Belief in a Just God (and a Just Society):

A System Justification Perspective on Religious Ideology

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Abstract

Theoretical approaches that treat religiosity as an evolutionary byproduct of cognitive mechanisms to detect agency may help to explain the prevalence of superstitious thinking, but they say little about the social-motivational (or ideological) functions of religious beliefs or the specific contents of religious doctrines. To address these omissions, we develop the thesis that religion provides an ideological justification for the existing social order, so that prevailing institutions and arrangements are perceived as legitimate and just and therefore worth obeying and preserving. We summarize empirical evidence revealing that: (a) religiosity is associated with the same set of epistemic, existential, and relational needs that motivate system justification; (b) religiosity is associated with the endorsement of the belief in a just world, Protestant Work Ethic, fair market ideology, opposition to equality, right-wing authoritarianism, political conservatism, and other system-justifying belief systems; and (c) religious ideology tends to serve the palliative function of making people happier or more satisfied with the way things are. Although most major religious texts and movements contain progressive as well as conservative elements, belief in God is more often than not system-justifying in terms of its motivational antecedents, manifestations, and consequences.

The Lord feeds some of His prisoners better than others.
It could be said of Him that He is not a just god but an indifferent god.
That He is not to be trusted to reward the righteous and punish the unscrupulous.
That He maketh the poor poorer but is otherwise undependable.

It could be said of Him that it is His school of the germane
   that produced the Congressional Record.
That it is His vision of justice that gave us cost accounting.

-- Reed Whittemore (1990/2000, p. 13)

The recent trend in scientific approaches to religion has been to understand belief in God (or gods) as an evolutionary "accident," that is, a byproduct of psychological adaptations that enabled our species to infer agency and other hidden causes of observable outcomes in the social and physical world (e.g., Atran & Norenzayan, 2004; Boyer, 2001; Dawkins, 2006; Dennett, 2006). The idea is that—as Paul Bloom (2005) put it—our cognitive apparatus evolved to "see purpose, intention, design, even when it is not there." Such approaches may indeed help to explain the prevalence of religious and superstitious forms of thinking in general, but they say little about the social-motivational functions of religion or, relatedly, the specific *contents* that religious beliefs and doctrines are likely to include. Adopting a system justification perspective, we propose that an important but underappreciated function of religion is to provide ideological justification for the existing social order and to establish the perception that prevailing institutions and arrangements are legitimate and just and therefore worth obeying and preserving (Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004; Jost & Van der Toorn, 2012). In other words, we consider the possibility that religious belief systems are (more often than not) *system-justifying* in terms of their contents, consequences, and underlying motivational structure.

Let us begin with the problem of *theodicy,* which poses a challenge to religious faith—or at least to belief in a deity who is morally irreproachable (Leibniz, 1709/1952; see also Larrimore, 2001): If God is all-knowing and all-powerful, how do we explain the existence and

prevalence of evil, suffering, and injustice in the world? As Max Weber (1922/1963) observed in

The Sociology of Religion, every religion has offered some solution to (or, in a few cases, clever

evasions of) the problem of theodicy. One of the most common theological solutions concerns

the *afterlife*, a time and place in which earthly scores are settled, scoundrels are punished

retributively, and the virtuous are compensated—perhaps infinitely so. Furthermore, as the

psychologist Melvin Lerner (1980) pointed out:

> [T]here are strong forces in our culture which convey the belief that this is a "just
> world." The Western religions stress the relation between sin, doing harm to
> others, and suffering. Although the ultimate accounting is expected to take place
> in the next world and for eternity, there are strong themes running through the
> Judeo-Christian tradition which link signs of one's fate on earth with virtue and a
> state of grace—Job, in the Bible, suffered long and grievously, but he was more
> than compensated, not in heaven but on this earth. The Old Testament contains
> many examples which illustrate that "righteous will triumph and the wicked be
> punished." The Christian Reformation created the basis for a world view, the
> "Protestant Ethic," which permeates our culture . . . From this perspective,
> success, financial and otherwise, is a sign of salvation, and a direct result of the
> Christian virtues of diligence and self-sacrifice. (p. 13)

Lerner suggests that religious ideology helps adherents to satisfy their desire to believe in a "just

world" in which people "deserve what they get and get what they deserve" (see also Furnham &

Brown, 1992; Rubin & Peplau, 1975).

But religious belief systems do much more than validate intuitions about justice and

conceptions of God as benevolent. As Weber (1922/1963) noted, they also uphold the current

social order by suggesting that justice is (or will be) served. The Hindu concept of *karma,* for

instance, and the related doctrine of the transmigration of souls (i.e., reincarnation) commit

individuals to believing that they *deserve* their present status in society and also that, if they live

in a manner that is consistent with religious prescriptions, they will be rewarded in their next

lives. Thus, belief in the doctrine of the transmigration of souls (i.e., reincarnation) helps to

explain why "it is precisely the lowest classes, who would naturally be most desirous of

improving their status in subsequent incarnations, that cling most steadfastly to their caste

obligations, never thinking of toppling the caste system through social revolutions or reforms"

(Weber, 1922/1963, p. 43).

The Judeo-Christian tradition, too, is replete with elaborate ideological justifications that

provide moral and intellectual support for the notion that the existing social order is legitimate,

just, and should be defended and maintained. The New Testament explicitly states, for instance,

that political authorities are legitimate and should be obeyed:

> 1. Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no
> authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have
> been established by God.
>
> 2. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God
> has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.
>
> 3. For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong.
> Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right
> and he will commend you.
>
> 4. For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he
> does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to
> bring punishment on the wrongdoer.
>
> 5. Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of
> possible punishment but also because of conscience.
>
> 6. This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give
> their full time to governing. (*Romans* 13)

Religious texts also condone many forms of social inequality, including sexism:

> Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the
> husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church . . . as the
> church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their husbands in everything.
> (*Ephesians* 5:22-24)

Slavery is regarded as a justifiable institution in the Old and New Testaments, as the following

passages show:

> As for your male and female slaves whom you may have: you may buy male and female slaves from among the nations that are around you. You may also buy from among the strangers who sojourn with you and their clans that are with you, who have been born in your land, and they may be your property. You may bequeath them to your sons after you to inherit as a possession forever. You may make slaves of them, but over your brothers the people of Israel you shall not rule, one over another ruthlessly. (*Leviticus* 25:44-46)

> Masters, treat your slaves justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven. (*Colossians* 4:1)

In religious teachings, gender disparities and traditional divisions of labor within families are often accepted and imbued with moral and even spiritual significance. This is by no means confined to Christianity. As Weber (1922/1963) observed, "Women are completely excluded from the official Chinese cults as well as from those of the Romans and Brahmins; nor is the religion of the Buddhist intellectuals feministic" (p. 105).

During the Medieval Crusades, the tenets of Christian ideology were used to justify the inquisition, torture, and execution of non-believers. They were also wielded in defense of racial hierarchies and the institution of slavery (e.g., Faust, 1981; Fredrickson, 2002). Religion continues to function as a major justification for slavery in those parts of the world where it is still practiced, such as Mauritania. An escaped Haratin slave named Moctar Teyeb noted that, "Slavery is a state of mind, and most Haratin believe that the slavery system is part of Allah's command . . . To be against slavery is to be against religion" (Finnegan, 2000, p. 52).

The point of recounting these cultural and historical facts is simply to highlight the observation that among the astonishingly variegated doctrines of religious belief, certain themes repeatedly emerge, and these reflect basic psychological needs or motives to believe that the world is just (Lerner, 1980) and that existing social, economic, and political institutions and arrangements are fair, legitimate, and justifiable (Jost & Banaji, 1994). In this article, we focus not on the ideological defense of slavery or other forms of persecution but on far more mundane

examples of system justification, such as the justification of social and economic inequalities in contemporary society.

We are not suggesting that the specific theological contents of disparate religious belief systems are indistinguishable from one another. On the contrary, there are many important differences in the ways in which various religious beliefs are connected to themes of justice and justification. To take just one example, Weber (1922/1963) draws an especially strong contrast between Hinduism and Judaism:

> The Hindu's conception left unchanged for all time the caste stratification obtaining in this world and the position of his own caste within it; indeed, he sought to fit the future state of his own individual soul into this very gradation of ranks. In striking contrast, the Jew anticipated his own personal salvation through a revolution of the existing social stratification to the advantage of his pariah people; his people had been chosen and called by God, not to a pariah position but to one of prestige. (p. 110)

Observations such as these suggest that (a) different religious doctrines may differ in the extent to which they justify vs. challenge existing social, economic, and political arrangements, and (b) religious belief systems address not only the question of whether God is benevolent and just (i.e., the problem of theodicy) but also the question of whether *worldly* institutions and arrangements are themselves benevolent and just. To the extent that religious ideology encourages people to view the status quo as fair, legitimate, desirable, stable, inevitable, and so on, we would suggest that it is serving a system-justifying function (Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004).

In this article, we propose that system justification motives may contribute, at least in part, to the enduring appeal of religious conviction. It may also help to explain why the specific contents of religious doctrines—and the political use and abuse of those doctrines—are generally associated with conservative (or, in some cases, reactionary) ends that maintain the status quo. Several interrelated hypotheses follow from the proposal to treat religious ideology as a system-

justifying belief system. First, religious ideologies, like other system-justifying ideologies, should be linked to underlying epistemic, existential, and relational motives to attain certainty, security, and solidarity (Jost, Ledgerwood, & Hardin, 2008). Second, religiosity should be positively associated with the endorsement of system-justifying beliefs, including the belief in a just world, Protestant Work Ethic, rationalization of inequality, authoritarianism, political conservatism, and fair market ideology (see Jost & Hunyady, 2005). Third, religion should serve the palliative function of making people happier and more satisfied with the way things are—and therefore less likely to challenge the status quo (Jost & Hunyady, 2002). Broadly speaking, these propositions are consistent with Karl Marx's (1844/1964) analysis of religion as a "general theory of the world" that provides "enthusiasm," "moral sanction," and a "universal ground for consolation and justification" (p. 41).

