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## Death By Religion? Individual Differences in Attitudes About Capital Punishment

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DEATH BY RELIGION?  
INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES IN ATTITUDES ABOUT CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

by

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## Dedication

I would like to dedicate this thesis and especially acknowledge the many blessings God has given me through this process to those who supported me the most, my family and friends. I especially want to thank my husband Jeremy who encouraged me to return to school after 22 years. His constant encouragement and patience has meant the world to me. To my son Steven, the spark that started the conversation of returning to college for a degree, thank you my angel boy. It is your turn now. This effort was also in remembrance of my parents, Frank and Ellen Harrelson who taught me to do my best no matter what. Thank you to my sister Holly, and my two best friends, Kim Pate and Regina McCary, for being my cheerleaders and prayer warriors when I needed it most. Last, to those on the Person by Situation Research team, especially Matt Valente, Iqra Javed, Shawn Lewis, and David Beane; thank you!

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## Abstract

There is evidence that a relationship between religiosity (intrinsic, extrinsic, indiscriminately pro-religious or indiscriminately anti-religious orientation toward one's religious beliefs) and differences in attitudes about life and death social issues exists. Mainstream religions (e.g., Catholic and Protestant) have officially stated opposition to capital punishment while most individuals who are part of these mainstream religions favor capital punishment. In this study, 150 college students completed two different measures of religiosity and one measure of attitudes about capital punishment. Participant's scores on two measures of religiosity were predictive of attitudes toward capital punishment. Intrinsically oriented individuals indicated more than extrinsically oriented individuals unfavorable attitudes toward capital punishment. Conversely, extrinsically oriented individuals indicated more than intrinsically oriented individuals favorable attitudes toward capital punishment. We found no significant differences with indiscriminately pro-religious individuals, anti-religious or extrinsically oriented individuals. We discuss limitations and implications.

*Keywords:* Attitudes, capital punishment, religiosity

## Death by Religion? Individual Differences in Attitudes about Capital Punishment

Religion has been conceptually difficult to define. James Leuba (1912) cataloged 48 different definitions of religion (Batson & Ventis, 1982). Psychology pioneer William James (1902) said it is “solemn joy” and searched for ways to study and define religion. James Dittes (1969) addressed this conceptual difficulty in terms of a unitary versus a multidimensional concept. A unitary (single dimension) view of religion as a discrete variable would disregard all of its complexities. Conversely, a multidimensional concept would be viewed as an “area of research.” To illustrate this difference in psychological terms, consider the different views of capital punishment. A unitary concept would only reflect a pro or con attitude toward capital punishment but a multidimensional concept would allow for measurement of attitudes beyond pro or con. Some attitudinal responses beyond pro or con includes ambivalent attitudes (i.e., positive and negative evaluations) and neutral attitudes (i.e., neither negative nor positive evaluations). Individuals, for example who believe capital punishment is positive when a convicted serial killer is executed but negative when an innocent person is wrongfully executed would be considered to have ambivalent attitudes toward capital punishment. Individuals, for example, who do not have an opinion about capital punishment would be considered to have neutral attitudes toward capital punishment.

### **Religion and Capital Punishment**

Americans are often divided on the issue of capital punishment. In a recent poll, a majority of the sample (61%) favored the death penalty for a person convicted of murder whereas a small but substantial minority of the sample (35%) opposed it (Gallup, 2011 Oct 6-9). With few exceptions, this split in attitudes is consistent with polls taken in previous decades. When life imprisonment without the possibility of parole was an option, respondents were almost

evenly split between those favored the death penalty (49%) versus those who favored life imprisonment (46%) (Gallup, 2010 Nov 8). When individuals were asked if the death penalty was morally acceptable, 65% said yes versus 28% no (Gallup, 2010 May 26).

The reasons for this disagreement are not entirely clear. Many people (64%) do not believe the death penalty is a deterrent to crime (Gallup, 2011 October 6-9). When asked why they favored the death penalty, relatively few people (37%) cited reasons such as “An eye for an eye” or other “Biblical reasons” (5%) (Gallup, 2003 June 3). When asked why they opposed the death penalty, a plurality cited reasons such as “Wrong to take a life” (46%) and that “Punishment should be left to God/Religious Beliefs.” (13%) (Gallup, 2003 June 3). From these last two findings, we might speculate that religion might play a role in the attitudes different people have about the death penalty.

