes, “How many, if any, of these five people are religious?” The analytic variable is operationalized as the number of religious friends divided by the total number of friends named. Regression models also include a variable indicating the total number of friends named (0–5). All regression models control for several individual characteristics that may be associated with religiosity (Schwadel 2018): age, gender, race, education, marital status, children, and region.<sup>6</sup> See Table 2 for independent variable descriptive statistics.

**Table 2.** Independent variable descriptive statistics

	Mean/proportion	Standard deviation	Range
Religious tradition			
Evangelical	0.19		0–1
Mainline	0.06		0–1
Black Protestant	0.05		0–1
Catholic	0.15		0–1
Other religion	0.06		0–1
No religion	0.36		0–1
Indeterminate	0.13		0–1
Service attendance	1.97	1.17	1–4
Frequency of prayer	3.85	2.27	1–7
Religious salience	3.03	1.39	1–5
Believe in God	0.72		0–1
Closeness to God <sup>a</sup>	4.07	1.24	1–6
Religious friends	0.47	0.37	0–1
Number of friends	3.91	1.23	0–5
Age	4.48	1.48	1–8
Race			
White	0.73		0–1
African American	0.12		0–1
Latino	0.09		0–1
Other	0.05		0–1
Indeterminate	0.01		0–1
Gender	0.53		0–1
Bachelor's degree	0.40		0–1
Married/cohabit	0.35		0–1
Children	0.29		0–1
South	0.40		0–1

*N* = 1885 unless otherwise noted.

<sup>a</sup>*N* = 1486

The analysis proceeded in two steps. First, we present bivariate correlations between the religiosity variables and the value variables. In most cases, we use Pearson correlation coefficients. For the dichotomous religiosity variables, however, we use point-biserial correlation coefficients (Kornbrot 2005). Second, we present full information maximum likelihood regression models of each of the 10 values to assess the net effects of each focal religiosity variable. These models allowed us to include the closeness to God variable while retaining respondents who did not believe in God and were, therefore, not asked the closeness to God question (Enders 2001). All analyses were conducted using Stata.

## Results

Bivariate correlations between religiosity variables and Schwartz's circle of values are reported in Table 3. To begin with, the results show that each religious tradition except Mainline Protestant and Other Religion was positively correlated with endorsement of all three conservation values: security, conformity, and tradition. Still, Mainline Protestant was positively correlated with two of three conservation values: security and tradition. Conversely, being a None had a negative correlation with the three conservation values as well as benevolence but a positive correlation with universalism. Evangelical Protestant was negatively correlated with universalism and all five personal focus values. Black Protestant, on the other hand, was positively correlated with universalism and four of the five personal focus values.

Compared to religious tradition, the other measures of religiosity had stronger, more consistent positive correlations with all the social focus values except universalism. Service attendance, prayer, religious salience, belief in and closeness to God, and number of religious friends had medium to strong correlations with the three conservation values, with 15 of 18 correlations at 0.20 or above and six at 0.30 or above (Funder and Ozer 2019). These religiosity measures also had smaller but meaningful correlations with benevolence (correlations between 0.10 and 0.17). Unlike most of the other religiosity measures (aside from Evangelical Protestant), service attendance was negatively correlated with universalism and all five personal focus values. Interestingly, belief in God was negatively correlated with universalism, while closeness to God was positively correlated with universalism. Although these results show that religiosity in general was positively associated with the three conservation values and benevolence, the pattern of relationships with values varied across measures of religiosity.

Multivariate regression results for the social focus values are reported in Table 4. When controlling for demographic variables and other aspects of religiosity, many of the associations between religious traditions and social focus values were no longer significant. For instance, although Evangelical Protestant affiliation had a significant bivariate correlation with four of the five social focus values, it was only significantly predictive of universalism in the full regression models. Similarly, despite significant bivariate correlations with four of the five social focus values, black Protestant affiliation did not significantly predict any of the social focus values in the regression models. Mainline Protestant affiliation had bivariate correlations with both security and tradition, but only significantly predicted security in the full regression models. Catholic was the most relevant religious tradition in the social focus values regression models, with significant associations with both security and tradition.