Epistemic, Existential, and Relational Motives

According to System Justification Theory, the social psychological inclination to defend, bolster, and rationalize aspects of the societal status quo arises from three classes of underlying needs or motives: *epistemic* motives to attain certainty, predictability, and control; *existential* motives to manage anxiety, fear, and threat; and *relational* motives to affiliate with others and maintain solidarity through the development of a shared sense of reality. Psychological research has identified empirical connections between epistemic, existential, and relational needs and various religious outcomes, just as it has identified connections between each of these needs and various system-justifying outcomes (e.g., see Hennes, Nam, Stern, & Jost, 2012; Jost, Ledgerwood, & Hardin, 2008). We highlight some of the most pertinent findings here.

Epistemic Motivation and Religiosity

Consistent with the notion that system justification is motivated in part by epistemic

needs to reduce uncertainty and ambiguity, past research indicates that personal needs for order, structure, and closure are positively associated with the endorsement of conservative, system-justifying attitudes. At the same time, open-mindedness and tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity are negatively associated with such attitudes (e.g., Chirumbolo, Areni, & Sensales, 2004; Federico & Goren, 2009; Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003; Jost, Napier, Thorisdottir, Gosling, Palfai, & Ostafin, 2007; Kemmelmeier, 2007; Van Hiel, Pandelaere, & Duriez, 2004). A growing number of studies links many of these same epistemic motives to religiosity (e.g., Hogg, Adelman, & Blagg, 2010; McGregor, Nash, & Phills, 2010; van den Bos, van Ameijde, & van Gorp, 2006).

Saroglou (2002b) reviewed dozens of studies carried out in a variety of cultural contexts and noted that the correlation between religiosity and constructs pertaining to uncertainty avoidance and motivated closed-mindedness are almost always positive (and statistically significant). For instance, more religious people tend to be more dogmatic (Altemeyer, 2002; Francis, 2001; Pancer, Jackson, Hunsberger, Pratt, & Lea, 1995), intolerant of ambiguity and inconsistency (Budner, 1962; Feather, 1964), in greater need of personal control (Hood, Spilka, Unsberger, & Gorsuch, 1996), and less open to new experiences (Saroglou, 2002a; Schwartz & Huismans, 1995), in comparison with less religious (or non-religious) people.

To further probe the relationship between epistemic motivation and religious belief, Saroglou (2002b) administered a French translation of the Need for Cognitive Closure scale (Kruglanski, Webster, & Klem, 1993), which contains five facets or subscales, to 239 Belgian students (primarily Catholic), along with measures of "classic religiosity" (including belief in the importance of God, religion, and religious ritual and frequency of prayer) and religious fundamentalism (see Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992, 2004). He found that the need for

cognitive closure (overall) was positively and robustly correlated with both classic religiosity and religious fundamentalism, with three facets in particular (need for order, need for predictability, and, to a lesser extent, closed-mindedness) driving the associations. We have conceptually replicated these results with a sample of 192 U.S. adults recruited online through Mechanical Turk (see Hennes, et al., 2012, for a description of the research procedure). Specifically, we found that self-reported religiosity was negatively correlated with the Need for Cognition ($r = -.20$, $p < .05$) and positively correlated with the Need for Cognitive Closure ($r = .18$, $p < .05$), with the two strongest facet-level effects observed for the need for order and decisiveness.

Brandt and Reyna (2010, Study 2) obtained largely parallel results in a sample of U.S. college students that was 61% Christian, 17% religious but non-Christian, and 20% non-religious. Specifically, they found that closed-mindedness and needs for order and predictability were positively associated with religious fundamentalism. Analysis of data obtained from over 1,600 respondents to the General Social Survey (which included 55% Protestant, 25% Catholic, and 17% respondents with no religious affiliation) similarly yielded a positive correlation between closed-mindedness and religious fundamentalism (Brandt & Reyna, 2010, Study 1). In both studies, the researchers found that religious fundamentalism was associated with prejudice against those who are perceived as violating traditional values, including gays and lesbians, and that closed-mindedness statistically mediated (i.e., explained) the effect of religious fundamentalism on prejudice.

Existential Motivation and Religiosity

Ernest Becker (1973), building on the work of Otto Rank, argued that religion (like all other cultural and institutional forms) is a manifestation of the *denial of death*, that is, the vain human striving to thwart existential angst by associating oneself with symbols of immortality.

This idea provides the core inspiration for terror management theory (e.g., Solomon, Greenberg, & Pyszczynski, 2004), which is the most well-known social psychological theory of existential motivation (see Vail et al., 2010, for an application to the psychology of religion). However, as Willer (2009, pp. 245-247) noted, the correlational evidence is mixed, with some studies finding positive and others negative correlations between the fear of death and religiosity (see also Spilka, Hood, & Gorsuch, 1985).[1] Presumably, this is because death anxiety motivates religious adherence and, at the same time, religious adherence assuages death anxiety. To investigate the first of these two causal relationships, Willer conducted an experimental study in which participants were either asked to write short essays about their own death (mortality salience condition) or watching television (control condition) and were then asked about their belief in the afterlife. He found that participants assigned to the mortality salience condition (i.e., those who wrote about their own death) judged the existence of an afterlife to be more likely than did participants who were assigned to the control condition, but this effect was driven by participants whose initial (i.e., pre-manipulation) levels of religiosity were relatively *low*.

Other experimental studies tell a similar story. For instance, Greenberg et al. (1995) demonstrated that mortality salience led participants to be more reverential toward religious symbols (i.e., less willing to use a crucifix as a hammer), in comparison with participants who were assigned to a control condition. Norenzayan and Hansen (2006), too, found that mortality salience caused participants to espouse greater belief in God and religiosity in general (as well as greater belief in other supernatural agents, such as Buddha and Shamanic spirits). This last finding would appear to contradict the assumption of terror management theory that death anxiety would motivate people to defend only the specific contents of their personal "cultural

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[1] We observed that self-reported religiosity was uncorrelated with death anxiety in a sample of 192 U.S. adults recruited through MTurk (see Hennes et al., 2012).

worldview" (including atheist or agnostic worldviews)—and so do Willer's (2009) findings that

mortality salience increased belief in the afterlife primarily for those who were *low* rather than

high in religiosity. All of these results, however, are consistent with the broader notion that

existential needs to manage fear and threat, including death anxiety, encourage religious beliefs

such as those associated with the afterlife. From a system justification perspective, we would

concur with Vail et al. (2010), who suggested that religious belief systems are likely to be

preferred over secular alternatives when existential threats are present.

Relational Motivation and Religiosity

The notion that religion serves a relational (or affiliative) function was captured well by

Paul Bloom (2005) in his description of the "fraternity theory" of religion:

> [R]eligion brings people together, giving them an edge over those who lack this
> social glue . . . . religion thrives because groups that have it outgrow and outlast
> those that do not. . . . In this conception religion is a fraternity . . . . [C]ertain
> puzzling features of many religions, such as dietary restrictions and distinctive
> dress, make perfect sense once they are viewed as tools to ensure group solidarity.

Religion, in other words, enables people of like mind (or background) to affiliate and coordinate

with one another, maintain a distinctive social identity, and develop and enforce social norms

and codes of conduct (e.g., Graham & Haidt, 2010; Hogg et al., 2010; Norenzayan & Sheriff,

2008; Ysseldyk, Matheson & Anisman, 2010). We have obtained some preliminary evidence that

the desire to share reality is greater for religious believers than non-believers. In the sample of

192 U.S. adults recruited through MTurk (see Hennes et al., 2012), we found that self-reported

religiosity was positively associated with the endorsement of two items we created to tap into

shared reality motivation, namely: "I believe it is important that I see the world as people who

generally share my beliefs do" ($r = .18$, $p < .05$); and "I prefer to have the same reactions to

things that others who generally share my beliefs do" ($r = .16$, $p < .05$).

If relational needs underlie religious behavior, then social isolation should trigger increased religiosity, all other things being equal. A series of experiments by Aydin, Fischer, and Frey (2010, Studies 2-4) suggest that this is indeed the case. Specifically, they found that for Christian students in Germany, thinking and writing about personal experiences of ostracism caused them to score higher on measures of both intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity (that is, religiosity for its own sake and also for the rewards it offers), and it also led them to evaluate prayer and religious rituals more favorably.

Birgegard and Granqvist (2004) demonstrated that subliminal threats to religious and familial attachments (e.g., exposure to phrases such as "God has forsaken me" or "Mother is gone") led to increased religiosity among Swedish Christian students who exhibited secure (but not insecure) attachment styles. Similarly, Magee and Hardin (2010) found that a subliminal threat to religious conviction (e.g., exposure to evolution-related terms) increased both religiosity and prejudice against atheists among U.S. Jews and Christians who perceived their religious beliefs to be shared by their fathers (Study 1) and who exhibited secure attachment styles (Study 2), but it had the opposite effects for those whose religious devotion was unshared by their fathers or who exhibited insecure attachment styles. These findings are consistent with the notion that religious belief systems, like other ideologies, serve the relational function of establishing a shared sense of reality that helps to maintain and coordinate important social relationships (Jost, Ledgerwood, & Hardin, 2008).

Religiosity and the Endorsement of System-Justifying Belief Systems

According to System Justification Theory, the motivation to defend, bolster, and justify the societal status quo can be manifested in various ways. Perhaps the most direct manifestation is the overt endorsement of ideologies that serve to legitimize existing social, economic, and

political arrangements (Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003; Major, Gramzow, McCoy, Levin, Schmader, & Sidanius, 2002). To some extent, whether a given ideology is to be considered system-justifying depends upon specific features of the social, economic, and political contexts (Knowles, Lowery, Hogan, & Chow, 2009). At the same time, the theory holds that there is a subset of belief systems that contribute moral and intellectual legitimacy to the status quo. Examples of system-justifying belief systems in contemporary Western societies include the belief in a just world; the Protestant Work Ethic; general (or diffuse) system justification; economic system justification; fair market ideology; opposition to equality; right-wing authoritarianism; and political conservatism (Jost & Hunyady, 2005). In Table 1 we have listed and descriptively defined each of these belief systems.