Researchers and theorists have had difficulty in defining the concept of religion. Although psychology pioneer William James (1902) said it is “solemn joy” and searched for ways to study and define religion, James Leuba (1912) - as cited in Batson and Ventis (1982) - cataloged 48 different definitions of religion. James Dittes (1969) discussed the pros and cons of defining religion as a unitary versus a multidimensional concept.

Glock identified five dimensions on which the role of religion in people’s lives could be studied (Glock, 1962). The first dimension in Glock’s scheme is an ideological one or set of religious beliefs. A creed, such as the Nicene Creed, is a tenet in both the Roman Catholic and Episcopal faiths. Second is a ritualistic dimension or set of religious practices. For example, Roman Catholics and Episcopal traditions celebrate the Lord’s Supper (Communion) weekly while communion celebration varies in other Protestant traditions (e.g., Baptist). The next dimension according to Glock is religious experiences and feelings. An experience can be as

scary as Saul's conversion to Paul on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1-31, King James Version) or as subtle as a still, small voice described by Elijah (I Kings 19:12). Glock's fourth facet of religion is intellectual or knowledge dimension. Roman Catholics and Episcopalians differ, for example, in their understanding the catechism, confirmation, and so forth. The last feature of religion according to Glock is a consequential dimension or set of religious effects. Because Mother Teresa is a nun, for example, she would work with the poorest of the poor.

In summary, the dimensions cover what members of a faith are expected to believe and how these members live out their beliefs. Using the first of these dimensions, we might expect that the attitudes individuals have toward capital punishment could readily be predicted from knowing the dogma of these individuals' religion. Two factors make this prediction difficult however.

One factor is changes in the dogma of mainstream religions concerning capital punishment. This change involves Glock's fourth facet of religion, an intellectual or knowledge dimension. For example, Catholicism and mainline Protestantism did not always oppose capital punishment. Melton (1989) has provided official statements given by many traditions about their historical and current position on capital punishment. He notes that the Old Testament has been interpreted as support for the State's right to protect its citizens from harm. The most frequently cited scriptures from the Old Testament supporting capital punishment for example, are from Mosaic laws which are believed to be God's permission to use the death penalty (e.g., Exodus 21 and 22 and Leviticus 20, including Exodus 21:12-17, 23-25,28-29). Exodus 21:12-14 "He that smiteth (kill) a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death. And if a man lie not in wait, but God deliver him into his hand; then I will appoint thee a place whither he shall flee. But if a man come upon his neighbor to slay him with guile; thou shalt take him with guile; thou shalt take

him from mine alter, that he may die.” Approximately twelve offenses are cited in ancient Hebrew law that the death penalty is punishment. Even from 1972-77, there were religions that supported capital punishment [e.g., the National Association of Evangelicals, the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and the National Association of Free Will Baptists], (Melton, 1989).

Melton also notes that those against capital punishment cite from the Old and New Testament as well (Melton, 1989). For example, in the Old Testament, Genesis 4:15, the story of Cain and Abel is cited. God will not allow Cain to be killed as punishment of taking the life of his brother, Abel. This scripture reference points to another area of debate, namely vengeance then versus now. For example, the Church of the Brethren interpreted this passage to mean “restoration of wholeness and integrity to the community, a restoration accomplished at times through human action. It was not vindictive, but rather sought to repay or provide restitution for the once violated,” (Melton, 1989, p. 98). Although some use Exodus 21:22 “an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth” as an argument for the death penalty, some interpret this passage as a “guard against personal vengeance and disproportionate retaliation” (Melton, 1989, p. 45). Others also cite Jesus responding to the question of the meaning of this “eye for an eye” (Matthew 5:38) as in the New Testament the Sermon on the Mount. Several scriptures are cited to establish a view of compassion and forgiveness (e.g., Matthew 5:44, John 8:1-10, and Luke 23:34) or Romans 12:14-21 describes vengeance belonging to God only (Melton, 1989).