**Table 3.** Bivariate correlations between religion variables and Schwartz’s values

	Social focus					Personal focus				
	Conservation			Self-transcendence		Openness to change			Self-enhancement	
	Security	Conformity	Tradition	Benevolence	Universalism	Self-direction	Stimulation	Hedonism	Achievement	Power
Religious tradition <sup>a</sup>										
Evangelical	0.05*	0.14***	0.15***	0.02	-0.09***	-0.07**	-0.07**	-0.11***	-0.09***	-0.06*
Mainline	0.05*	0.03	0.07*	0.04	0.01	-0.00	0.02	0.00	0.00	-0.01
Black Protestant	0.14***	0.06*	0.11***	0.04	0.05*	0.09***	0.06**	0.08**	0.05*	0.04
Catholic	0.05*	0.07**	0.12***	0.03	-0.04	-0.01	-0.02	0.03	0.04	0.06**
Other	0.01	0.03	0.03	-0.00	0.02	-0.02	-0.03	-0.02	-0.02	0.01
Unaffiliated	-0.21***	-0.26***	-0.36***	-0.12*	0.07**	0.03	0.02	0.05*	0.01	-0.03
Indeterminate	0.05*	0.06*	0.07**	0.06*	-0.00	-0.00	-0.00	-0.01	0.02	0.03
Service attendance	0.12***	0.23***	0.30***	0.10***	-0.08***	-0.07**	-0.07**	-0.12***	-0.10***	-0.07**
Frequency of prayer	0.22***	0.26***	0.39***	0.16***	-0.00	-0.02	-0.02	-0.08***	-0.03	0.01
Religious salience	0.25***	0.34***	0.45***	0.17***	-0.01	-0.04	-0.02	0.00	-0.03	0.01
Believe in God <sup>a</sup>	0.23***	0.27***	0.37***	0.10***	-0.06**	-0.02	-0.00	-0.05*	0.00	0.03
Closeness to God <sup>b</sup>	0.19***	0.23***	0.31***	0.16***	0.08**	0.03	0.01	-0.03	-0.02	-0.01
Religious friends	0.18***	0.22***	0.29***	0.13***	-0.04	-0.02	-0.01	-0.04	-0.02	0.00

**Notes:** Table reports Pearson correlation coefficients unless otherwise noted; *N* = 1885 unless otherwise noted.

<sup>a</sup>Point-biserial correlation coefficients.

<sup>b</sup>*N* = 1486

\**p* < .05, \*\**p* < .01, \*\*\**p* < .001 (two-tailed test)

**Table 4.** Full information maximum likelihood regression models of social focus Schwartz’s values

	Conservation									Self-transcendence					
	Security			Conformity			Tradition			Benevolence			Universalism		
	b	se	Beta	b	se	Beta	b	se	Beta	b	se	Beta	b	se	Beta
Religious tradition <sup>a</sup>															
Evangelical	0.13	0.12	0.04	0.06	0.12	0.02	0.01	0.11	0.00	-0.11	0.09	-0.06	-0.19	0.09	-0.09*
Mainline	0.30	0.14	0.06*	0.02	0.15	0.00	0.19	0.12	0.04	0.00	0.09	0.00	-0.02	0.11	-0.00
Black Protestant	0.21	0.17	0.04	-0.16	0.20	-0.03	0.01	0.16	0.00	-0.07	0.13	-0.02	-0.15	0.13	-0.04
Catholic	0.30	0.11	0.09**	0.21	0.12	0.07	0.38	0.09	0.12***	0.01	0.08	0.00	-0.12	0.08	-0.05
Other	0.16	0.15	0.04	0.10	0.15	0.02	-0.01	0.13	-0.00	-0.18	0.10	-0.06	-0.02	0.12	-0.01
Indeterminate	0.10	0.10	0.03	0.05	0.11	0.01	0.07	0.09	0.02	0.07	0.08	0.03	-0.10	0.08	-0.04
Service attendance	-0.11	0.04	-0.11**	0.01	0.04	0.00	-0.02	0.04	-0.02	0.00	0.03	0.01	-0.08	0.03	-0.11*
Frequency of prayer	-0.03	0.02	-0.06	-0.06	0.02	-0.11*	0.00	0.02	0.00	0.01	0.02	0.02	0.01	0.02	0.03
Religious salience	0.05	0.04	0.06	0.19	0.05	0.22***	0.20	0.04	0.25***	0.06	0.03	0.10	0.04	0.03	0.06
Believe in God	0.10	0.10	0.04	0.19	0.11	0.07	0.19	0.09	0.07*	-0.14	0.07	-0.08*	-0.31	0.08	-0.16***
Closeness to God	0.13	0.04	0.15**	0.10	0.04	0.12*	0.09	0.04	0.12*	0.06	0.03	0.12*	0.07	0.03	0.11*
Religious friends	0.23	0.09	0.07*	0.22	0.10	0.07*	0.30	0.08	0.10***	0.14	0.07	0.06*	0.02	0.07	0.01