Our first hypothesis is that religiosity will be positively associated with the endorsement of each of these system-justifying belief systems. To investigate this hypothesis, we analyzed data from 302,037 volunteer research participants using the Project Implicit online laboratory (https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/) between December 2007 and June 2012. Participants were randomly assigned to complete various measures in the context of a large multivariate study investigating ideology (Hawkins, Graham, & Nosek, 2012). The data collection followed a "planned missingness" design (see Graham, Taylor, Olchowski, & Cumsille, 2006), according to which participants are randomly assigned to receive a single subset of items drawn from a large pool of items (see Nosek, 2005, for more information on the data source). As a consequence, the sample sizes vary greatly across different items and analyses. The advantage of conducting item-level analyses is that we are able to obtain a clear idea of which attitudinal elements are related to religiosity. The disadvantage is that scores based on individual items are less reliable than scores based on multi-item scales. Thus, we will present additional data based on scale scores (drawing

on different samples) following our summary of the results from the online sample.

Demographic information was obtained during registration, and participants received a new random subset of items on each administration of the study. The sample of participants who completed our main variable of interest (self-reported religiosity) was two-thirds female and diverse in terms of nationality (with over 200 countries represented, including the largest blocks of respondents from the U.S., Canada, and Australia). The average age was 30.25 years (SD = 12.54), and the sample was fairly well educated overall (with a modal response of "some college"). In terms of racial composition, the sample was 74% White, 7% Black, 7% Asian, 1% American Indian, 7% Multiracial, and approximately 5% "Other" or unknown. By ethnicity, the sample was 82% Non-Hispanic, 9% Hispanic, and 9% unknown.

We measured self-reported religiosity with a single item: 1 (*Not at all religious*), 2 (*Slightly religious*), 3 (*Very religious*), 4 (*Extremely religious*). Participants also indicated their religious denomination. This allowed us to inspect the association between self-reported religiosity and endorsement of system-justifying beliefs (with all responses provided on scales ranging from 1 [*Strongly disagree*] to 7 [*Strongly agree*]) and to compare mean levels of endorsement among the six largest categories of respondents (i.e., atheists, agnostics, Jews, Catholics, Protestants, and Buddhists).

Belief in a Just World

We measured the Belief in a Just World with six items first developed by Dalbert, Montada, and Schmitt (1987). These items are listed in Table 2, along with correlations and means as a function of religious denomination. Over 11,000 online respondents answered each question. In every case, self-reported religiosity was associated with stronger endorsement of just world beliefs. The two largest effect sizes were observed for the following items: "In the long

run, people will be compensated for injustices"; and "Justice always prevails over injustice."

Atheists and agnostics were significantly less likely than Catholics and Protestants (and, in most

cases, Buddhists) to endorse the just world items. Interestingly, Jews tended to hold justice-

related beliefs that were more similar to those of atheists and agnostics than to those of Catholics

and Protestants. There are several potential reasons for this, including differences in theological

content of the kind noted by Weber (1922/1963) and the fact that (in our sample and in previous

studies) Jews tend to be less religious and more liberal than Christians (e.g., Fastnow, Grant, &

Rudolph, 1999). In any case, it appears that religiosity (in general) is positively associated with

the tendency to believe that the world is a fair and just place (see also Furnham & Brown, 1992).

Protestant Work Ethic

The Protestant Work Ethic, which suggests that people have a *moral* responsibility to

work hard and avoid leisure activities, has been described by Katz and Hass (1988) as one of

America's "core values," and it, like the Belief in a Just World, is conceptually and theoretically

linked to perceptions of deservingness and the justification of material outcomes. According to

Mirels and Garrett (1971), the ideology of the Protestant Work Ethic "provided a moral

justification for the accumulation of wealth" but also warned that its accumulation fosters

"continual temptation to wanton self-indulgence" (p. 40; see also Weber, 1958). Mirels and

Garrett also point out that the work ethic has been used by community leaders to encourage

citizens to work hard and "eschew immoderate consumption and participation in worldly

pleasures" (p. 40). We administered 11 items used in prior research by Mirels and Garrett (1971)

and Katz and Hass (1988), which are listed in Table 3. Each item received at least 9,500 online

responses.

In every case, self-reported religiosity was associated with stronger endorsement of

Protestant Work Ethic items. The largest effect sizes, which were fairly modest in absolute

terms, were observed for the following items: "Life would have very little meaning if we never

had to suffer"; "The person who can approach an unpleasant task with enthusiasm is the person

who gets ahead"; "Anyone who is willing and able to work hard has a good chance of

succeeding"; "Our society would have fewer problems if people had less leisure time"; "Most

people spend too much time in unprofitable amusements"; and "A distaste for hard work usually

reflects a weakness of character." Interestingly, Catholics were just as likely to endorse these

beliefs as were Protestants, and Buddhists also endorsed them to the same extent more than half

of the time. Atheists and agnostics were significantly less likely to endorse these items. With

only a few exceptions, Jews resembled atheists and agnostics more than Christians. These results

are quite consistent with those we observed with respect to other system-justifying belief systems

(see below), but they are somewhat different from results observed in previous studies, some of

which suggest that Jews and Protestants are more committed to the "Protestant" work ethic than

are Catholics (see Beit-Hallahmi & Argyle, 1997, p. 215).

Fair Market Ideology

Jost, Blount, Pfeffer, and Hunyady (2003) noted that, according to public opinion polls,

most U.S. citizens endorse egalitarian ideals and recognize that substantial income inequality

exists, but they nevertheless perceive the economic system to be fair and legitimate. This

apparent paradox can be resolved by positing a fairly common tendency to subscribe to "fair

market ideology," according to which people assume that procedures and outcomes generated by

market-based systems are not only efficient but fair and just. Jost, Blount, and colleagues

developed a Fair Market Ideology scale and found that its endorsement was associated with self-

deception, system justification, belief in a just world, opposition to equality, political

conservatism, and the tendency to downplay political and business scandals. We administered

each of the 6 items from the short version of the scale to approximately 4,500 online respondents

and found that religiosity was associated with the endorsement of 5 of these 6 items (see Table

4). Correlations were fairly modest in general, with the strongest effects observed for the two

items: "In free market systems, people tend to get the outcomes that they deserve"; and

"Profitable businesses tend to be more morally responsible than unprofitable businesses."

Catholics and Protestants were more likely than members of the other groups to endorse items

from the Fair Market Ideology scale.

Opposition to Equality

To measure ideological opposition to income equality, we adapted 7 items that were

developed by Kluegel and Smith (1986, pp. 106-7) and used in research by Jost, Blount, et al.

(2003). These items, which are listed in Table 5, received approximately 7,000 online responses

each. For all of the items, religiosity was correlated with opposition to equality, with the largest

effect sizes obtained for these items: "Making incomes more equal means socialism, and that

deprives people of individual freedoms"; "If incomes were more equal, nothing would motivate

people to work hard"; "Incomes should *not* be more equal because the rich invest in the economy

and that benefits everyone"; and "Incomes should not be made more equal because that would

keep people from dreaming of someday becoming a real success." For most of the items,

Catholics and Protestants scored above the scale midpoint in terms of opposition to equality,

whereas the other groups tended to score below the scale midpoint, suggesting that they opposed

income inequality. Thus, when it comes to support for the economic status quo, religiosity was

associated with Fair Market Ideology and Opposition to Equality, but this support was relatively

unique to Christians. Given that there is no historically necessary connection between support for

capitalism and religious faith in general (or Christianity in particular)—and, indeed, Jesus's own economic views were decidedly egalitarian, if not socialist (e.g., Ross, Lelkes, & Russell, 2012)—system justification motivation may help to explain why religious believers are more likely than skeptics to hold economic attitudes that are highly favorable toward the capitalist system and the income inequality it produces.

Right-wing Authoritarianism and Political Conservatism

A number of previous studies have shown that religiosity is positively and robustly correlated with politically conservative and right-wing attitudes (e.g., Beit-Hallahmi & Argyle, 1997; Duriez, 2003; Jost, Nosek, & Gosling, 2008; Layman, 2001; Malka, Lelkes, Srivastava, Cohen, & Miller, 2012; Mehrabian, 1996; Ross et al., 2012). Napier and Jost (2006) analyzed data from the 2000 World Values Survey and found that the correlation between religiosity (measured in terms of religious belief and behavior, such as church attendance) and right-wing political orientation (measured with an ideological self-placement scale) was approximately $r =$ .30 in the U.S. The association was positive and significant in every country and for every religious denomination for which data were available. Furthermore, Napier and Jost (2008a) analyzed data from 19 democratic countries and found that, even after adjusting for education and income, religiosity was a robust predictor of obedience to authority, conventionalism, and right-wing orientation (see also Beit-Hallahmi & Argyle, 1997, pp. 221-226).

We adapted 15 items from Zakrisson's (2005) Right-Wing Authoritarianism Scale and administered them to approximately 7,000 online respondents each. As can be seen in Table 6, religiosity was very strongly related to each of these items. In certain cases, this is not too surprising, insofar as certain items specifically mention God, church, or the Bible. Religiosity was also strongly related to agreement with individual statements that do not explicitly mention

religious issues, such as: "The 'old-fashioned ways' and 'old-fashioned values' still show the best way to live"; "It would be best if newspapers were censored so that people would not be able to get hold of destructive and disgusting material; and "Our country needs a powerful leader, in order to destroy the radical and immoral currents prevailing in society today." Furthermore, religiosity was strongly related to disagreement with statements such as these: "Our society would be better off if we showed tolerance and understanding for untraditional values and opinions"; and "Our country needs free thinkers, who will have the courage to stand up against traditional ways, even if this upsets many people." Most participants scored fairly low in terms of right-wing authoritarianism, with atheists and agnostics scoring especially low, Jews and Buddhists scoring in the middle, and Catholics and Protestants scoring highest.

All participants—nearly 300,000 of them—were asked to locate themselves on an ideological self-placement item ranging from -3 (*Strongly conservative*) to 3 (*Strongly liberal*). In addition, approximately 10,000 participants located themselves on separate scales for social and economic liberalism-conservatism ranging from 1 (*Strongly liberal*) to 7 (*Strongly conservative*). As shown in Table 7, religiosity was robustly correlated with self-reported conservatism with respect to social, economic, and political issues, replicating the results of previous research (e.g., Layman, 2001; Napier & Jost, 2006, 2008a). With respect to all three items, atheists were the most liberal group, followed by agnostics, then Buddhists and Jews, followed by Catholics and Protestants.