Melton further notes that many religions currently oppose capital punishment. The first church body to go on record against the death penalty was the “Methodist Church (1939-1968) which included the merger of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Protestant Church, and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South in 1939” (Melton, 1989). The Episcopal Church at its General Convention in 1958 expressed opposition to capital punishment and reaffirmed this in

1969 starting educational programs (Melton, 1989). Canadian Catholics in 1967 initiated the discussion in the United States resulting in a 1974 Roman Catholic statement: “The U.S. Catholic Conference goes on record in opposition to Capital Punishment” (Melton 1989). According to Melton, many faith traditions found it necessary to make an official statement against capital punishment after the Supreme Court’s decision about the unconstitutionality of selective capital punishment in the case of Furman vs. Georgia (1972). Bishops of Georgia, in a statement against capital punishment in 1980, listed four main reasons they were now against capital punishment: 1st, holiness of life, 2nd, vengeance belongs to God, 3rd killing teaches killing and 4th a divine law of love. Other reasons include discrimination in the use of capital punishment (e.g., disproportionate number of poor and minority offenders on death row), no chance for rehabilitation given capital punishment, and no opportunity for corrections when an innocent person is wrongly accused and executed (Melton, 1989). Mainline Protestantism since 1958 has spoken out against capital punishment and has listed the sanctity of human life as its biggest reason (Melton, 1989).

In sum, leaders in mainline religious traditions now encouraged their members to oppose capital punishment. However, there is slippage between the dogma of dominant religious positions and the attitudes of individual members reflected in poll results (Melton, 1989; Unnever & Cullen, 2009; Wonzniak & Lewis, 2010). This slippage could reflect the time it takes for changes in dogma to be internalized by members of these religions. This slippage could, however, also reflect different orientations to religions – even the same religion!

### **Individual Differences in Orientation to Religion**

A factor in predicting the attitudes individuals have toward capital punishment from knowing these individuals’ religion is different orientations to their religion. This factor would

fall under Glock's knowledge dimension of religion (Glock, 1962). Allport and Ross (1967) found discrepancies in the way churchgoers did or did not accept their religion's dogma (e.g., religious beliefs to love one another). In their study, they found people who attended church infrequently were more prejudice than those who were frequent attendees. Allport and Ross labeled differences in individuals' motivation to attend church and live out the tenants of their religious affiliation as differences in individuals' religious orientations.

Allport and Ross described orientations in terms of intrinsic (an individual which lives out their beliefs) or extrinsic (an individual who uses their beliefs). People with an intrinsic orientation would agree with statements like "*My religious beliefs are what really lie behind my whole approach to life*", whereas people with an extrinsic orientation would agree with statements like "*What religion offers me most is comfort when sorrows and misfortune strike.*"

These two dimensions can be used to define four types of orientations, which in our study, are central in understanding the nature of how these religious orientations are related to attitudes regarding social issues such as capital punishment. Intrinsically oriented individuals are those who internalize their beliefs and live out those beliefs through their actions without looking for personal or social gain (e.g., Jesus, Mother Teresa, Mahatma Gandhi, and Martin Luther King). Extrinsically oriented individuals are those who use their religious affiliation as a way to gain either extrinsic personal rewards (e.g., an individual who has lost their job and seeks ways to reduce stress during the time taken to find a new job) or extrinsic social rewards (e.g., a politician seeking office will attend a larger congregation in hopes of attaining more votes). Indiscriminately pro-religious oriented individuals are those who favor all things religious in nature without question such as statements like "religious beliefs are important" and "church is important to make friends". Indiscriminately anti-religious oriented individuals are those who

oppose anything religious such as statements like “I pray because I have been taught to pray” and “If I am good that is not all that matters”.

## **Hypotheses**

Because officials in mainstream religions have declared that capital punishment is wrong, members of these religions should have negative attitudes toward capital punishment if these individuals have internalized this value (i.e., have an intrinsic religious orientation). Because they do not internalize the values espoused by religions, people with either an extrinsic, indiscriminately-pro, or indiscriminately anti-religious orientation should have positive attitudes toward capital punishment. Last, it was predicted that political ideology would not be confounded with religious orientation. That is, religious orientation will be related to attitudes toward capital punishment even after controlling for differences in political ideology.

## **Method**

### **Participants**

A total of 150 students from undergraduate psychology classes from the University of North Florida were recruited for this study. Students volunteered to take part in a study of “Individual Differences in Attitudes about Capital Punishment”. In exchange for their participation, students received extra-credit toward their course grade. Other forms of extra credit were offered (e.g., writing a paper or volunteering in other research). Participation was limited to individuals aged 18 years or older. Participation was not limited to a specific religious affiliation.

