

Religious Pluralism and the Individual: The Effects and Meaning of Inter-religious Contact

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Abstract

This study tests three competing hypotheses regarding the effect of religious pluralism on individual-level religiosity. Although most theory in this area focuses on the individual, most measures of religious pluralism only take account of the macro-level. Inter-religious contact is a measure that takes more direct account of individuals' experiences of religious pluralism. Using a random national sample from *The Religion and Diversity Survey* (2003), we conduct multivariate regressions that indicate relationships between inter-religious contact and two dependent variables: church attendance and spiritual effort. The results indicate that religious

economies, Berger's sacred canopies, and non-effect models all are illuminated by a more direct measure of individual-level religious pluralism.

Keywords: Religious pluralism, Inter-religious contact, Sacred canopies, Religious economies

1. Introduction

How does inter-religious contact affect religiosity? Inter-religious contact is an indicator of religious pluralism at the individual level; it refers to the extent to which a person has interaction and exposure to diverse religious traditions. Debates about the effects of religious pluralism on religiosity are heated and inconclusive. While most measures of religious pluralism necessarily look at the societal or community level of religious diversity (Breault, 1989; Finke et al., 1996; Olson & Hadaway 1999), theoretical explanations of why religious pluralism is important to religiosity tend to focus on the individual (Berger, 1967, Stark & Finke, 2000). Inter-religious contact is predicted to both reduce religiosity, leading the individual to a "crisis of faith," but also increase religious confidence, by placing a person's beliefs in clear contradistinction to foreign ideas. Both predictions follow an inherent logic yet lead to opposite expectations. This paper offers an empirical analysis of an important and unexplored link in the fragmented chain of theory connecting religious pluralism to religiosity.

Inter-religious contact specifically refers to the level of exposure an individual has to ideas and individuals from religious traditions different from her own. Inter-religious contact is considered in a handful of recent studies that investigate other research questions. Merino (2010) and Brown and Brown (2011) draw on intergroup contact theory (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006) and confirm a positive relationship between inter-religious contact and support for religious pluralism. In two other recent studies, Scheitle and Smith (2011) and Vargas and Loveland (2011) gather evidence regarding the sources of inter-religious contact. There is no complete measure of this concept.

On the *Religion and Diversity Survey* (2003), we find that respondents were asked how much personal contact they have with people from the following religious traditions: Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, and Jews (Note 1). Response options include "none" (0); "almost none" (1); "only a little" (2); "a fair amount" (3); and "a great deal" (4). In order to assess respondents' overall inter-religious contacts, we first removed from the dataset all respondents who identified as Muslim ($n = 13$), Hindu (9), Buddhist (11), or Jewish (67). We then summed responses on these four options to create an index of inter-religious contact (0-16; Cronbach's $\alpha = .795$).

Overall, Americans report low levels of inter-religious contact, averaging 6 out of 16 (see Table 1). Respondents say they have a lot of contact with Jews, a little contact with Muslims, and even less with Buddhists and Hindus (see Figure 1).

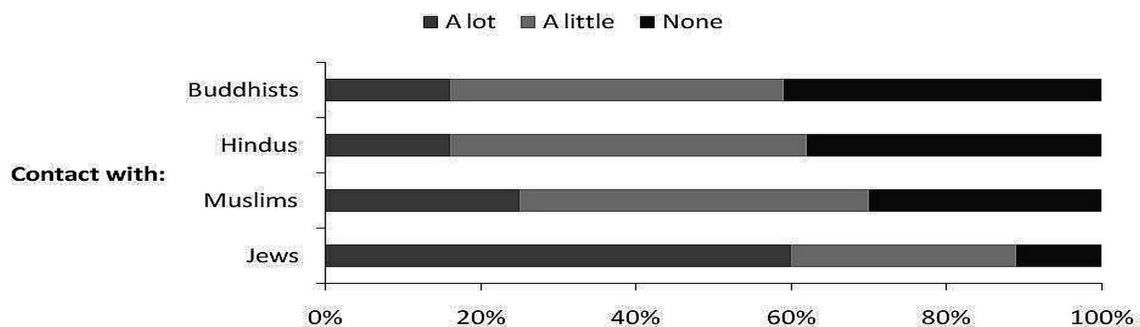


Figure 1. Distribution of inter-religious contact

Source: The Religion and Diversity Survey (2003).