To explore some of the more subtle ways in which religious commitment may be associated with conservative, system-justifying attitudes, we investigated the relationship between religiosity and a variety of personal preferences in two large samples (Ns = 617 and 766) of undergraduates at the University of Texas. Responses to different sets of attitudinal

stimuli were solicited in 2000 and 2004 as part of a broader study of activities, values, and life

styles (see Jost, Nosek, & Gosling, 2008). For the 2000 sample we measured religiosity in terms

of the favorability of their attitudes toward God and religious people (2 items, $\alpha = .72$), and for

the 2004 sample we measured religiosity in terms of liking and engaging in prayer and collective

worship (3 items, $\alpha = .76$). The results, which are summarized in Table 8, indicate that

individuals who hold more religious attitudes tend to hold more favorable attitudes toward a

wide range of institutions, authorities, and ideas that are associated with the American social

system, including big corporations, rich people, marriage, the idea of women staying at home,

politicians, the U.S. government, police, military, the state they live in, most Americans, the U.S.

flag, Republicans, and conservatives. More religious students also held more negative attitudes

concerning universal health care, gay unions, and Democrats.

System Justification

Kay and Jost (2003) developed an 8-item scale to measure the extent to which citizens

feel that their society and its policies are fair and just and as they should be. We adapted these

general system justification items, which are listed in Table 9, and administered them to

approximately 7,000 online respondents each. Results revealed that self-reported religiosity was

associated with the endorsement of 7 of these 8 items. Correlations were strongest for three

items: "My country is the best country in the world to live in"; "Our society is getting worse

every year"; and "Everyone has a fair shot at wealth and happiness." Catholics and Protestants

were most likely to agree with system justification items, whereas atheists and agnostics tended

to disagree with them. For several items, Jews and Buddhists responded between nonbelievers

and Christians. Although the effect sizes we observed were not very large in general, the

hypothesis that religious people would be more likely to justify the overarching social system

was supported.

A clear methodological limitation of our internet survey is that each participant

responded to single items rather than complete scales, which means that we sacrificed

measurement reliability in favor of extremely large sample sizes. To obtain better estimates of

the correlation between religiosity and system justification, we administered several system

justification scales (in their entirety) to three other samples, namely: (a) 79 adults recruited in

2010 through newspaper advertisements in the rural Midwest, (b) 192 adults recruited online

through Mechanical Turk (see Hennes et al., 2012), and (c) 407 NYU undergraduates who

completed the Introductory Psychology battery of instruments during the spring 2012 semester.

The results, which are summarized in Table 10, reveal that self-reported religiosity is indeed

correlated with general system justification (with r's ranging from .16 to .35), economic system

justification (with r's ranging from .05 to .24), political system justification ($r = .22$), and

gender-specific system justification (with r's ranging from .10 to .29).

The Palliative Function of Religious Ideology

Most readers are familiar with Karl Marx's notorious claim that "religion is the opium of

the people," but perhaps not with the broader context of his remarks:

> *Religious* distress is at the same time the *expression* of real distress and the *protest*
> against real distress. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a
> heartless world, just as it is the spirit of a spiritless situation. It is the *opium* of the
> people. . . . The abolition of religion as the *illusory* happiness of the people is
> required for their *real* happiness. The demand to give up the illusion about its
> condition is the *demand to give up a condition which needs illusions.* The criticism
> of religion is therefore *in embryo the criticism of the vale of woe*, the *halo* of which
> is religion . . . Thus the criticism of heaven turns into a criticism of the earth. (Marx
> & Engels, 1843/1964, pp. 41-42)

At the time, opium was commonly prescribed "as a solace or relief from illness, pain, hunger, or

other forms of distress" (Wolff, 2002, p. 20). What Marx is suggesting is that religion is an

understandable, perhaps even admirable attempt to cope with the harsh realities of a world in which most people are trapped in poverty and misery; it is "the heart of a heartless world" and a "protest against distress." At the same time, religious solutions are imaginary (or illusory) and, according to Marx, they are ultimately ineffectual at promoting genuine happiness because they do nothing to change an oppressive and unequal status quo. Or, as Erich Fromm (1963/2004) put it, religion makes "it easier for the masses to resign themselves to the many frustrations that reality presents" and provides "a certain measure of satisfaction that makes life sufficiently tolerable" to prevent people "from attempting to change their position from that of obedient son to that of rebellious son" (p. 13).

Several studies suggest that the endorsement of system-justifying beliefs serves the palliative function of reducing negative affect and increasing positive affect, thereby increasing satisfaction with the status quo (Jost & Hunyady, 2002). For instance, believing that economic inequality is legitimate and necessary is associated with increased life satisfaction (Jost, Pelham, Sheldon, & Sullivan, 2003), and political conservatism is associated with self-reported happiness (Napier, & Jost, 2008b), regardless of one's income level. The holding of system-justifying beliefs is associated with the reduction of guilt, anxiety, dissonance, frustration, and moral outrage that might otherwise be triggered by social inequality (Jost, Wakslak, & Tyler, 2008). Studies show that religious devotion is positively associated with subjective well-being (e.g., Ellison, 1991; Levin, Markides & Ray, 1996) and that it may be especially "helpful to more socially marginalized groups (e.g. older people, African Americans, women, poor people)" (Pargament, 2002, p. 178).

In a survey of low-income respondents, Rankin, Jost, and Wakslak (2009) found that religiosity was positively correlated with scores on Kay and Jost's (2003) general system

justification scale for White but (somewhat surprisingly) not Black respondents. Religiosity was

also positively associated with positive affect, a sense of meaning, life satisfaction, and

happiness for low-income Whites, but these effects did not attain statistical significance for

Blacks. Religiosity among low-income Blacks was associated only with a stronger sense of

mastery and performance-related self-esteem. These findings are broadly consistent with the

notion that religion is a form of system justification for poor Whites, but the psychological

"benefits" of religiosity are not necessarily equivalent for all racial or ethnic groups. Future

research would do well to investigate the extent to which system justification is a major

explanation for why religious people tend to be happier than non-religious people, adjusting for

other related factors, such as perceived social support.

Concluding Remarks

Erich Fromm (1962) noted that, despite their differences, both Marx and Freud had "in

common an uncompromising will to liberate man, an equally uncompromising faith in truth as

the instrument of liberation and the belief that the condition for this liberation lies in man's

capacity to break the chain of [religious] illusion" (p. 26). This general view assumes that

religion holds people back from changing either themselves (in the case of Freud) or society (in

the case of Marx). A system justification perspective similarly emphasizes the conservative

character of religious thinking in general.

At the same time, some prominent religious figures, such as prophets, set themselves "in

explicit opposition to the established order" (Parsons, 1963, p. xxxiv), and this is one of the foci

of Weber's (1922/1963) inquiries. Indeed, some religious movements and doctrines have been

used to promote social change, often to the extent that they envision an alternative (i.e., utopian)

system that inspires anticipatory rationalization among true believers (cf. Kay, Jimenez, & Jost,

2002). Along similar lines, the sociologist Gary T. Marx (1967, p. 64) observed that:

> On the one hand, established religious institutions have generally had a stake in the status quo and hence have supported conservatism. Furthermore, with the masses having an otherworldly orientation, religious zeal, particularly as expressed in the more fundamentalist branches of Christianity, has been seen as an alternative to the development of political radicalism. On the other hand, as the source of universal humanistic values and the strength that can come from believing one is carrying out God's will in political matters, religion has occasionally played a strong positive role in movements for radical social change.

The fact of the matter is that most major religious texts and movements contain progressive as well as conservative elements (e.g., Davis & Robinson, 1996, 2006; Ross et al., 2012), and so one must ask why religious believers so consistently express more conservative, system-justifying sentiments than do non-believers.

In a study of the political consequences of religiosity among African Americans during the 1960s, for instance, G.T. Marx (1967) concluded that—despite the leadership of religious figures such as the Reverend Martin Luther King—the net effect of church attendance and religious conviction was to blunt support for civil rights. The results we have summarized in this article similarly suggest that religiosity is positively associated with system-justifying (rather than system-challenging) sentiments. It is conceivable, at least, that this association is partially explained by the fact that people who are temporarily or chronically elevated in terms of epistemic, existential, and relational needs to reduce uncertainty, threat, and social isolation are especially drawn to religious and system-justifying belief systems.

Whereas Leibniz famously argued that belief in God leads to the conclusion that we must be "living in the best of all possible worlds," a system justification perspective would suggest that the *desire* to believe that we are "living in the best of all possible worlds" may motivate—and be motivated by—religious belief. It is perhaps of historical interest to note that although Voltaire parodied Leibniz's Pollyannaish writings about theodicy in *Candide*, he maintained that

the belief in a just God was in fact indispensable:

> If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him.
> Let the wise man announce him and kings fear him.
> Kings, if you oppress me, if your eminencies disdain
> The tears of the innocent that you cause to flow,
> My avenger is in the heavens: learn to tremble.
> Such, at least, is the fruit of a useful creed.
> (Voltaire, 1759)

That is, some conceptions of religious beliefs are consistent with the motivation to *resist* or

challenge injustice and oppression (see Deutsch, 2006; G. Marx, 1967). At the same time, we

have suggested that there is a stronger "elective affinity" (see Jost, 2009) between belief in God

and conservative, system-justifying attitudes. This possibility has been ignored in evolutionary

accounts that treat religion as a purely accidental byproduct of cognitive adaptations without

considering its motivational or ideological functions.

The idea that beliefs and ideologies exist in part to help individuals understand and cope

with an imperfect, or even oppressive, situation has been the focus of two decades of social

psychological research on system justification theory (Jost & Banaji, 1994; Jost, Banaji, &

Nosek, 2004). There is by now a sizeable empirical literature illustrating the myriad ways that

members of advantaged and disadvantaged groups defend, justify, and rationalize social,

economic, and political systems that affect them (for reviews, see Jost, Banaji, & Nosek, 2004;

Jost & Hunyady, 2002, 2005; Jost & Van der Toorn, 2012; Kay, Jost, et al., 2007). Thus far,

researchers have largely confined their investigations to the system-justifying functions of

political beliefs and ideologies, including conservatism, authoritarianism, opposition to equality,

fair market ideology, and meritocratic belief systems (e.g., Jost & Hunyady, 2005). The common

thread of these ideologies is that each offers moral and/or intellectual rationalization for the

existing social order, so that prevailing institutions, authorities, and arrangements are deemed

just and therefore worth obeying and preserving.