There were 37 males and 113 females in this sample. Of this sample, 67% was between the ages of 18 and 23. A majority of the sample was Caucasian (59%) and female (75%). Most

participants were either Catholic (24%) or Protestant (27.3%). In our sample, participants identified themselves as Republican (32%), Democratic (34%), or Independent/Other (34%).

Of the 150 participants who volunteered for this study, 148 completed the survey. Each participant's written informed consent was obtained. All variables were measured rather than manipulated; participants were not randomly assigned to conditions. All participants were treated in accordance with the Ethical Principles of Psychologist and Code of Conduct (American Psychological Association, 2010).

### **Procedure**

A female experimenter surveyed one to four participants per one hour session using a computer based survey tool (Media Lab 2008). Participants received an explanation of the purpose and procedures of the current study (i.e., exploring student attitudes about social issues). Each participant's written informed consent was obtained. Participants were verbally reminded of the three main rights contained within the written informed consent document (i.e., right to withdraw at any time, participation was voluntary and, survey responses were anonymous).

Participants began with 12-Item Scale of Social Conservatism (Henningham, 1996). Henningham's 12-Item Scale of Social Conservatism was used to assess individual differences in political ideology (liberal versus conservative). Henningham revised Wilson and Patterson's (1968) original 25-item catch-phrase scale to a 12-item scale using current social terminology (Henningham, 1996). In our study, we used this scale as a covariate to control for differences in political ideology. Participants responded to each of the 12 items (e.g., church authority, multiculturalism) by choosing one of three responses: *yes*, *uncertain* and *no*. Half of the items were worded such that agreement (i.e., a yes response) indicated a more conservative ideology (e.g., church authority) and half of the items were worded such that agreement indicated a more

liberal ideology (e.g., legalized abortion). Answers to all items were scored such that higher scores indicated a more conservative ideology. Participants' total scores were calculated by summing the scores for responses to the 12 items.

Consistency in score responses across time refers to test-retest reliability whereas consistency of responses at one point in time is internal consistency (Breakwell, 2004; Kline, 2000). Henningham (1996) found scores on his 12-item scale were internally consistent (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .74$ ). Other researchers have found Cronbach's alphas of .73 (Kivisto & Swan, 2011), .95 (Maltby, 2005) and .77 (Maltby, 1997). In our sample, scores on the Henningham 12-Item Scale of Social Conservatism were internally consistent (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .67$ ).

Researchers have also found evidence of convergent validity for scores on the social conservatism scale. Convergent validity is the extent to which scores on two or more different measures of the same construct produce similar results (Campbell & Fiske, 1959; Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002). Participants' scores on the 12-item Scale of Social Conservatism have been found to be positively correlated with participants' scores on an 8-item measure of economic conservatism (e.g., Henningham, 1997). Additionally, participants' social conservatism scores have been correlated with participants' scores of right wing authoritarianism (Kivisto & Swan, 2011). Discriminant validity is the extent to which scores on different measures of different constructs produce different results (Campbell & Fiske, 1959; Shadish et al., 2002). Kivisto and Swan (2011) found scores on the Henningham Social Conservatism Scale did not correlate with scores on measures of social desirability or religious fundamentalism.

Construct validity is the degree to which scores on a measure can be used to predict scores on theoretically related measures (Cronbach & Meehl, 1955; Shadish et al., 2002).

Kivisto and Swan (2011) found positive relationships between scores on the Social Conservatism

Scale and scores on measures of juror bias in attitudes toward the insanity defense in capital cases. Similarly, other researchers have found that scores on the Social Conservatism Scale were related to scores on measures of attitudes about the death penalty after conviction (Eisenberg, Garvey & Wells, 2001; Jurow, 1971; Tygart, 1992). In sum, Henningham's scale of social conservatism has been found to have construct validity.

Participants were asked to indicate their attitudes about capital punishment using a revision of Thurstone's Attitudes Toward Capital Punishment Scale (Peterson, 1933). Thirteen statements were worded such that agreement indicated support of capital punishment (e.g., "Capital punishment should be used more than it is.") while eleven statements were worded such that disagreement indicated support of capital punishment (e.g., "Capital punishment is absolutely never justified"). The order with which the 24 items were presented was randomized for each participant to avoid response sets such as acquiescence. Participants responded to each of the statements by indicating whether they agreed or disagreed with a statement. Participants were given a score of (2) if their responses to an item indicated a negative attitude about capital punishment and a score of (1) if their responses to an item indicated a positive attitude about capital punishment. Total attitude scores were computed by summing the scores for responses to each individual item. Higher total scores indicated increasingly negative attitudes about capital punishment.