Note: For this figure only, we designate “a great deal” or “a fair amount” of inter-religious contact as “a lot” of inter-religious contact. We designate “only a little” or “almost none” as “a little” inter-religious contact.

2. Initial Concepts

Religious pluralism is an ideal type wherein, according to Stark and Finke (2000, p. 198), “pluralistic refers to the number of religious firms active in the [religious] economy; the more firms there are with significant market shares, the greater the degree of pluralism.” This definition of pluralism is concise but its measurement is contentious (Breault, 1989; Finke & Stark, 1988; Land, Deane, & Blau 1991). Disagreements over how to measure pluralism highlight the need for more precise conceptualization of two additional terms: 1) what constitutes a religious firm? and 2) what constitutes a religious economy?

A *religious firm* is conceptualized as a distinct religious group. The term *firm* implies that groups which work in tandem may comprise a similar body, much like departments or divisions of a larger corporation. Whether a religious firm is properly delineated as all groups that are Christian, or all groups that are Baptist, or all groups which meet at the corner of 4th and Maple in Austin, Texas is subject to debate. Our measure of inter-religious contact defines “distinct” in the context of the United States as essentially non-Christian, thereby defining diversity at the level of global religious tradition and not denomination or individual house of worship.

A *religious economy*, according to Stark and Finke (1993), “consists of all the religious activity going on in any society.” While Stark and Finke indicate that an economy is understood at the level of society, other researchers have shown that our understanding of how religious economies affect individuals is altered by whether we conceptualize the economy as existing at the national, state, county, or community level (Breault, 1989; Land et al., 1991; Olson & Hadaway, 1999; Perl & Olson, 2000). Essentially, the question concerns whether pluralism at the level of the nation can properly reflect pluralism at the community level, where true religious competition occurs. Does the fact that the United States as a whole is populated by countless religious groups affect the dominance of one or two religious

groups in specific communities? Think of the Church of Latter-Day Saints in Salt Lake City, for instance. Our measure of inter-religious contact limits the idea of a religious economy to those with whom one has face-to-face interaction; this is the most restricted sense of an economy possible.

Religiosity refers to a person's overall level of religious commitment. While there is no measure or index which properly accounts for the idea of religiosity, especially across diverse faith traditions, we offer the following two simple yet distinct measurements. The first is a form of public religiosity, which we measure using *church attendance*. The specific item we use is, "Aside from weddings and funerals, how often do you attend religious services?" Responses include "never" (1); "a few times a year" (2); "once or twice a month" (3); "almost every week" (4); "once a week" (5); and "more than once a week" (6). A second a form of religiosity is private, which we define as *spiritual effort*. While not as common a measure of religiosity, the following item seems to evoke an important aspect of private religious devotion: "How much effort have you devoted to your spiritual life during the past year?" Options include "none" (1); "hardly any" (2); "only a little" (3); "a fair amount" (4); and "a great deal" (5).

The independent variables are as follows: Total household income is measured as less than \$10,000 (1); \$10,001-\$20,000 (2); \$20,001-\$30,000 (3); \$30,001-\$40,000 (4); \$40,001-\$50,000 (5); \$50,001-\$75,000 (6); and above \$75,000 (7). Age is a continuous measure ranging from 18 to 96. Additionally, we use dichotomous measures of education (college graduate or higher = 1), gender (female = 1), race (white = 1), marital status (married/widowed = 1), region of the country (South = 1), and type of place (small town/rural = 1). To control for respondents' religious affiliations, we use Steensland et al.'s (2000) RELTRAD typology, which places individuals into the categories of black Protestant, evangelical Protestant, mainline Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, other religion, and no religion based on their stated religious preference. In multivariate models, we employ RELTRAD as a system of dummy variables, with unaffiliated respondents as the suppressed category. There is no category for Jewish respondents, as all Jewish respondents were removed in order to measure inter-religious contact. Likewise, the "other" category does not include Muslims, Hindus, or Buddhists. Also, to avoid confounding unaffiliated Christians' responses with those of individuals who are not religious, we removed from analysis all unaffiliated respondents who answered anything but "no" on another question from the survey: "Do you consider yourself a Christian?"

Table 1 summarizes the sample characteristics and indicates an appropriate range of diversity with regards to SES, geography, and religiosity.