        In this article, we have presented some preliminary evidence that *religious* belief systems (especially, in the context of the populations we have investigated, Catholic and Protestant belief systems) are indeed associated with a fairly wide variety of system-justifying attitudes. We have also shown that those who find religion more appealing tend to possess stronger epistemic, existential, and relational needs and report being happier and more satisfied with the status quo. It would be much too strong to suggest that these findings directly support Karl Marx's hypothesis that "human beings invented religion only because their life on earth was so appalling, so poverty-stricken" (Wolff, 2002, p. 19). At the same time, a serious social psychological analysis of the *ideological* function of religious belief—which might help to explain certain empirical regularities in the antecedents, manifestations, and consequences of religiosity—is long overdue.

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Table 1: **Several Types of System-Justifying Belief Systems, Their Definitions, and Illustrative References**

Types of Belief Systems	Definition/Content	Sample illustrative reference(s)
Belief in a just world	People typically get what they deserve and deserve what they get; with regard to outcomes, what "is" is what "ought" to be.	Dalbert, Montada, & Schmitt (1987); Lerner (1980)
Protestant work ethic	People have a moral responsibility to work hard and avoid leisure activities; hard work is a virtue and is its own reward.	Jones, Furnham, & Deile (2010); Katz & Hass (1988); Mirels & Garrett (1971)
Fair market ideology	Market-based procedures and outcomes are not only efficient but inherently fair, legitimate, and just.	Jost, Blount, Pfeffer, & Hunyady (2003)
Opposition to equality	Increased social and economic equality is unattainable and undesirable; it would be detrimental for society.	Jost & Thompson (2000); Kluegel & Smith (1986)
Right-wing authoritarianism	Aggression toward deviants, submission to established authorities, and adherence to conventional traditions.	Altemeyer & Hunsberger (2005); Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, and Sulloway (2003)
Political conservatism	Traditionalism/resistance to change and justification of hierarchy/inequality.	Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, and Sulloway (2003); Jost, Nosek, & Gosling (2008)
General system justification	In general, (American) society and its policies are fair, just, and as they should be.	Kay & Jost (2003); Ullrich & Cohrs (2007)

Note: This table is adapted from Jost and Hunyady (2005).

Table 2: **Empirical Associations between Religiosity and Belief in a Just World**

Means, (Standard Deviations), and Sample Sizes

	Correlation with Religiosity	Atheist	Agnostic	Jewish	Catholic	Protestant	Buddhist
Justice always prevails over injustice.	$r = .19$ $n = 11,638$	$M = 2.76_a$ $(SD = 1.46)$ $n = 1,298$	$M = 2.92_a$ $(SD = 1.49)$ $n = 1,217$	$M = 3.03_a$ $(SD = 1.59)$ $n = 369$	$M = 3.74_c$ $(SD = 1.67)$ $n = 1,966$	$M = 3.58_b$ $(SD = 1.70)$ $n = 3,274$	$M = 3.65_{b,c}$ $(SD = 1.83)$ $n = 209$
Injustices in all areas of life (e.g., professional, family, politics) are the exception rather than the rule.	$r = .08$ $n = 11,561$	$M = 3.30_a$ $(SD = 1.55)$ $n = 1,310$	$M = 3.39_a$ $(SD = 1.49)$ $n = 1,164$	$M = 3.37_a$ $(SD = 1.53)$ $n = 358$	$M = 3.83_c$ $(SD = 1.50)$ $n = 1,961$	$M = 3.77_{b,c}$ $(SD = 1.57)$ $n = 3,288$	$M = 3.54_{a,b}$ $(SD = 1.60)$ $n = 218$
People try to be fair when making important decisions.	$r = .10$ $n = 11,695$	$M = 4.19_a$ $(SD = 1.52)$ $n = 1,269$	$M = 4.35_{a,b}$ $(SD = 1.42)$ $n = 1,229$	$M = 4.47_b$ $(SD = 1.42)$ $n = 367$	$M = 4.66_c$ $(SD = 1.42)$ $n = 2,008$	$M = 4.65_c$ $(SD = 1.40)$ $n = 3,332$	$M = 4.31_{a,b}$ $(SD = 1.44)$ $n = 205$
In the long run people will be compensated for injustices.	$r = .27$ $n = 11,742$	$M = 3.00_a$ $(SD = 1.50)$ $n = 1,328$	$M = 3.39_b$ $(SD = 1.58)$ $n = 1,266$	$M = 3.58_{b,c}$ $(SD = 1.66)$ $n = 372$	$M = 4.24_{d,e}$ $(SD = 1.65)$ $n = 1,953$	$M = 4.33_e$ $(SD = 1.74)$ $n = 3,387$	$M = 3.96_{c,d}$ $(SD = 1.73)$ $n = 200$
People get what they deserve.	$r = .09$ $n = 11,760$	$M = 3.22_a$ $(SD = 1.61)$ $n = 1,247$	$M = 3.47_b$ $(SD = 1.61)$ $n = 1,276$	$M = 3.64_{b,c}$ $(SD = 1.68)$ $n = 352$	$M = 4.10_d$ $(SD = 1.62)$ $n = 1,969$	$M = 3.84_c$ $(SD = 1.62)$ $n = 3,412$	$M = 3.90_{c,d}$ $(SD = 1.87)$ $n = 201$
Basically, the world is a fair place.	$r = .08$ $n = 11,712$	$M = 2.48_a$ $(SD = 1.41)$ $n = 1,297$	$M = 2.59_{a,b}$ $(SD = 1.4)$ $n = 1,199$	$M = 2.79_{b,c}$ $(SD = 1.47)$ $n = 396$	$M = 3.11_d$ $(SD = 1.55)$ $n = 1,937$	$M = 2.91_c$ $(SD = 1.51)$ $n = 3,344$	$M = 3.05_{c,d}$ $(SD = 1.60)$ $n = 209$

Note: Because of the very large sample sizes, all correlations are highly significant ($p < .001$). Means with different subscripts are significantly different from one another ($p < .05$).

Table 3: **Empirical Associations between Religiosity and Protestant Work Ethic**

	Correlation with Religiosity	Means, (Standard Deviations), and Sample Sizes					
		Atheist	Agnostic	Jewish	Catholic	Protestant	Buddhist
Most people spend too much time in unprofitable amusements.	$r = .14$ $n = 9,676$	$M = 3.80_a$ $(SD = 1.70)$ $n = 1,047$	$M = 4.00_{a,b,d}$ $(SD = 1.62)$ $n = 1,010$	$M = 3.90_{a,d}$ $(SD = 1.66)$ $n = 348$	$M = 4.23_{b,c,d}$ $(SD = 1.54)$ $n = 1,650$	$M = 4.38_{c,d}$ $(SD = 1.55)$ $n = 2,691$	$M = 4.47_d$ $(SD = 1.72)$ $n = 159$
Our society would have fewer problems if people had less leisure time.	$r = .14$ $n = 9,508$	$M = 2.39_a$ $(SD = 1.44)$ $n = 1,031$	$M = 2.57_a$ $(SD = 1.40)$ $n = 981$	$M = 2.60_a$ $(SD = 1.53)$ $n = 299$	$M = 2.91_b$ $(SD = 1.53)$ $n = 1,638$	$M = 3.08_c$ $(SD = 1.56)$ $n = 2,663$	$M = 2.54_a$ $(SD = 1.56)$ $n = 164$
Money acquired easily is usually spent unwisely.	$r = .09$ $n = 9,788$	$M = 4.52_a$ $(SD = 1.58)$ $n = 1,061$	$M = 4.55_a$ $(SD = 1.53)$ $n = 972$	$M = 4.37_a$ $(SD = 1.61)$ $n = 343$	$M = 4.85_b$ $(SD = 1.58)$ $n = 1,657$	$M = 4.93_b$ $(SD = 1.53)$ $n = 2,735$	$M = 4.90_{a,b}$ $(SD = 1.53)$ $n = 170$
Most people who don't succeed in life are just plain lazy.	$r = .08$ $n = 9,882$	$M = 2.77_a$ $(SD = 1.61)$ $n = 1,066$	$M = 2.99_b$ $(SD = 1.61)$ $n = 1,021$	$M = 2.73_a$ $(SD = 1.48)$ $n = 335$	$M = 3.41_{c,d}$ $(SD = 1.68)$ $n = 1,688$	$M = 3.45_d$ $(SD = 1.70)$ $n = 2,810$	$M = 3.03_{a,b,c}$ $(SD = 1.67)$ $n = 147$
Anyone who is willing and able to work hard has a good chance of succeeding.	$r = .14$ $n = 9,568$	$M = 4.72_a$ $(SD = 1.80)$ $n = 1,058$	$M = 4.89_{a,b}$ $(SD = 1.68)$ $n = 984$	$M = 4.91_{a,b}$ $(SD = 1.68)$ $n = 302$	$M = 5.66_c$ $(SD = 1.40)$ $n = 1,662$	$M = 5.63_c$ $(SD = 1.43)$ $n = 2,683$	$M = 5.36_{b,c}$ $(SD = 1.70)$ $n = 161$
People who fail at a job have usually not tried hard enough.	$r = .07$ $n = 9,776$	$M = 3.62_a$ $(SD = 1.64)$ $n = 1,043$	$M = 3.71_a$ $(SD = 1.60)$ $n = 1,052$	$M = 3.52_a$ $(SD = 1.60)$ $n = 341$	$M = 4.06_b$ $(SD = 1.63)$ $n = 1,660$	$M = 4.01_b$ $(SD = 1.60)$ $n = 2,799$	$M = 3.67_a$ $(SD = 1.64)$ $n = 163$

(Table 3 continued)