**Notes:** Models control for age, gender, race, education, marital status, children, region, and number of friends; models weighted;  $N = 1885$  (closeness to God  $N = 1486$ ).

<sup>a</sup>No religious affiliation omitted reference group.

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$  (two-tailed test)

**Table 5.** Full information maximum likelihood regression models of personal focus Schwartz’s values

	Openness to change									Self-enhancement					
	Self-direction			Stimulation			Hedonism			Achievement			Power		
	b	se	Beta	b	se	Beta	b	se	Beta	b	se	Beta	b	se	Beta
Religious tradition <sup>a</sup>															
Evangelical	-0.007	0.11	-0.03	-0.14	0.12	-0.05	-0.10	0.12	-0.03	-0.01	0.12	-0.00	0.05	0.13	0.02
Mainline	0.06	0.13	0.02	0.12	0.16	0.02	0.13	0.14	0.03	0.06	0.15	0.01	0.08	0.15	0.02
Black Protestant	0.14	0.14	0.03	0.07	0.18	0.01	0.12	0.19	0.02	0.17	0.18	0.03	0.26	0.19	0.05
Catholic	-0.02	0.09	-0.01	-0.00	0.11	-0.00	0.05	0.10	0.02	0.19	0.10	0.06	0.25	0.11	0.08*
Other	0.04	0.14	0.01	-0.08	0.16	-0.02	0.09	0.15	0.02	0.04	0.14	0.01	0.12	0.16	0.03
Indeterminate	-0.01	0.09	-0.00	-0.03	0.11	-0.01	-0.03	0.11	-0.01	0.12	0.12	0.03	0.18	0.12	0.05
Service attendance	-0.10	0.04	-0.12*	-0.09	0.04	-0.10*	-0.12	0.04	-0.13**	-0.17	0.04	-0.17***	-0.15	0.04	-0.15***
Frequency of prayer	0.01	0.02	0.02	-0.03	0.02	-0.06	-0.03	0.02	-0.07	-0.02	0.03	-0.04	0.01	0.03	0.03
Religious salience	-0.02	0.04	-0.02	0.01	0.05	0.01	-0.02	0.04	-0.03	0.04	0.05	0.04	-0.01	0.05	-0.01
Believe in God	-0.01	0.08	-0.00	-0.02	0.11	-0.01	-0.06	0.10	-0.02	-0.04	0.10	-0.02	-0.03	0.10	-0.01
Closeness to God	0.01	0.03	0.02	0.10	0.04	0.13*	0.09	0.04	0.11*	0.02	0.04	0.02	0.05	0.04	0.07
Religious friends	0.11	0.08	0.05	0.06	0.10	0.02	0.03	0.10	0.01	0.03	0.09	0.01	0.09	0.10	0.03

**Notes:** Models control for age, gender, race, education, marital status, children, region, and number of friends; models weighted; *N* = 1885 (closeness to God *N* = 1486).

<sup>a</sup>No religious affiliation omitted reference group.

\**p* < .05, \*\**p* < .01, \*\*\**p* < .001 (two-tailed test)

Compared to the correlations, there were fewer but still notable significant associations between other measures of religiosity and social focus values in the regression models. Service attendance, for example, was significantly correlated with all five personal focus values but was only significantly predictive of security and universalism in the full regression models. Moreover, the negative link between service attendance and security was in the opposite direction of the bivariate correlation. Religious salience maintained robust, positive associations with conformity and tradition in the regression models but was no longer associated with security and benevolence. Similar to the correlations, belief in God was positively predictive of tradition and negatively predictive of universalism. On the other hand, the significant link between belief in God and benevolence in the regression model was in the opposite direction of the bivariate correlation between the two.