Table 1. Sample characteristics

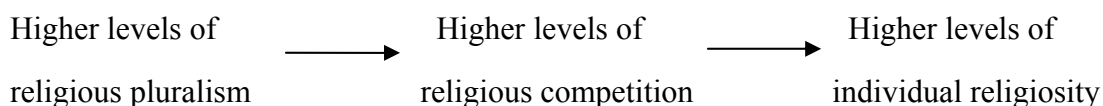
Variables	Mean	SD
Dependent		
Inter-religious contact	6	3.82
Worship attendance	3.44	1.73
Spiritual effort	2.81	1.04
Independent		
College graduate	0.22	0.41
Income	4.4	1.95
Female	0.52	0.49
Age	44.71	17.98
White	0.75	0.43
Married/ widowed	0.58	0.49
South	0.37	0.48
Small town/ rural	0.45	0.49
Evangelical	0.33	0.47
Mainline	0.14	0.35
Black Protestant	0.07	0.26
Catholic	0.27	0.44
Other	0.06	0.24
Unaffiliated	0.11	0.31
N	2602	

Source: The Religion and Diversity Survey (2003).

3. Competing Theories

Hypotheses regarding the effect of inter-religious contact on religiosity can be easily inferred from theoretical discussions concerning religious pluralism. There are essentially three models concerning how religious pluralism should affect religiosity, all of which assume that modernization increases levels of religious pluralism.

3.1 The Religious Economies Model



This model is concisely and firmly proposed by a number of researchers (Finke & Stark, 2005; Iannaccone et al., 1996; Stark & Finke, 2000). The mechanisms which are represented by causal arrows are of immediate interest. The link between religious pluralism and religious

competition is complicated yet also intuitive. In fact, purveyors of this model tend to stress the importance of religious competition but despair in the fact that it cannot be directly measured. Consequently, religious pluralism as indicated by the Herfindahl Index is often offered as a substitute measure for religious competition. This is problematic for a number of reasons. The Herfindahl Index, borrowed from economic studies of market concentration, has been regularly employed as a measure of religious pluralism (Finke et al., 1996; Norris & Inglehart, 2004). Briefly, the index uses the number and size of religious “firms” in an area to gauge the overall level of religious “competition” in a given “market.” Although this application of the Herfindahl Index has been challenged on methodological grounds (Voas et al., 2002), its attention to denominations’ differential control of religious markets illustrates a common interest in the macro-level. But within this model it is still thought that religious competition increases as more religious firms come into being.

The link between religious competition and religiosity is highly complex. Simply stated, it is expected that competing religious groups will actively and successfully vie for committed members. The heightened activity of religious groups is due to their struggle to survive in a competitive environment. The success of individual religious groups is somewhat serendipitous to their stumbling on and adhering to recruitment tactics that work.

It is posited that the individual is aware of religious competition and happily considers offers from a number of groups. In this way, the individual naturally is attracted to pluralism yet can fortify his faith by finding the one religious group which fits his needs most adequately. While theorists highlight the religious choice of individuals, the religious economies model does not require that individuals be conscious of choice. Most importantly, groups need to be aware of competition, because this is what will inspire them to actively seek and retain members. However, a successful tactic in retaining members may be to keep members unaware of the actual menu of competing religious options. This possibility is suggested by Christian Smith (1998) in his subcultural identity theory, which is compatible with a religious economies approach. In his analysis of evangelical Christians in the United States, Smith argues that part of the strength of evangelicalism is to instill a false sense of embattlement with secular culture. In this way, a religious group’s success is tied to propagating false impressions of competition.

This religious economies model suggests the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Increases in inter-religious contact will increase individual religiosity.

This hypothesis is derived from the general idea that individuals choose their religion and that more choice actually leads to more religious commitment.

3.2 Berger Modernization Model

Higher levels of religious pluralism → Loss of one religion’s “taken-for-grantedness” → Lower levels of individual religiosity

In *The Sacred Canopy* (1967), Peter Berger points to increasing plurality in modern societies as the catalyst for a decline in religious belief and practice. He offers some of the most distinct and specific explanations available for the mechanisms linking pluralism to reduced religiosity.

In pre-modern settings, the individual lives within a more coherent nomos—a taken-for-granted, self-evident world of meaning. Maintaining the subjective credibility of this world depends on “plausibility structures,” within which “successive generations of individuals are socialized in such a way that this world will be real to them” (p. 46). With religious pluralism, however, no single religion can be taken-for-granted.