Means, (Standard Deviations), and Sample Sizes

	Correlation with Religiosity	Atheist	Agnostic	Jewish	Catholic	Protestant	Buddhist
Life would have very little meaning if we never had to suffer.	$r = .15$ $n = 9,624$	$M = 4.11_a$ $(SD = 1.92)$ $n = 1,051$	$M = 4.59_{b,c}$ $(SD = 1.74)$ $n = 1,007$	$M = 4.32_{a,b}$ $(SD = 1.77)$ $n = 306$	$M = 4.82_c$ $(SD = 1.61)$ $n = 1,654$	$M = 4.96_d$ $(SD = 1.62)$ $n = 2,693$	$M = 4.83_{a,b,c,d}$ $(SD = 1.82)$ $n = 153$
The person who can approach an unpleasant task with enthusiasm is the person who gets ahead.	$r = .14$ $n = 9,574$	$M = 5.09_a$ $(SD = 1.37)$ $n = 1,058$	$M = 5.18_a$ $(SD = 1.31)$ $n = 968$	$M = 5.23_a$ $(SD = 1.33)$ $n = 319$	$M = 5.52_b$ $(SD = 1.20)$ $n = 1,636$	$M = 5.61_b$ $(SD = 1.12)$ $n = 2,701$	$M = 5.64_b$ $(SD = 1.14)$ $n = 173$
If people work hard enough they are likely to make a good life for themselves.	$r = .12$ $n = 9,573$	$M = 4.62_a$ $(SD = 1.68)$ $n = 1,043$	$M = 4.94_c$ $(SD = 1.56)$ $n = 1,004$	$M = 4.73_{a,b}$ $(SD = 1.68)$ $n = 333$	$M = 5.52_e$ $(SD = 1.36)$ $n = 1,618$	$M = 5.42_{d,e}$ $(SD = 1.39)$ $n = 2,697$	$M = 5.19_{b,c,d}$ $(SD = 1.52)$ $n = 166$
I feel uneasy when there is little work for me to do.	$r = .06$ $n = 9,699$	$M = 4.38_a$ $(SD = 1.79)$ $n = 1,041$	$M = 4.55_a$ $(SD = 1.69)$ $n = 1,024$	$M = 4.92_b$ $(SD = 1.71)$ $n = 328$	$M = 4.81_b$ $(SD = 1.60)$ $n = 1,651$	$M = 4.80_b$ $(SD = 1.61)$ $n = 2,749$	$M = 4.46_{a,b}$ $(SD = 1.80)$ $n = 160$
A distaste for hard work usually reflects a weakness of character.	$r = .14$ $n = 9,718$	$M = 3.95_a$ $(SD = 1.68)$ $n = 1,021$	$M = 4.02_a$ $(SD = 1.66)$ $n = 1,004$	$M = 4.15_a$ $(SD = 1.73)$ $n = 329$	$M = 4.59_{b,c}$ $(SD = 1.60)$ $n = 1,706$	$M = 4.67_c$ $(SD = 1.58)$ $n = 2,730$	$M = 4.23_{a,b}$ $(SD = 1.75)$ $n = 167$

Note: Because of the very large sample sizes, all correlations are highly significant ($p < .001$). Means with different subscripts are significantly different from one another ($p < .05$).

Table 4: **Empirical Associations between Religiosity and Fair Market Ideology**

	Correlation with Religiosity	Means, (Standard Deviations), and Sample Sizes					
		Atheist	Agnostic	Jewish	Catholic	Protestant	Buddhist
The free market system is a fair system.	$r = .12$ $n = 4,525$	$M = 3.61_a$ $(SD = 1.87)$ $n = 487$	$M = 3.77_a$ $(SD = 1.62)$ $n = 454$	$M = 3.87_{a,b}$ $(SD = 1.63)$ $n = 147$	$M = 4.24_{b,c}$ $(SD = 1.56)$ $n = 788$	$M = 4.31_c$ $(SD = 1.57)$ $n = 1,320$	$M = 3.75_a$ $(SD = 1.62)$ $n = 80$
Common or "normal" business practices must be fair, or they would not survive.	$r = .11$ $n = 4,507$	$M = 3.54_{a,b}$ $(SD = 1.93)$ $n = 512$	$M = 3.49_{a,b}$ $(SD = 1.82)$ $n = 451$	$M = 3.71_{a,b}$ $(SD = 1.88)$ $n = 134$	$M = 4.23_{c,d}$ $(SD = 1.81)$ $n = 775$	$M = 4.23_d$ $(SD = 1.80)$ $n = 1,285$	$M = 3.50_{a,b,c}$ $(SD = 1.90)$ $n = 82$
Acting in response to market forces is not always a fair way to conduct business. †	$r = -.01$ $n = 4,523$	$M = 5.07_a$ $(SD = 1.59)$ $n = 497$	$M = 4.99_{a,b}$ $(SD = 1.48)$ $n = 472$	$M = 5.00_{a,b,c}$ $(SD = 1.52)$ $n = 142$	$M = 4.67_c$ $(SD = 1.40)$ $n = 750$	$M = 4.76_{b,c}$ $(SD = 1.44)$ $n = 1,299$	$M = 5.19_{a,b,c}$ $(SD = 1.47)$ $n = 74$
In free market systems, people tend to get the outcomes that they deserve.	$r = .14$ $n = 4,496$	$M = 2.95_a$ $(SD = 1.66)$ $n = 480$	$M = 3.25_b$ $(SD = 1.66)$ $n = 469$	$M = 3.48_{a,b}$ $(SD = 1.51)$ $n = 126$	$M = 3.98_c$ $(SD = 1.60)$ $n = 779$	$M = 3.88_c$ $(SD = 1.60)$ $n = 1,318$	$M = 3.38_{a,b}$ $(SD = 1.71)$ $n = 80$
Profitable businesses tend to be more morally responsible than unprofitable businesses.	$r = .13$ $n = 4,714$	$M = 2.60_a$ $(SD = 1.46)$ $n = 523$	$M = 2.68_a$ $(SD = 1.39)$ $n = 482$	$M = 3.03_{a,b}$ $(SD = 1.58)$ $n = 143$	$M = 3.32_b$ $(SD = 1.53)$ $n = 816$	$M = 3.26_b$ $(SD = 1.55)$ $n = 1,360$	$M = 3.05_{a,b}$ $(SD = 1.58)$ $n = 101$
Economic markets do not fairly reward people. †	$r = -.11$ $n = 4,484$	$M = 5.25_a$ $(SD = 1.48)$ $n = 495$	$M = 5.05_a$ $(SD = 1.54)$ $n = 429$	$M = 4.76_{a,b,c}$ $(SD = 1.49)$ $n = 131$	$M = 4.59_c$ $(SD = 1.54)$ $n = 811$	$M = 4.65_{b,c}$ $(SD = 1.51)$ $n = 1,277$	$M = 5.13_{a,b}$ $(SD = 1.35)$ $n = 71$

† *Dis*agreement with these items (i.e., lower scores) indicates greater endorsement of fair market ideology.

Note: Because of the very large sample sizes, correlations with all items are highly significant ($p < .001$) except one (i.e., "Acting in response to market forces is not always a fair way to conduct business," $p = .57$). Means with different subscripts are significantly different from one another ($p < .05$).

Table 5: **Empirical Associations between Religiosity and Opposition to Equality**

		Means, (Standard Deviations), and Sample Sizes					
	Correlation with Religiosity	Atheist	Agnostic	Jewish	Catholic	Protestant	Buddhist
Incomes should be more equal, because everybody's contribution to society is equally important. †	$r = -.06$ $n = 7,001$	$M = 4.03_a$ $(SD = 1.91)$ $n = 764$	$M = 3.85_{a,b}$ $(SD = 1.81)$ $n = 663$	$M = 3.78_{a,b}$ $(SD = 1.83)$ $n = 228$	$M = 3.50_b$ $(SD = 1.74)$ $n = 1,214$	$M = 3.44_b$ $(SD = 1.79)$ $n = 2,005$	$M = 4.29_a$ $(SD = 1.86)$ $n = 118$
If incomes were more equal, nothing would motivate people to work hard.	$r = .13$ $n = 6,925$	$M = 3.27_a$ $(SD = 1.93)$ $n = 762$	$M = 3.43_a$ $(SD = 1.86)$ $n = 688$	$M = 3.29_a$ $(SD = 1.96)$ $n = 215$	$M = 4.33_b$ $(SD = 1.97)$ $n = 1,214$	$M = 4.14_b$ $(SD = 1.94)$ $n = 1,994$	$M = 3.37_a$ $(SD = 2.03)$ $n = 124$
Incomes cannot be made more equal because it's human nature to always want more than others have.	$r = .09$ $n = 6,955$	$M = 3.94_a$ $(SD = 2.02)$ $n = 767$	$M = 4.12_a$ $(SD = 1.86)$ $n = 755$	$M = 4.02_a$ $(SD = 1.81)$ $n = 191$	$M = 4.70_b$ $(SD = 1.67)$ $n = 1,169$	$M = 4.68_b$ $(SD = 1.69)$ $n = 1,992$	$M = 4.19_a$ $(SD = 1.87)$ $n = 113$
Making incomes more equal means socialism, and that deprives people of individual freedoms.	$r = .19$ $n = 7,083$	$M = 2.95_a$ $(SD = 1.83)$ $n = 761$	$M = 3.20_a$ $(SD = 1.79)$ $n = 719$	$M = 3.35_a$ $(SD = 1.96)$ $n = 192$	$M = 4.12_b$ $(SD = 1.84)$ $n = 1,167$	$M = 4.12_b$ $(SD = 1.85)$ $n = 2,081$	$M = 3.14_a$ $(SD = 1.76)$ $n = 107$
Incomes should *not* be more equal because the rich invest in the economy and that benefits everyone.	$r = .12$ $n = 6,997$	$M = 2.62_a$ $(SD = 1.63)$ $n = 745$	$M = 2.78_a$ $(SD = 1.57)$ $n = 701$	$M = 2.96_a$ $(SD = 1.69)$ $n = 193$	$M = 3.49_b$ $(SD = 1.66)$ $n = 1,152$	$M = 3.46_b$ $(SD = 1.69)$ $n = 2,060$	$M = 2.65_a$ $(SD = 1.57)$ $n = 123$

If incomes were more equal, life would be boring because people would all live in the same way.	$r = .10$ $n = 7,046$	$M = 2.63_a$ $(SD = 1.70)$ $n = 772$	$M = 2.80_a$ $(SD = 1.65)$ $n = 748$	$M = 2.84_a$ $(SD = 1.69)$ $n = 217$	$M = 3.45_b$ $(SD = 1.87)$ $n = 1,175$	$M = 3.37_b$ $(SD = 1.82)$ $n = 1,977$	$M = 2.67_a$ $(SD = 1.75)$ $n = 122$
Incomes should not be made more equal because that would keep people from dreaming of someday becoming a real success.	$r = .12$ $n = 7,175$	$M = 3.09_{a,b}$ $(SD = 1.88)$ $n = 777$	$M = 3.25_b$ $(SD = 1.85)$ $n = 760$	$M = 3.35_b$ $(SD = 1.86)$ $n = 239$	$M = 4.00_c$ $(SD = 1.89)$ $n = 1,255$	$M = 3.85_c$ $(SD = 1.90)$ $n = 1,979$	$M = 2.80_a$ $(SD = 1.73)$ $n = 144$

† *Dis*agreement with this item (i.e., lower scores) indicates greater opposition to equality.