Number of religious friends and closeness to God were the most consistent predictors of social focus values in the regression models. All else being equal, number of religious friends was positively associated with each of the social focus values except universalism: security, conformity, tradition, and benevolence. Closeness to God was positively associated with all five social focus values. These results mirror the bivariate correlation results.

Multivariate regression models of personal focus values are reported in Table 5. As this table shows, associations between religiosity and personal focus values were largely limited to religious service attendance. There were a few other small but significant effects—Catholics were more likely than Nones to endorse the power value, and closeness to God was positively associated with stimulation and hedonism. Service attendance, however, was significantly and negatively associated with all five personal focus values. This suggests that the negative bivariate correlations between Evangelical Protestant affiliation and each of the personal focus values was primarily due to the relatively high frequencies of service attendance in the evangelical Protestant community. Despite black Protestant affiliation being significantly and positively associated with four of the five personal focus values in the correlation analysis, it was not significantly associated with any of the values in the regression models. This appears to be largely though not wholly attributable to the association between race and black Protestant affiliation. In alternative regression models that do not include controls for race, black Protestant affiliation was significantly associated with four of the five personal focus values (models not shown).

## Discussion and Conclusions

Our goal in the present study was to assess how various aspects of religiosity are associated with universal human values. The bivariate correlations showed that most of our measures of religiosity were associated with Schwartz's circle of values. In particular, aside from religious tradition, all the measures of religiosity were positively associated with all three conservation values and with benevolence. Moreover, except for the insignificant association between mainline Protestant and conformity, all the Christian traditions were positively associated with the three conservation values. This aligns with the large body of research showing that religiosity in general is associated with Schwartz's circle of values, social focus values in particular (see meta-analysis by Saroglou, Delpierre, and Dernelle 2004). The multivariate regression results, however, painted a different picture. When

controlling for other dimensions of religiosity and demographic factors, many of the associations between religiosity and values dissipated and sometimes even changed directions. This is due to the large amount of shared variance between aspects of religiosity, making it difficult for them to each make a unique contribution to values. The most notable exceptions were the positive associations between number of religious friends and social focus values, the positive associations between closeness to God and social focus values, and the negative associations between religious service attendance and personal focus values.

Religious service attendance is the “most important and widely used measure to estimate the level of religious practice in a population” (Rossi and Scappini 2014:249). In line with this conception of service attendance as fundamental to religious practice, the findings here showed that service attendance was the only aspect of religiosity that had consistent, negative relationships with each of the personal focus values in the regression models. The effort it takes to attend religious services may play a role in these findings. Aside from prayer, the other measures of religiosity in our analyses do not require any time; and unlike service attendance, prayer, at least for most Christians, can be done anytime and anywhere. The negative associations between service attendance and personal focus values may, therefore, indicate that those who commit more time and energy to their religion are relatively unlikely to endorse personal focus values.

The service attendance findings partially align with a Durkheimian perspective on religion, such as Collins’ Interaction Ritual Chain theory (2004), which emphasizes that interaction with coreligionists promotes shared understanding and group solidarity. Religious service attendance is inherently social, potentially elevating the importance of the group over the individual for many attendees. Thus, service attendance is negatively associated with values that prioritize the self: self-direction, stimulation, hedonism, achievement, and power. Similarly, this interpretation fits with the finding that service attendance was also negatively associated with the universalism value since universalism, unlike benevolence, prioritizes the worth of those who are different and outside of the group. Consequently, the findings suggest that any influence service attendance has on leading people to value the group over the self may not extend to valuing people outside of one’s reference group. This Durkheimian interpretation, however, suggests that service attendance should also be positively associated with social focus values other than universalism. While this is borne out in the correlation analysis, it does not hold in the regression models. Alternative regression models (not shown) indicate that adding the other religiosity measures to the models, not the demographic variables, leads to this change in the effect of service attendance. Additional research is needed to clarify why, when controlling for other aspects of religiosity, frequent attenders are relatively likely to downplay personal focus values and universalism but not to instead emphasize the importance of other social focus values.