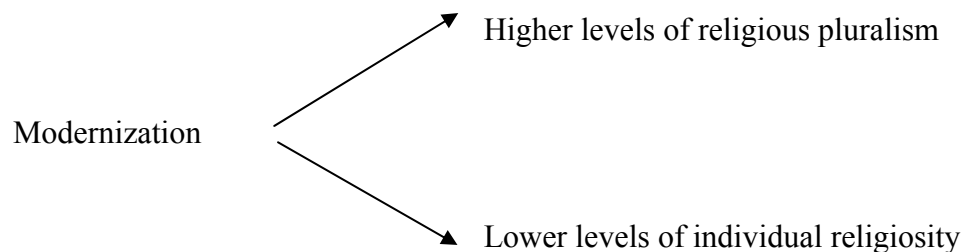
More religious options shift the consciousness of the individual from a level of “deep taken-for-grantedness” to a level of “preference.” Or, stated another way, individuals make relative what was formerly understood as an objective fact. And when religious belief is no longer seen as an objective fact, individuals are less likely to commit to it.

The Berger modernization model suggests the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: Increases in inter-religious contact will decrease individual religiosity.

This hypothesis suggests that contact with others of different religious faiths forces a face-to-face awareness that one’s own faith cannot be “taken-for-granted.” As such, this type of contact should reduce one’s own confidence in and commitment to a single faith.

3.3 Non-effect Model



Perhaps there is no connection between religious pluralism and levels of religiosity. Some theorists who hypothesize a negative relationship between modernization and levels of religiosity think that various aspects of modernization, other than religious pluralism, are at work. For instance, Norris and Inglehart (2004) hypothesize that modernization reduces levels of “existential insecurity,” which in turn eliminates the basic motivation to be religious. In this model, increases in religious pluralism are spurious to why modernization decreases religiosity.

The non-effect model suggests the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: Inter-religious contact is unrelated to individual religiosity.

This hypothesis simply expects that contact with individuals of different faiths has no real effect on one’s own religiosity. In other words, religiosity is always determined by other events and relationships.

4. Who Has Inter-Religious Contact?

Before testing our stated hypotheses, we first look to see which individuals are most likely to have inter-religious contacts. Through a simple regression of inter-religious contacts, we establish the effects of some common demographic variables (Note 2).

Table 2. OLS regression of inter-religious contact

	b	SE
Intercept	6.719***	.355
College graduate	1.637***	.186
Income	0.429***	.043
Female	-0.426**	.151
Age	-0.012**	.004
White	-0.158	.201
Married/ widowed	-0.701***	.172
South	-0.247	.156
Small town/ rural	-1.004***	.154
RELTRAD		
Evangelical Protestant	-1.034***	.263
Mainline Protestant	-1.204***	.304
Black Protestant	-1.115**	.374
Roman Catholic	-1.383***	.266
Other	-0.844*	.363
R ²	.166	
N	2225	

Source: The Religion and Diversity Survey (2003).

*P < .05 **P < .01 *P < .001 (two-tailed).

We find that more cosmopolitan individuals are more likely to have inter-religious contacts. “Cosmopolitan” is a non-technical term, yet elicits a general sense of the finding that individuals who are a) more educated, b) wealthier, and c) live in more urban settings are more likely to have non-Christian contacts. We also find that members of traditional Christian groups are less likely to have inter-religious contacts. More specifically, members of evangelical, mainline, black Protestant, and Roman Catholic churches are less likely than Americans who have no religious affiliation to have non-Christian contacts.

The meaning of these findings is not immediately apparent. Perhaps these findings are simply a function of opportunity. In other words, more cosmopolitan individuals, along with non-Christians, are just more likely to run across non-Christians in their daily activities. Or perhaps these types of individuals seek out non-Christians as contacts. Or perhaps non-cosmopolitan people and Christians actively avoid non-Christians. All interpretations are possible, but there remains a distinct relationship between cosmopolitanism, religious affiliation, and whether one has inter-religious contacts.

5. Hypothesis Testing

To discover the importance of inter-religious contacts to religiosity net of being cosmopolitan or a member of a Christian church, we perform regressions on our proposed measures of religiosity: 1) church attendance and 2) spiritual effort (see Tables 3 and 4).