Note: Because of the very large sample sizes, correlations with all items are highly significant ($p < .001$). Means with different subscripts are significantly different from one another ($p < .05$).

Table 6: **Empirical Associations between Religiosity and Right-Wing Authoritarianism**

	Correlation with Religiosity	Means, (Standard Deviations), and Sample Sizes					
		Atheist	Agnostic	Jewish	Catholic	Protestant	Buddhist
Our country needs a powerful leader, in order to destroy the radical and immoral currents prevailing in society today.	$r = .20$ $n = 7,104$	$M = 2.70_a$ $(SD = 1.79)$ $n = 807$	$M = 2.90_{a,b}$ $(SD = 1.78)$ $n = 711$	$M = 3.14_b$ $(SD = 1.92)$ $n = 199$	$M = 3.81_c$ $(SD = 1.83)$ $n = 1,180$	$M = 3.91_c$ $(SD = 1.86)$ $n = 2,027$	$M = 3.36_{a,b}$ $(SD = 1.94)$ $n = 108$
Our country needs free thinkers, who will have the courage to stand up against traditional ways, even if this upsets many people. †	$r = -.26$ $n = 6,967$	$M = 6.36_a$ $(SD = .96)$ $n = 748$	$M = 6.22_a$ $(SD = .98)$ $n = 747$	$M = 6.06_a$ $(SD = 1.25)$ $n = 214$	$M = 5.56_b$ $(SD = 1.30)$ $n = 1,251$	$M = 5.39_c$ $(SD = 1.50)$ $n = 1,931$	$M = 5.73_{a,b}$ $(SD = 1.44)$ $n = 123$
The "old-fashioned ways" and "old-fashioned values" still show the best way to live.	$r = .34$ $n = 7,062$	$M = 2.41_a$ $(SD = 1.37)$ $n = 755$	$M = 2.73_{a,b}$ $(SD = 1.46)$ $n = 704$	$M = 3.24_c$ $(SD = 1.77)$ $n = 209$	$M = 3.90_d$ $(SD = 1.61)$ $n = 1,210$	$M = 4.13_e$ $(SD = 1.68)$ $n = 2,096$	$M = 3.21_{b,c}$ $(SD = 1.67)$ $n = 123$
Our society would be better off if we showed tolerance and understanding for untraditional values and opinions. †	$r = -.26$ $n = 7,030$	$M = 6.23_a$ $(SD = 1.06)$ $n = 788$	$M = 6.11_a$ $(SD = 1.04)$ $n = 720$	$M = 5.97_a$ $(SD = 1.12)$ $n = 196$	$M = 5.54_b$ $(SD = 1.36)$ $n = 1,216$	$M = 5.21_c$ $(SD = 1.58)$ $n = 1,966$	$M = 6.20_a$ $(SD = 1.10)$ $n = 124$
God's laws about abortion, pornography, and marriage must be strictly followed before it is too late.	$r = .58$ $n = 6,853$	$M = 1.18_a$ $(SD = .67)$ $n = 748$	$M = 1.36_a$ $(SD = .83)$ $n = 716$	$M = 1.87_b$ $(SD = 1.54)$ $n = 197$	$M = 3.13_c$ $(SD = 1.92)$ $n = 1,111$	$M = 3.93_d$ $(SD = 2.11)$ $n = 1,947$	$M = 1.83_b$ $(SD = 1.56)$ $n = 115$

(Table 6 continued)

Means, (Standard Deviations), and Sample Sizes

	Correlation with Religiosity	Atheist	Agnostic	Jewish	Catholic	Protestant	Buddhist
The society needs to show openness towards people thinking differently, rather than a strong leader, the world is not particularly evil or dangerous. †	$r = -.24$ $n = 6,967$	$M = 5.58_{a,b}$ $(SD = 1.33)$ $n = 734$	$M = 5.49_{a,b,c}$ $(SD = 1.26)$ $n = 727$	$M = 5.20_{c,d,e}$ $(SD = 1.40)$ $n = 207$	$M = 4.93_e$ $(SD = 1.49)$ $n = 1,170$	$M = 4.49_f$ $(SD = 1.66)$ $n = 2,064$	$M = 5.61_{a,d}$ $(SD = 1.20)$ $n = 94$
It would be best if the Internet were censored so that people would not be able to get hold of destructive and disgusting material.	$r = .28$ $n = 7,093$	$M = 1.67_a$ $(SD = 1.22)$ $n = 784$	$M = 2.12_b$ $(SD = 1.44)$ $n = 739$	$M = 2.19_{b,c}$ $(SD = 1.71)$ $n = 214$	$M = 3.11_d$ $(SD = 1.95)$ $n = 1,215$	$M = 3.30_e$ $(SD = 1.99)$ $n = 2,044$	$M = 2.36_{a,b,c}$ $(SD = 1.64)$ $n = 111$
Many good people challenge the state, criticize the church and ignore "the normal way of living." †	$r = -.14$ $n = 7,104$	$M = 5.87_a$ $(SD = 1.58)$ $n = 780$	$M = 5.49_b$ $(SD = 1.69)$ $n = 748$	$M = 5.34_b$ $(SD = 1.66)$ $n = 192$	$M = 4.88_c$ $(SD = 1.49)$ $n = 1,247$	$M = 4.94_c$ $(SD = 1.54)$ $n = 2,048$	$M = 5.24_{b,c}$ $(SD = 1.80)$ $n = 123$
We ought to put an end to those forces challenging the society built by our forefathers.	$r = .17$ $n = 6,848$	$M = 2.63_a$ $(SD = 1.64)$ $n = 754$	$M = 2.84_a$ $(SD = 1.51)$ $n = 729$	$M = 2.97_a$ $(SD = 1.66)$ $n = 192$	$M = 3.52_b$ $(SD = 1.60)$ $n = 1,185$	$M = 3.58_b$ $(SD = 1.68)$ $n = 1,955$	$M = 3.06_a$ $(SD = 1.59)$ $n = 110$
People ought to put less attention to the Bible and religion, instead they ought to develop their own moral standards. †	$r = -.60$ $n = 7,125$	$M = 6.43_a$ $(SD = 1.04)$ $n = 783$	$M = 6.06_b$ $(SD = 1.27)$ $n = 753$	$M = 5.25_c$ $(SD = 1.71)$ $n = 197$	$M = 4.12_d$ $(SD = 1.75)$ $n = 1,264$	$M = 3.13_d$ $(SD = 1.88)$ $n = 1,992$	$M = 5.79_{a,b}$ $(SD = 1.37)$ $n = 126$

(Table 6 continued)

	Correlation with Religiosity	Means, (Standard Deviations), and Sample Sizes					
		Atheist	Agnostic	Jewish	Catholic	Protestant	Buddhist
There are many radical, immoral people trying to ruin things; the society ought to stop them.	$r = .20$ $n = 6,933$	$M = 3.25_a$ $(SD = 1.83)$ $n = 730$	$M = 3.29_a$ $(SD = 1.74)$ $n = 721$	$M = 3.45_a$ $(SD = 1.86)$ $n = 220$	$M = 4.21_b$ $(SD = 1.70)$ $n = 1,197$	$M = 4.12_b$ $(SD = 1.69)$ $n = 2,018$	$M = 3.61_a$ $(SD = 1.80)$ $n = 95$
It is better to accept bad literature than to censor it. †	$r = -.28$ $n = 7,035$	$M = 6.29_a$ $(SD = 1.08)$ $n = 767$	$M = 6.15_{a,b}$ $(SD = 1.18)$ $n = 722$	$M = 5.97_b$ $(SD = 1.37)$ $n = 221$	$M = 5.32_c$ $(SD = 1.59)$ $n = 1,238$	$M = 5.02_d$ $(SD = 1.74)$ $n = 2,004$	$M = 5.51_{a,b}$ $(SD = 1.66)$ $n = 117$
Facts show that we have to be harder against crime and sexual immorality, in order to uphold law and order.	$r = .28$ $n = 6,785$	$M = 2.76_a$ $(SD = 1.74)$ $n = 752$	$M = 3.03_{a,b}$ $(SD = 1.73)$ $n = 698$	$M = 3.37_b$ $(SD = 1.88)$ $n = 191$	$M = 4.26_c$ $(SD = 1.80)$ $n = 1,202$	$M = 4.37_c$ $(SD = 1.77)$ $n = 1,885$	$M = 3.47_b$ $(SD = 1.87)$ $n = 120$
The situation in the society of today would be improved if troublemakers were treated with reason and humanity. †	$r = -.11$ $n = 7,039$	$M = 5.23_a$ $(SD = 1.55)$ $n = 795$	$M = 4.94_{a,b}$ $(SD = 1.52)$ $n = 730$	$M = 4.89_b$ $(SD = 1.50)$ $n = 221$	$M = 4.40_c$ $(SD = 1.58)$ $n = 1,199$	$M = 4.27_c$ $(SD = 1.62)$ $n = 2,033$	$M = 5.10_{a,b}$ $(SD = 1.52)$ $n = 118$
It is the duty of every true citizen to help eliminate the evil that poisons our country from within.	$r = .22$ $n = 7,033$	$M = 3.62_a$ $(SD = 1.89)$ $n = 765$	$M = 3.76_a$ $(SD = 1.76)$ $n = 711$	$M = 3.87_a$ $(SD = 1.87)$ $n = 225$	$M = 4.58_b$ $(SD = 1.70)$ $n = 1,199$	$M = 4.67_b$ $(SD = 1.71)$ $n = 2,025$	$M = 4.23_a$ $(SD = 1.96)$ $n = 118$

† *Dis*agreement with these items (i.e., lower scores) indicates greater right-wing authoritarianism.