In addition to religious participation, religious beliefs are regularly measured aspects of American religiosity that have been shown to be associated with various individual outcomes. Belief in God is of course a key measure of religious belief in a predominantly Christian context, such as the United States. Interestingly though, it was not belief in God but closeness to God that exhibited consistent, positive relationships with social focus values.<sup>7</sup> This finding expands on research on the social and psychological implications of one’s views of and relationship with the divine. Research on the family, for example,

indicates that feeling close to God may “spillover” into other relationships (e.g., Dalton, Dollahite, and Marks 2018). Our findings suggest this “spillover” could include relationships outside of the family, particularly as closeness to God was the only measure of religiosity that was positively associated with universalism. Moreover, people who feel close to God tend to have better mental health outcomes (Ellison 1991; Jeppsen et al. 2015; Schieffman et al. 2006). The association between closeness to God and mental health may help explain our findings as several social focus values are also associated with affective well-being (Sagiv and Schwartz 2000). However, other research hypothesizes that some social focus values undermine subjective wellbeing (Sortheix and Schwartz 2017). Additional research is thus needed to elucidate the complex relationship between closeness to God, mental health, and values.

Although fewer researchers focus on the religious aspects of social networks, perhaps due to data limitations, sociologists have long argued that religion is predominantly a social phenomenon that shapes and is shaped by social interactions (e.g., Durkheim, Simmel, Collins; see Cheadle and Schwadel 2012). With advances in data collection procedures, empirical research has begun to address the social and psychological consequences of the religious qualities of social networks, often showing that religious friends play a larger role than theology and other more commonly assessed aspects of religion (e.g., Brashears 2010; Schwadel et al. 2016). The findings here further this growing body of research by demonstrating that number of religious friends has a positive association with each of the social focus values except universalism. Thus, similar to service attendance, the influence of religious friends on valuing the social over the individual does not appear to extend to those outside of the individual’s reference group. The relevance of social networks in this context highlights the theoretical advances that can be made by combining insights from sociological and psychological research.

Broadly speaking, the results in this article demonstrate that different dimensions of religiosity are relevant to different outcomes, in this case different values. Researchers looking at the effects of religiosity on values, morals, and other social-psychological outcomes must consider theoretical arguments that seriously grapple with what about religiosity is important, and build their research accordingly. For instance, given the hierarchical structure and conservative culture of the Catholic Church, it should not be surprising that our results showed that Catholics are relatively likely to endorse the tradition value (Dinges and Hitchcock 1991). Similarly, our results support Roccas and Schwartz’s (1997) hypothesis that in nations where the Catholic Church is supportive of the state, such as the United States, Catholics are likely to emphasize security. In sum, measures such as religious salience that tap into a general feeling of religiosity might appear to be relevant but could instead be acting as proxies for more specific aspects of religious participation, religious affiliation, religious belief, religious identity, and interaction with religious communities.

While the present results greatly expand understanding of the aspects of religiosity that are associated with values, there is considerably more work to be done. For instance, experimental and longitudinal data can shed light on how aspects of religiosity cause changes in values, and vice versa (e.g., Schwadel et al. 2021). Indeed, people may change their religious identities and forms of religious participation to match their existing values (Bardi

et al. 2014). The self-report nature of Schwartz's circle of values might also influence the results. Although this is the most widely used measure of universal human values, the dual nature of mental processing (De Neys 2018) suggests that religiosity may relate differently to implicit values. The associations between aspects of religiosity and values could vary across relevant social groups as well. For instance, there could be differences by race/ethnicity, gender, generation, and geographic location. Moreover, the results may differ with data that include people of all ages. Our sample of young adults might evince unique associations between religiosity and values that are not applicable to middle-aged or older adults. Younger adults are relatively unlikely to endorse social focus values and relatively likely to endorse personal focus values (Schwartz 2016). Similarly, religiosity changes substantially across the life course (Wink and Dillon 2002). Additional research is needed to assess if the connections between religiosity and values also change with age. Finally, the values endorsed by individuals may not be the same as those advanced by their religious groups or communities. Sociologists and anthropologists emphasize the organizational and communal aspects of religion. Religious congregations, denominations, and communities may prioritize different values than those expressed by individuals. Indeed, differences in social and political viewpoints between religious leaders and adherents are relatively common (Calfano, Oldmixon, and Gray 2014; Hadden 1969). Future research should expand on the present study with alternative forms of data collection, different ways of measuring values, samples with older adults, assessing how the religiosity and value associations vary across social and demographic categories, and by comparing the values of individuals with their religious organizations and communities.