Evidence of reliability for scores on Thurstone's Attitudes Toward Capital Punishment Scale have been found. A test-retest correlation of .66 over a two week interval was reported for scores on Thurstone's scale in Peterson's work with children exposed to motion pictures (Peterson, 1933). A test-retest correlation of .92 was reported in a pre-and post-test of voters in California voting to reinstate capital punishment (Moore, 1975). Internal consistency

coefficients estimates of .59 to .88 (Lorge, 1939) and .79 to .88 (Ferguson, 1952) were also reported (For a review of the psychometric properties of Thurstone's scale, see Shaw & Wright, 1967).

Researchers have also provided evidence of convergent and discriminant validity for scores on Thurstone's Attitudes Toward Capital Punishment Scale. Diggory provided convergent validity when he found that scores from a college form of Attitude Toward Punishment of Criminals scale and scores from Thurstone's scale were positively correlated (Diggory (1953). Likewise, McKelvie and his colleague found positive correlations for scores on their Questionnaire on Capital Punishment (QCP) scale and Thurstone's scale ranging from .50 to .88 (McKelvie & Daoussis, 1982). O'Neil and his colleagues, (2004) found evidence of discriminant validity because scores on Thurstone's scale did not correlate with scores on measures of just world beliefs, social desirability, fear of crime, authoritarianism or dogmatism.

Evidence of construct validity for the Thurstone scale has been established. Ferguson (1944) found scores on Thurstone's scale helped predict treatment of criminals. Moore (1975) found scores on Thurstone's scale to be a predictor of voting behavior. Additionally, McKelvie (2006) found scores on an 18-item Questionnaire on Capital Punishment, based closely on Thurstone's 24 item Attitudes Toward Capital Punishment Scale, helped predict offender punishment.

Participants were given two scales to measure these individuals' religiosity. First, individual differences in religiosity were assessed using the 20-item Religious Orientation Scale (ROS) (Allport & Ross, 1967). Participant responses to each of the statements were made using a 4-point scale with four response options (e.g., *I definitely disagree* to *I definitely agree* or *Definitely not true* to *Definitely true*). Participant response options changed based on whether or

not an item was intrinsically or extrinsically worded as well as if it were negatively or positively worded. Eleven statements were worded to represent an extrinsic orientation (e.g., “The purpose of prayer is to secure a happy and peaceful life.”) and nine statements were worded to represent an intrinsic orientation (e.g., “It is important to me to spend periods of time in private religious thought and meditation.”). In the extrinsic subscale of the ROS, there were two negatively worded statements (e.g., “The primary purpose of prayer is to gain relief and protection.”) with accompanying response options (i.e., *I definitely agree*, *I tend to agree*, *I tend to disagree*, and *I definitely disagree*), and nine positively worded statements (e.g., “Although I am a religious person I refuse to let religious considerations influence my everyday affairs.”) with accompanying response options (i.e., *definitely not true to me*, *tends not to be true*, *tends to be true*, and *clearly true in my case*). In the intrinsic subscale of the ROS, there were four negatively worded statements (e.g., “Religion is especially important to me because it answers many questions about the meaning of life.”) with accompanying options (i.e., *definitely disagree*, *tend to disagree*, *tend to agree*, and *definitely agree*) and five positively worded statements (e.g., “If not prevented by unavoidable circumstances, I attend church.”) with accompanying options (i.e., *more than once a week*, *about once a week*, *two or three times a month*, and *less than once a month*). Responses to negatively worded statements were reversed scored thus controlling for acquiescent response sets.

Answers to all items in the intrinsic subscale of our study were scored such that participants with higher scores were classified as intrinsically oriented toward their religion. Answers to all items in the extrinsic subscale of our study were scored such that participants with higher scores were classified as extrinsically oriented toward their religion. Participants who scored above the median of our sample on the intrinsic subscale and below the median of our

sample on the extrinsic subscale were classified as intrinsically oriented toward their religion. Participants who scored below the median of our sample on the intrinsic subscale and above the median of our sample on the extrinsic subscale were classified as extrinsically oriented toward their religion. Participants who scored above the median of our sample on the intrinsic subscale and above the median of our sample on the extrinsic subscale were classified as indiscriminately pro-religious in their orientation toward their religion. Participants who scored below the median of our sample on both the intrinsic and extrinsic subscale were classified as indiscriminately anti-religious in their orientation toward their religion.