Table 3. OLS Regression of church attendance

	b	SE	b	SE
Intercept	2.562***	0.157	1.101***	0.169
College graduate	0.113	0.089	0.195*	0.083
Income	0.005	0.02	-0.016	0.019
Female	0.502***	0.071	0.373***	0.066
Age	0.012***	0.002	0.009***	0.002
White	-0.263**	0.085	-0.195*	0.088
Married/ widowed	0.347***	0.081	0.245***	0.076
South	0.435***	0.072	0.266***	0.069
Small town/ rural	0.016	0.073	0.023	0.068
RELTRAD				
Evangelical Protestant	---		2.205***	0.116
Mainline Protestant	---		1.507***	0.134
Black Protestant	---		2.117***	0.165
Roman Catholic	---		1.771***	0.118
Other	---		1.909***	0.16
Inter-religious Contact	-0.024*	0.009	-0.005	0.009
R ²	0.088		0.222	
N	2253		2216	

Source: The Religion and Diversity Survey (2003).

*P < .05 **P < .01 *P < .001 (two-tailed).

Table 4. OLS regression of spiritual effort

	b	SE	b	SE
Intercept	2.070***	0.093	1.264***	0.101
College graduate	0.013	0.053	0.044	0.05
Income	-0.003	0.012	-0.015	0.011
Female	0.467***	0.042	0.386***	0.04
Age	0.009***	0.001	0.007***	0.001
White	-0.222***	0.05	-0.156**	0.053
Married/ widowed	0.094	0.048	0.049	0.046
South	0.214***	0.043	0.127**	0.041
Small town/ rural	0.002	0.043	0.006	0.041
RELTRAD				
Evangelical Protestant	---		1.133***	0.07
Mainline Protestant	---		0.860***	0.081
Black Protestant	---		1.209***	0.099
Roman Catholic	---		0.920***	0.071
Other	---		1.220***	0.096
Inter-religious Contact	0.019***	0.005	0.029***	0.005
R ²	0.106		0.213	
N	2260		2223	

Source: The Religion and Diversity Survey (2003).

*P < .05 **P < .01 *P < .001 (two-tailed).

First, a number of variables consistently predict both church attendance and spiritual effort. Specifically, women are more likely than men to both attend church and report spiritual effort. Older individuals are more likely to both attend church and report spiritual effort. Non-whites are more likely to both attend church and report spiritual effort. Individuals living in the South are more likely to both attend church and report spiritual effort. Members of religious groups are more likely than non-affiliated individuals to both attend church and report spiritual effort

Second, inter-religious contact demonstrates three important relationships with religiosity. Specifically, those with more inter-religious contacts are *less* likely to attend church only when not controlling for religious affiliation. Controlling for religious affiliation negates the statistical significance of the association between inter-religious contact and church attendance (Note 3). Those with more inter-religious contacts are *more* likely to report spiritual effort.

It is of great interest that an individual's number of inter-religious contacts is the only variable which is related to *less* church attendance and *more* spiritual effort simultaneously. This complex relationship makes the evaluation of our stated hypotheses complex.

6. Discussion

Our key finding is that inter-religious contact is negatively correlated to or perhaps even unrelated to (when controlling for RELTRAD) church attendance, while inter-religious contact is positively correlated with reported spiritual effort. What does this suggest concerning our three hypotheses?

Hypothesis 1, which predicts a positive relationship between inter-religious contact and religiosity, is only partially supported. It makes perfect sense given a religious economies perspective that a person who interacts with religious diversity would be spiritually active. This model assumes a rational choice framework to religious decision-making and theorizes that religiosity requires a series of cost-benefit calculations. Surely it would be rationally more efficient for a person who is investing effort into clarifying her spiritual life to expose herself to people of different faiths. These people could either tell her directly about their spiritual life or, at least, provide prototypes of how a person who believes in *X* behaves and appears. If you are seeking to enhance your spiritual life, experiencing religious diversity would be one way to improve your efficiency. The data fit this suggestion.