The findings here expand on the relatively large body of research on religiosity and values. We moved beyond noting that religiosity writ large is associated with universal human values and instead showed that specific aspects of religiosity are related to different values. Specifically, an individual's relationship with the divine and the religious makeup of their social networks have clear psychological repercussions in the form of endorsement of social focus values, and frequent participation in religious congregations appears to curb endorsement of personal focus values. Religion is not a monolithic phenomenon. Different people prioritize different ways of being religious, and these patterns have important implications for the values they hold and their psychological dispositions more broadly. Now that we have established the pattern of relationships between various aspects of religiosity and values, we must ask why these patterns exist. What is it about having more religious friends and feeling close to God that leads people to endorse social focus values? We have offered some potential reasons, but additional research is required to assess these possibilities. We encourage future research on religiosity and values to delve into the factors that explain the various relationships we have established in the present study.

**Acknowledgments** – The authors thank the editor of *JSSR* and the anonymous reviewers for their thoughtful comments on earlier drafts.

**Statement on Data Replication** – The data are available without charge at the Association of Religion Data Archives website ([www.TheARDA.com](http://www.TheARDA.com)). Contact the lead author for questions about the Stata code used in the analyses.

## Notes

1. Pepper, Jackson, and Uzzell (2010) assessed correlations between conceptions of God (e.g., distant God, benevolent God, and strict God) and Schwartz's circle of values among churchgoers ( $N = 260$ ) and the general public ( $N = 250$ ) in Great Britain. Their research is an important addition to knowledge about how conceptions of God are related to values. However, they do not perform a multivariate analysis of the relationship between diverse measures of religiosity and values, as we do in this article. Our research also focuses on a different population (United States), examines aspects of religiosity they do not include (e.g., number of religious friends, prayer, and specific religious tradition), and includes relevant demographic controls.
2. Sample size does not include Jewish oversample ( $n = 73$  in Wave 4) because the Jewish oversample data cannot be weighted along with the other cases. Still, there are 81 Jewish respondents in the core sample.
3. The NSYR PVQ questions ("how much does each of the following statements sound like you") deviate slightly from the original PVQ wording ("how much like you is this person").
4. The questions are gendered, thus men and women received different versions of the Schwartz value questions.
5. In our sample, 240 respondents who indicated that they had a religious affiliation did not provide the additional information needed to categorize their religious tradition. Most of these respondents indicated they were Christian but did not specify a denomination (nor that they were nondenominational or "just Christian"). Thus, their tradition is indeterminate.
6. Age is an ordinal measure of years of age. Gender is a dummy variable for female respondents. Race is assessed with dummy variables for African American, Latino, and other race respondents, with white as the omitted reference category (models also include a dummy variable for respondent with indeterminate race). Education is measured with a dummy variable for those with a bachelor's degree. Dummy variables for those who are married/cohabiting and those with children control for family formation. Given the regional concentration of religious affiliation, and following previous research using the NSYR (e.g., Schwadel 2018), a dummy variable for living in the South Census Region is used to assess region.
7. In regression models without closeness to God, belief in God had significant, positive associations with security, conformity, and tradition; no association with benevolence; and a significant, negative association with universalism.

## References

- Ammerman, Nancy T. 1997. Golden rule Christianity. In *Lived Religion in America: Toward a History of Practice*, edited by D. Hall, pp. 196–216. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Bardi, Anat, Kathryn E. Buchanan, Robin Goodwin, Letitia Slabu, and Mark Robinson. 2014. Value stability and change during self-chosen life transitions: Self-selection versus socialization effects. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 106(1):131–47.