Note: All correlations are highly significant ($p < .001$). Means with different subscripts are significantly different from one another ($p < .05$).

Table 7: **Empirical Associations between Religiosity and Political Orientation**

<div align="center">Means, (Standard Deviations), and Sample Sizes</div>

	Correlation with Religiosity	Atheist	Agnostic	Jewish	Catholic	Protestant	Buddhist
Ideological self-placement ranging from -3 (strongly conservative) to 3 (strongly liberal)	$r = -.33$ $n = 294{,}807$	$M = 1.70_e$ $(SD = 1.38)$ $n = 30{,}865$	$M = 1.48_d$ $(SD = 1.34)$ $n = 29{,}327$	$M = 1.37_c$ $(SD = 1.58)$ $n = 9{,}280$	$M = .40_b$ $(SD = 1.54)$ $n = 52{,}435$	$M = .13_a$ $(SD = 1.69)$ $n = 84{,}573$	$M = 1.26_{c,d}$ $(SD = 1.49)$ $n = 5{,}165$
Social liberalism-conservatism ranging from ranging from 1 (strongly liberal) to 7 (strongly conservative)	$r = .36$ $n = 10{,}021$	$M = 2.12_a$ $(SD = 1.35)$ $n = 1{,}119$	$M = 2.35_a$ $(SD = 1.33)$ $n = 1{,}043$	$M = 2.41_a$ $(SD = 1.51)$ $n = 275$	$M = 3.55_b$ $(SD = 1.67)$ $n = 1{,}664$	$M = 3.85_c$ $(SD = 1.78)$ $n = 3{,}021$	$M = 2.61_a$ $(SD = 1.52)$ $n = 171$
Economic liberalism-conservatism ranging from ranging from 1 (strongly liberal) to 7 (strongly conservative)	$r = .24$ $n = 10{,}161$	$M = 3.08_a$ $(SD = 1.63)$ $n = 1{,}117$	$M = 3.23_b$ $(SD = 1.53)$ $n = 1{,}006$	$M = 3.37_{b,c}$ $(SD = 1.74)$ $n = 331$	$M = 4.00_d$ $(SD = 1.60)$ $n = 1{,}785$	$M = 4.32_e$ $(SD = 1.62)$ $n = 2{,}841$	$M = 3.26_{a,b,c}$ $(SD = 1.44)$ $n = 184$

Note: All correlations are highly significant ($p < .001$). Means with different subscripts are significantly different from one another ($p < .05$).

Table 8: **Self-Reported Attitudinal Correlates of Religiosity in 2000 and 2004**

	Correlation with religiosity	
	2000 (N = 616)	2004 (N = 759)
Big corporations	.26***	.15***
The rich	.34***	N/A
Universal health care	N/A	-.14***
The idea of women staying at home	.33***	N/A
Marriage	.37***	N/A
Gay unions	N/A	-.43***
Politicians	.17***	N/A
The U.S. government	.23***	.21***
Police	.24***	.20***
Military	N/A	.24***
The state they live in	N/A	.30***
Most Americans	N/A	.22***
Wore the U.S. flag	N/A	.23***
Republicans	.36***	.32***
Democrats	.03	-.21***
Conservatives/conservatism	.22***	.30***

Note: These data are based on college student samples for which Jost, Nosek, and Gosling (2008) reported other results. Entries are zero-order correlation coefficients. "N/A" = not administered

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

Table 9: **Empirical Associations between Religiosity and General System Justification**

	Correlation with Religiosity	Means, (Standard Deviations), and Sample Sizes					
		Atheist	Agnostic	Jewish	Catholic	Protestant	Buddhist
In general, I find society to be fair.	$r = .10$ $n = 7,080$	$M = 2.81_a$ $(SD = 1.48)$ $n = 799$	$M = 3.01_a$ $(SD = 1.44)$ $n = 757$	$M = 3.17_a$ $(SD = 1.56)$ $n = 207$	$M = 3.65_c$ $(SD = 1.59)$ $n = 1,137$	$M = 3.46_b$ $(SD = 1.54)$ $n = 2,052$	$M = 3.09_{a,b}$ $(SD = 1.48)$ $n = 123$
In general, my country's political system operates as it should.	$r = .06$ $n = 6,993$	$M = 3.14_b$ $(SD = 1.72)$ $n = 762$	$M = 3.13_{a,b}$ $(SD = 1.59)$ $n = 716$	$M = 3.31_{a,c}$ $(SD = 1.58)$ $n = 220$	$M = 3.62_d$ $(SD = 1.66)$ $n = 1,154$	$M = 3.53_c$ $(SD = 1.65)$ $n = 1,997$	$M = 2.94_{a,b}$ $(SD = 1.66)$ $n = 112$
Society needs to be radically restructured. †	$r = -.03$ $n = 6,984$	$M = 4.79_a$ $(SD = 1.69)$ $n = 785$	$M = 4.48_{a,b}$ $(SD = 1.59)$ $n = 743$	$M = 4.08_c (SD = 1.76)$ $n = 209$	$M = 4.25_c$ $(SD = 1.58)$ $n = 1,167$	$M = 4.36_{b,c}$ $(SD = 1.59)$ $n = 2,011$	$M = 4.74_a$ $(SD = 1.63)$ $n = 122$
My country is the best country in the world to live in.	$r = .21$ $n = 6,953$	$M = 3.62_a$ $(SD = 1.81)$ $n = 795$	$M = 3.82_a$ $(SD = 1.69)$ $n = 720$	$M = 4.34_b$ $(SD = 1.73)$ $n = 196$	$M = 4.82_c$ $(SD = 1.74)$ $n = 1,196$	$M = 4.95_c$ $(SD = 1.73)$ $n = 1,959$	$M = 3.87_a$ $(SD = 1.70)$ $n = 129$
Most policies serve the greater good.	$r = .10$ $n = 6,975$	$M = 3.66_a$ $(SD = 1.48)$ $n = 732$	$M = 3.82_a$ $(SD = .44)$ $n = 669$	$M = 3.75_a$ $(SD = 1.42)$ $n = 211$	$M = 4.21_c$ $(SD = 1.46)$ $n = 1,153$	$M = 4.19_{b,c}$ $(SD = 1.45)$ $n = 2,042$	$M = 3.91_{a,b}$ $(SD = 1.52)$ $n = 116$
Everyone has a fair shot at wealth and happiness.	$r = .14$ $n = 6,970$	$M = 2.78_a$ $(SD = 1.83)$ $n = 743$	$M = 3.06_b$ $(SD = 1.78)$ $n = 731$	$M = 2.93_{a,b}$ $(SD = 1.74)$ $n = 212$	$M = 3.91_d$ $(SD = 1.94)$ $n = 1,171$	$M = 3.78_{c,d}$ $(SD = 1.94)$ $n = 1,975$	$M = 3.35_{a,b,c}$ $(SD = 2.07)$ $n = 112$
Our society is getting worse every year. †	$r = .15$ $n = 7,201$	$M = 3.93_a$ $(SD = 1.64)$ $n = 804$	$M = 4.06_a$ $(SD = 1.51)$ $n = 799$	$M = 4.09_a$ $(SD = 1.65)$ $n = 212$	$M = 4.46_c$ $(SD = 1.49)$ $n = 1,178$	$M = 4.70_b$ $(SD = 1.53)$ $n = 2,036$	$M = 4.38_{a,b,c}$ $(SD = 1.64)$ $n = 127$

		$M = 2.75_a$	$M = 2.86_a$	$M = 2.56_a$	$M = 3.37_b$	$M = 3.26_b$	$M = 2.67_a$
Society is set up so that people usually get what they deserve.	$r = .08$ $n = 7,043$	$(SD = 1.52)$ $n = 759$	$(SD = 1.52)$ $n = 742$	$(SD = 1.37)$ $n = 200$	$(SD = 1.60)$ $n = 1,197$	$(SD = 1.58)$ $n = 1,994$	$(SD = 1.41)$ $n = 110$

† *Dis*agreement with these items (i.e., lower scores) indicates greater system justification.

Note: Because of the very large sample sizes, correlations with all items are highly significant ($p < .001$) except one (i.e., "Society needs to be radically restructured," $p = .01$). Means with different subscripts are significantly different from one another ($p < .05$).

Table 10: **Empirical Associations between Religiosity and Scores on Various System Justification Scales**

	Correlation with Religiosity			
	General System Justification	Economic System Justification	Political System Justification	Gender-Specific System Justification
Rural Midwestern Adults	$r = .35$** $n = 79$	$r = .05$ $n = 79$	N/A	N/A
Mechanical Turk Respondents	$r = .24$*** $n = 192$	$r = .24$*** $n = 192$	N/A	$r = .29$*** $n = 192$
NYU Psychology Students	$r = .16$** $n = 407$	$r = .15$** $n = 405$	$r = .22$*** $n = 404$	$r = .10$* $n = 401$

Note: For the Rural Midwestern and Mechanical Turk respondents, religiosity was operationalized in terms of continuous responses to this item: "How central would you say your religious convictions are to your life?" For the NYU Psychology sample, religiosity was operationalized in terms of continuous responses to this item: "When it comes to belief in God, how religious are you?" General System Justification was operationalized in terms of mean scores on Kay and Jost's (2003) scale, Economic System Justification was operationalized in terms of mean scores on Jost and Thompson's (2000) scale, Political System Justification was operationalized in terms of mean scores on Jost, West, and Gosling's (2009) scale, and Gender-Specific System Justification was operationalized in terms of means scores on Jost and Kay's (2005) scale

"N/A" = The scale was not administered to this sample