However, the possibility that inter-religious contact could diminish or be unrelated to church attendance suggests that the rational choice/religious economies framework does not fully explain the actions of someone already committed to a specific faith. The religious economies theorist might have two, if not more, very reasonable explanations as to why the data don't fit Hypothesis 1 yet are still consistent with the theory. First, if a person is committed to a specific faith, and higher commitment is partially measured by church attendance, then this person has little incentive to engage with others of different faiths. From this person's perspective, there is no religious value to be gained. Therefore, it would be inefficient and wasteful to spend much time with those who do not share one's faith. Of course, this is premised on the idea that a person is already authentically committed to a specific church or religious tradition.

Second, given the expectation that individuals can expand their spiritual knowledge by interacting with people of different faiths, it would be advantageous for religious organizations to limit their members' interaction with people outside of their tradition. And religious economies theorists have consistently argued that while competition and pluralism is good for religion overall, individual churches seek to limit the exposure of their members to other faiths for the very reason that they fear competition (see Gill 2008). From this perspective, pluralism enhances religion only at the macro-level or organizational-level, but can have deleterious effects on an individual's commitment to a single faith.

Smith et al. (1998) offer an even more nuanced description of this phenomenon, which is also compatible with a religious economies framework. The authors argue that a religious community's sense of "embattlement" (American evangelicalism in this case) can enhance religious commitment. Therefore, the idea of competition invigorates religious organizations, because they feel the need to fight against something, *and* religious individuals, because they feel the need to be protected from something. In fact, the vigor of these kinds of religious groups and individuals is premised on the paradox of requiring religious pluralism to fuel

their religious exclusivity. Consequently, we would expect, in response to macro-level religious pluralism, that religiously committed individuals would actively avoid those of other faiths and sometimes demonize them.

If we are to accept these various religious economies explanations, we are left with the impression that church attendance and spiritual effort represent very different types of religiosity. While both may benefit from religious pluralism at the macro-level, it is for different reasons—one is energized by face-to-face diversity while the other is energized by the call to avoid face-to-face diversity.

Why one person seeks religious diversity while another eschews it is still unclear. Earlier, we indicated that more “cosmopolitan” individuals have religiously diverse interactions either by chance or design. If by design, the rational choice framework suggests that cosmopolitan individuals are simply under greater social pressures and expectations to interact with religious diversity and will naturally seek expressions of religiosity compatible with these demands. Spiritual seeking may be most compatible with the cosmopolitan lifestyle. Similarly, religious commitment to an individual church may be most compatible with a non-cosmopolitan lifestyle.

In the end, the data indicate that religious economies theorists must be conscious of and explicit about the contexts in which pluralism is introduced to and understood by the individual. Pluralism in some cases might foster spiritual seeking but in other contexts enhance religious exclusivity, intolerance, and dogmatism. Hypothesis 2 predicts the opposite of Hypothesis 1. Ostensibly, Berger’s theoretical framework provides a more elegant interpretation of the church attendance finding than the religious economies perspective. His explanation is straightforward but requires us to reverse the causal order of the relationship. Simply put, individuals committed to church are just unaware of other alternatives. Once a person becomes more aware of pluralism, potentially through contact with others of different faiths, his commitment will naturally wane.

For Berger, face-to-face pluralism involves the process of “cognitive contamination.” As cognitive contamination occurs, faith will automatically shift from a level of “deep taken-for-grantedness” to a level of “preference.” As such, Berger expects that the individual will be less likely to remain fixed to a single religious community or tradition. This interpretation certainly fits the data, as inter-religious contacts are strongly linked with non-affiliation (Table 2).

It is significant that Berger reversed his earlier position that societal secularization was a necessary outcome of religious pluralism – itself a product of modernization (1997; 1999). Although his views on secularization transformed since *The Sacred Canopy*, Berger has continued to maintain that, through cognitive contamination, face-to-face pluralism is likely to change “the place of religion in the consciousness of individuals” (Berger & Zijderveld, 2010, p. 18). And this argument fits with the fact that inter-religious contact is positively related to spiritual effort. From Berger’s perspective, this may have less to do with religious competition and more to do with a change in the way that “modern” or more cosmopolitan individuals think about religion. For them, it is a “preference” and subject to the whims of

their personal needs, wants, and interests. While face-to-face interaction might diminish religious dogmatism in the individual, it might not, as Berger argued decades ago, instill non-belief. Instead, Berger's latest insights fit with our data in suggesting that pluralism can still inspire spirituality, albeit a more "modern" or inclusive kind.