Reliability and validity has been well documented for the ROS scale. Reliability found in item-to-subscale correlations for ROS ranged from .18 to .58 [extrinsic, .18 to .51; intrinsic .28 to .58], (Allport & Ross, 1967). Spilka and colleagues reported a KR-20 of .91 for scores on the intrinsic subscale and .85 for scores on extrinsic subscale (Spilka, Stout, Minton & Sizemore, 1977). Cronbach's  $\alpha$  of .87 for scores on the intrinsic scale and Cronbach's  $\alpha$  of .79 for scores on extrinsic scale were also reported (Cohen, Pierce, Chambers, Meade, Gorvine, & Koenig, 2005). In our study, Cronbach's  $\alpha$  of .91 for scores on the intrinsic scale and Cronbach's  $\alpha$  of .70 for scores on extrinsic scale were obtained.

Evidence of convergent validity for scores on the ROS exists. Participants' scores on both intrinsic subscales of the Allport and Ross (1967) and Feagin (1964) measures were strongly and positively correlated. Likewise, participants' scores on both the extrinsic subscales of Allport and Ross (1967) and Gorsuch and McPherson's (1989) Intrinsic/Extrinsic Revised Scale (I/E-Revised Scale) measures were strongly and positively correlated. Participant's scores were correlated on both Gorsuch and Venables' Age Universal Religious Orientation Scale (1983) and ROS scale for both intrinsic and extrinsic orientations (Greer, Berman, Varan, Bobrycki &

Watson, 2005). In our study, participants' intrinsic scores on the ROS scale correlated strongly and positively with participants' intrinsic scores on I/E-Revised Scale. Also, participants' extrinsic scores on the ROS scale correlated strongly and positively with participants' extrinsic scores on I/E-Revised Scale.

Evidence of discriminant validity has been reported. Donahue found that across four studies, scores on the extrinsic subscale of the ROS were uncorrelated with scores on measures of religious commitment and religiousness. In his meta-analysis of 34 samples, Donahue (1985) found that scores on intrinsic and extrinsic subscales had a correlation near zero. Other researchers have found that scores on the ROS are not correlated with scores on measures of internal locus of control (Kahoe, 1974), purpose in life (Crandall & Rasmussen, 1975) and lack of anxiety (Baker & Gorsuch, 1982). Participant scores in our study on the intrinsic subscale of the I/E-Revised Scale were not strongly correlated with participant scores on the extrinsic subscale of the ROS scale. Also, participant scores in our study on the extrinsic subscale of the I/E-Revised Scale were not strongly correlated with participant scores on the intrinsic subscale of the ROS.

Researchers have confirmed construct validity for the ROS scale. Participants' extrinsic scores on the ROS scale have been found to be positively correlated with scores on the measures of prejudice and dogmatism (Donahue, 1985). Participants' intrinsic scores on the ROS have been found to be negatively correlated with scores on the measures of dogmatism and internal locus of control (Kahoe, 1974). Researchers have found evidence of construct validity with scores on various measures of fear of death being negatively correlated with scores on intrinsic religiosity subscales but not at all correlated with scores in extrinsic religiosity subscales (Spilka, Read, Allen, & Dailey, 1968). Donahue (1985) also reported studies in which participants'

intrinsic scores on the ROS scale were positively correlated with scores on measures of religious commitment and religiousness. Hood (1970) was developing the Religious Experience Episode Measure (REEM) scale and compared scores on the REEM measure with extrinsic and intrinsic scores on Allport and Ross's ROS scale. Hood obtained a positive correlation for scores on the REEM scale and the intrinsic scale but no association for scores on the REEM and the extrinsic scale. That is, participants who were intrinsically oriented were more likely to acknowledge having had a religious experience than those who were extrinsically oriented. Individuals with an intrinsic religious orientation have greater ego strength, less paranoia and less anxiety than do individuals with an extrinsic orientation (Baker & Gorsuch, 1982). That is, intrinsically oriented individuals have learned to incorporate and adapt to anxiety whereas extrinsically oriented individuals typically have not. Intrinsically oriented individuals were found to be less depressed than were extrinsic, pro-religious, and nonreligiously oriented individuals (Genia & Shaw, 1991). Other researchers found that scores on measures of wellbeing were more strongly correlated with scores on the intrinsic subscale than scores on the extrinsic subscale of the ROS (Bergin, Masters & Richards, 1987). Several other researchers have found evidence of construct validity for the ROS scale.