- Brashears, Mathew E. 2010. Anomia and the sacred canopy: Testing a network theory. *Social Networks* 32:187–96.
- Calfano, Brian R., Elizabeth A. Oldmixon, and Mark Gray. 2014. Strategically prophetic priests: An analysis of competing principal influence on clergy political action. *Review of Religious Research* 56:1–21.
- Cheadle, Jacob E., and Philip Schwadel. 2012. The ‘Friendship Dynamics of Religion,’ or the ‘Religious Dynamics of Friendship’? A social network analysis of adolescents who attend small schools. *Social Science Research* 41(5):1198–212.
- Collins, Randall. 2004. *Interaction Ritual Chains*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Dalton, Hilary, David C. Dollahite, and Loren D. Marks. 2018. Transcendence matters: Do the ways family members experience God meaningfully relate to family life? *Review of Religious Research* 60:23–47.
- De Neys, Wim. 2018. *Dual Process Theory 2.0*. New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis.
- Dinges, William D., and James Hitchcock. 1991. Roman Catholic traditionalism and activist conservatism in the United States. In *Fundamentalisms Observed*, edited by M. E. Marty and R. S. Appleby, pp. 66–141. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Ellison, Christopher G. 1991. Religious involvement and subjective well-being. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 32:80–99.
- Enders, Craig K. 2001. The performance of the full information maximum likelihood estimator in multiple regression models with missing data. *Educational and Psychological Measurement* 61(5):713–40.
- Fontaine, Johnny R. J., Bart Duriez, Patrick Luyten, Jozef Corveleyn, and Dirk Hutsebaut. 2005. Consequences of a multidimensional approach to religion for the relationship between religiosity and value priorities. *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion* 15(2):123–43.
- Fontaine, Johnny, Patrick Luyten, and Jozef Corveleyn. 2000. Tell me what you believe and I’ll tell you what you want: Empirical evidence for discriminating value patterns of five types of religiosity. *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion* 10(2):65–84.
- Froese, Paul, and Christopher Bader. 2008. Unraveling religious worldviews: The relationship between images of God and political ideology in a cross-cultural analysis. *Sociological Quarterly* 49(4):689–718.
- Funder, David C., and Daniel J. Ozer. 2019. Evaluating effect size in psychological research: Sense and nonsense. *Advances in Methods and Practices in Psychological Science* 2:156–68.
- Haber, Jon Randolph, Theodore Jacob, and David J. C. Spangler. 2007. Dimensions of religion/spirituality and relevance to health research. *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion* 17(4):265–88.
- Hadden, Jeffrey K. 1969. *The Gathering Storm in the Churches: The Widening Gap between Clergy and Laymen*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.
- Hanel, Paul, Lukas F. Litzellachner, and Gregory R. Maio. 2018. An empirical comparison of human value models. *Frontiers in Psychology* 9(1643). <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01643>.
- Hardy, Sam A., Jenae M. Nelson, Joseph P. Moore, and Pamela Ebstynne King. 2019. Processes of religious and spiritual influence in adolescence: A systematic review of 30 years of research. *Journal of Research on Adolescence* 29(2):254–75.
- Jeppsen, Benjamin, Patrick Pössel, Stephanie Winkeljohn Black, Annie Bjerg, and DonWooldridge. 2015. Closeness and control: Exploring the relationship between prayer and mental health. *Counseling and Values* 60:164–85.