The biggest obstacle in accepting a Berger-like interpretation of the data is one must accept that there exists a religious culture in America which can still maintain a deep "taken-for-grantedness" even alongside one which is fully modernized. Still, this is one possibility that the religious economies perspective may do well to better critique and analyze; i.e., is it true that the most conservative and dogmatic believers are as conscious of their religious choices as others?

Finally, Hypothesis 3 is not supported by our data. Still, theorists who favor this hypothesis may point to the fact that inter-religious contact was not related to church attendance given certain controls. And church attendance is one of the most direct measures of traditional religious activity. In turn, our measure of spiritual effort could be seen as a non-traditional expression of religiosity and, in fact, a type of religiosity not important to the secularization theory of Norris and Inglehart. These theorists are more concerned with the existential security which traditional religious communities and faiths provide for those in more dire circumstances. Perhaps they would dismiss our measure of spiritual effort as something common to the educated classes of modern societies but not indicative of the "real" function of religion in pre-modern societies. That said, it remains unclear why inter-religious contact *does* affect spiritual effort so powerfully, given all of our controls.

7. Conclusion

Our analysis has surprisingly never been performed in print. It speaks directly to the pluralism debate yet provides a new direction in the conversation. Specifically, how does face-to-face pluralism affect individual religiosity? Our findings have something to say to the current menu of competing theoretical frameworks.

The religious economies perspective suggests that pluralism will enhance religiosity, but our analysis suggests that this might be only a function of competition at the organizational level and has little to do with individual choice. Individual choice only becomes theoretically important as something that religious organizations hope to diminish. The Berger theoretical framework provides a simpler explanation of our data, but leads to questions of whether vastly different religious cultures can coexist side by side. Do "sacred canopies" still blind certain individuals from societal pluralism? Our analysis suggests this is a question which requires deeper consideration.

Finally, there is the question of how religiosity is measured and the extent to which church attendance and spiritual effort represent categorically different forms of religiosity. While they are positively correlated (.573***), our analysis indicates that face-to-face religious diversity can diminish one while enhancing the other. As globalization will only lead to more face-to-face pluralism, will spiritual effort increase while commitments to particular religions decrease? Or will religious groups rally for greater intolerance to stem the onslaught of

religious competition? While not ideal, this second possibility does appear to fit the current state of world affairs.

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Note 1. See the Appendix for information regarding the *Religion and Diversity Survey* (2003).

Note 2. Because the dependent variables in this study are all ordinal, the appropriate regression technique is ordinal logistic or multinomial. OLS assumptions are not satisfied, and the proportional odds assumption was violated in all but one of the ordinal logistic regressions. However, whether the analyses were ordinal logistic, multinomial, or OLS

regressions, the findings required identical interpretations. For all of this study's regressions, for ease of interpretation we display results from OLS models. All supplementary models are available from the authors upon request.

Note 3. In the church attendance model, inter-religious contact almost serves as a proxy for the difference between nones and affiliates until RELTRAD variables are entered as controls. To examine this further, we ran an additional binary logistic regression predicting non-affiliation with inter-religious contact and the control variables. Inter-religious contact significantly increases the odds of non-affiliation, and this can be taken as additional support for Berger's theory

Appendix

Data Source

The Religion and Diversity Survey was designed by Robert Wuthnow at Princeton University in conjunction with the Responding to Religious Diversity Project sponsored by the Lilly Endowment. Collected between 2002 and 2003, the survey contains questions regarding views about religious diversity in America, as well as relevant items regarding religious commitment and identification. The survey was collected through telephone interviews conducted by Schulman, Ronca, and Bucuvalas, Inc., and contains a nationally representative sample of 2,910 adults over the age of 18 who live in the continental U.S. A random-digit sample was generated by Survey Sampling, Inc. of Fairfield, Connecticut. At least 19 calls were made in order to ensure that interviews would be completed at each sampled telephone number, staggered over different times of day and days of the week in order to increase the chances of contacting each potential respondent. Interrupted interviews and refusals were recontacted at least twice in an effort to complete those interviews. Additionally, two mailings were sent to non-responding households, with an 800-number provided to complete the survey. Respondents were also offered a \$10 incentive. The response rate was 43.6%. Based on comparisons to the 2000 U.S. Census, sample weights were developed to correct for the overrepresentation of women and persons with college educations (Religion and Diversity Codebook 2003). These weights are employed in all of this study's analyses.

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