The second measure of an individual's religiosity was the 14-item Intrinsic/Extrinsic-Revised Scale (I/E-Revised Scale; Gorsuch & McPherson, 1989). Participants' responses to each of the statements were made using a 5-point Likert scale with end points "*strongly disagree*" (1) and, "*strongly agree*" (5). To reflect three different religious orientations, eight statements were intrinsic (e.g., "It is important to me to spend time in private thought and prayer."), three extrinsic-social (e.g., "I go to church mostly to spend time with my friends."),

three extrinsic-personal (e.g., “Prayer is for peace and happiness.”). Three intrinsic statements were negatively worded (e.g., “Although I am religious, I don’t let it affect my daily life.”).

Answers to all items in the intrinsic subscale of our study were scored such that participants with higher scores were classified as more intrinsically oriented toward their religion. Answers to all items in the extrinsic subscale of our study were scored such that participants with higher scores were classified as more extrinsically oriented toward their religion. Participants who scored above the median of our sample on the intrinsic subscale and below the median of our sample on the extrinsic subscale were classified as intrinsically oriented toward their religion. Participants who scored below the median of our sample on the intrinsic subscale and above the median of our sample on the extrinsic subscale were classified as extrinsically oriented toward their religion. Participants who scored above the median of our sample on the intrinsic subscale and above the median of our sample on the extrinsic subscale were classified as indiscriminately pro-religious in their orientation toward their religion. Participants who scored below the median of our sample on both the intrinsic and extrinsic subscale were classified as indiscriminately anti-religious in their orientation toward their religion.

Reliability and validity has been well documented for the I/E-Revised Scale. Gorsuch & McPherson (1989) found evidence of internal consistency for scores on the intrinsic subscale (Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  of .83) and on the extrinsic subscale (Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  of .65). Maltby reported scores across seven samples that indicated internal consistency with Cronbach alpha’s of .70 or higher (Maltby, 2005). Flere and his colleagues found acceptable reliability coefficients (i.e., intrinsic, Cronbach’s  $\alpha = .82$ ; extrinsic, Cronbach’s  $\alpha = .77$  to .83) for their religious orientation study based on I/E-Revised Scale (Flere, Klanjšek, Lavrič & Musil, 2008). In our study, we

found evidence of internal consistency for scores in the intrinsic subscale (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .89$ ) and for scores on the extrinsic subscale (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .79$ ) of the I/E-Revised Scale.

There is evidence of convergent validity for scores on the I/E-Revised Scale. As cited in Gorsuch and McPherson (1989), Venable (1982) found participants' Age Universal I-E intrinsic scores were found to be positively correlated with participants' intrinsic scores on the I/E-Revised Scale. Venable also found, participants' Age Universal I-E extrinsic scores were found to be positively correlated with participants' extrinsic scores on the I/E-Revised Scale. Using the I/E Revised Scale, Steger, Frazier, Oishi and Kaler (2006) found convergent validity with scores of intrinsic religiosity positively correlated to scores on measures of presence, life satisfaction, positive emotions, agreeableness and extraversion. In our study, participants' intrinsic scores on the I/E-Revised Scale were positively correlated with participants' intrinsic scores on ROS scale. Also, our participants' extrinsic scores on the I/E-Revised Scale positively correlated with participants' extrinsic scores on ROS scale.

Discriminant validity for the I/E-Revised Scale has been established in research. For example, participants' scores on the extrinsic subscale of the I/E-Revised Scale were not correlated with scores on measures of either neuroticism or conservatism (Maltby, 2005). Steger et al. (2006) reported scores from their Meaning of Life Scale (specifically measuring presence of and search for the meaning of life) were not strongly correlated with intrinsic religiosity nor extrinsic religiosity. Participants' scores in our study on the intrinsic subscale of the Revised I-E Scale were not strongly correlated with participant scores on the extrinsic subscale of the ROS scale. Also, participants' scores in our study on the extrinsic subscale of the Revised I-E Scale were not correlated with participant scores on the intrinsic subscale of the ROS scale.