- Kornbrot, Diana. 2005. Point biserial correlation. In *Encyclopedia of Statistics in Behavioral Science*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/0470013192.bsa485>.
- Mockabee, Stephen T., Joseph Quin Monson, and J. Tobin Grant. 2001. Measuring religious commitment among Catholics and Protestants: A new approach. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 40(4):675–90.
- Pepper, Miriam, Tim Jackson, and David Uzzell. 2010. A study of multidimensional religion constructs and values in the United Kingdom. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 49(1):127–46.
- Roccas, Sonia, Lilach Sagiv, Shalom H. Schwartz, and Ariel Knafo. 2002. The big five personality factors and personal values. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 28(6):789–801.
- Roccas, Sonia, and Shalom H. Schwartz. 1997. Church-state relations and the association of religiosity with values: A study of Catholics in six countries. *Cross-Cultural Research* 31(4):356–75.
- Roccas, Sonia. 2005. Religion and value systems. *Journal of Social Issues* 61(4):747–59. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.2005.00430.x>.
- Rossi, Maurizio, and Ettore Scappini. 2014. Church attendance, problems of measurement, and interpreting indicators: A study of religious practice in the United States, 1975–2010. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 53(2):249–67.
- Sabriseilabi, Soheil, and James Williams. 2020. Dimensions of religion and attitudes toward euthanasia. *Death Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07481187.2020.1800863>.
- Sagiv, Lilach, and Shalom H. Schwartz. 2000. Values priorities and subjective well-being: Direct relations and congruity effects. *European Journal of Social Psychology* 30:177–98.
- Saroglou, Vassilis, Vanessa Delpierre, and Rebecca Dernelle. 2004. Values and religiosity: A meta-analysis of studies using Schwartz's model. *Personality and Individual Differences* 37:721–34.
- Saroglou, Vassilis, and Antonio Muñoz-García. 2008. Individual differences in religion and spirituality: An issue of personality traits and/or values. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 47(1):83–101.
- Schieman, Scott, Tetyana Pudrovska, Leonard I. Pearlin, and Christopher G. Ellison. 2006. The sense of divine control and psychological distress: Variations across race and socioeconomic status. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 45:529–49.
- Schwadel, Philip. 2018. The political implications of religious non-affiliation in emerging adulthood. *Journal of Religion & Society, Supplement* 17:149–66.
- Schwadel, Philip, Jacob E. Cheadle, Sarah E. Malone, and Michael Stout. 2016. Social networks and civic participation and efficacy in two evangelical protestant churches. *Review of Religious Research* 58(2):305–17.
- Schwadel, Philip, Sam A. Hardy, Daryl R. Van Tongeren, and C. Nathan DeWall. 2021. The values of religious nones, dones, and sacralized Americans: Links between changes in religious affiliation and Schwartz values. *Journal of Personality* 89:867–82.
- Schwartz, Shalom H. 1992. Universals in the content and structure of values: Theoretical advances and empirical tests in 20 countries. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* 25:1–65.
- Schwartz, Shalom H. 2003. A proposal for measuring value orientations across nations. In *Source Questionnaire Development of the European Social Survey* (chapter 7). [https://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/docs/methodology/core\\_ess\\_questionnaire/ESS\\_core\\_questionnaire\\_human\\_values.pdf](https://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/docs/methodology/core_ess_questionnaire/ESS_core_questionnaire_human_values.pdf)
- Schwartz, Shalom H. 2012. Values and religion in adolescent development: Cross-national and comparative evidence. In *Values, Religion, and Culture in Adolescent Development*, edited by G. Tromsdorff and X. Chen, pp. 97–122. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Schwartz, Shalom H. 2016. Basic individual values: Sources and consequences. In *Handbook of Value: Perspectives from Economics, Neuroscience, Philosophy, Psychology and Sociology*, edited by T. Brosch and D. Sander, pp. 63–84. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Schwartz, Shalom H., and Spike Huismans. 1995. Value priorities and religiosity in four western religions. *Social Psychology Quarterly* 58:88–107.
- Smith, Christian. 1998. *American Evangelicalism Embattled and Thriving*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Smith, Christian, and Melinda L. Denton. 2008. Methodological design and procedures for the national study of youth and religion (NSYR) longitudinal telephone survey (Waves 1, 2, & 3) [Data Set]. NYSR.
- Sortheix, Florencia M., and Shalom H. Schwartz. 2017. Values that underlie and undermine well-being: Variability across countries. *European Journal of Personality* 31:187–201.
- Steensland, Brian, Jerry Z. Park, Mark D. Regnerus, Lynn D. Robinson, W. Bradford Wilcox, and Robert D. Woodberry. 2000. The measure of American religion: Toward improving the state of the art. *Social Forces* 79:291–318.
- Tamir, Christine, Aidan Connaughton, and Ariana M. Salazar. 2020. *The Global God Divide: People's Thoughts on Whether Belief in God Is Necessary to Be Moral Vary by Economic Development, Education and Age*. Pew Research Center.
- Todd, Nathan R., Jaclyn D. Houston, and Charlynn A. Odahl-Ruan. 2014. Preliminary validation of the sanctification of social justice scale. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality* 6(3):245–56.
- Wink, Paul, and Michele Dillon. 2002. Spiritual development across the adult life course: Findings from a longitudinal study. *Journal of Adolescent Development* 9(1):79–94.