There is also evidence of construct validity for scores on the I/E-Revised Scale. For example, Steger and colleagues found that scores on the intrinsic subscale of the I/E-Revised Scale were positively correlated with scores on the Purpose in Life Test, Life Regard Index, Satisfaction with Life Scale, and Rosenberg Self-Esteem Inventory, (Steger et al., 2006). Construct validity was established in Maltby's (2005) study in which he found evidence for females that scores for extrinsic religiosity were positively correlated with trait guilt, state guilt, and neuroticism. Likewise, male participants' scores for extrinsic religiosity were positively correlated with scores on moral standards guilt (Maltby, 2005). Participants' scores on the measure Faith Activities In The Home (FAITHS) were positively correlated to scores on all three religiosity subscales across three samples, intrinsic religiosity, extrinsic personal religiosity, extrinsic social religiosity (Lambert & Dollahite, 2010).

Participants' demographics were assessed with nominal response scales. Participants' answered items concerning sex (i.e., *male, female*), age (i.e., *18 -23, 24-30, 31-40, 41-50, 50+*), ethnic background (i.e., *Caucasian/White; African American/Black; Hispanic/Latino; Asian/Pacific Islander; Other*), religious affiliation (i.e., *Catholic [Roman, Orthodox, Reformed]*, (i.e., *Protestant [i.e., Baptist, Episcopalian, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian]*, *Jewish, Muslim, non-religious (i.e., agnostic, atheist)*, *Other [i.e., those faiths not listed as choices]*). Participants also answered items concerning church attendance (i.e., *Do not attend Church, Temple, Mosque etc., Attend less than three times a year, Once a month, Once a week, or More than once a week*). Questions were added to assess the participant's personal experience with issues of capital punishment (e.g., *jury duty, knowledge of a family or close friend's experience with capital punishment*). Each of the questions concerning participants' personal experience with capital punishment were accompanied by a multiple-choice format (i.e., *Yes [close friend], Yes*

*[immediate family member: mom, dad, sister or brother], Yes [relative other than immediate family], Yes other [neighbor, classmate] or No).*

Participants were debriefed upon completion of the demographic questions. A debriefing sheet contained contact information for both the principal investigator and the university Counseling Center. This information was provided in the event participants had questions about the study or were distressed. Participants were thanked for their time.

## **Results**

### **Preliminary Analyses**

In this study, we used two different measures to assess participants' religious orientation: the Religious Orientation Scale [ROS] (Allport & Ross, 1967) and the Intrinsic/Extrinsic-Revised Scale [I/E-Revised Scale] (Gorsuch & McPherson, 1989). We used two measures to help demonstrate convergent validity between scores on both scales (Campbell & Fiske, 1959; Shadish et al., 2002). That is, we used two different scales to measure the same construct to determine if scores on each scale provided similar classifications of participants' religious orientation. Consistent with previous research (Donahue, 1985), we found convergent validity when comparing participants' scores on the Allport and Ross ROS intrinsic subscale with participants' scores on the Gorsuch and McPherson I/E-Revised intrinsic subscale ( $r = .92, p < .001$ ). That is, participants' scores on the Allport and Ross ROS intrinsic subscale and the Gorsuch and McPherson I/E-Revised intrinsic subscale were highly related. We also found convergent validity when comparing participants' scores on the Allport and Ross ROS extrinsic subscale with participants' scores on the Gorsuch and McPherson I/E-Revised extrinsic subscale ( $r = .61, p < .001$ ). That is, participants' scores on the Allport and Ross ROS extrinsic subscale and the Gorsuch and McPherson I/E-Revised extrinsic subscale were highly related.

We found discriminant validity, like other researchers (Donahue, 1985), when comparing scores on the Allport and Ross ROS extrinsic subscale with participants' scores on the Gorsuch and McPherson I/E- Revised intrinsic subscale ( $r = .21, p < .001$ ). That is, participants' scores on the Allport and Ross ROS extrinsic subscale and Gorsuch and McPherson I/E-Revised intrinsic subscale were not strongly related. Further, we found evidence of discriminant validity when comparing scores on the Allport and Ross ROS intrinsic subscale with participants' scores on the Gorsuch and McPherson I/E-Revised extrinsic subscale ( $r = .28, p < .001$ ). That is, participants' scores on the Allport and Ross ROS intrinsic subscale and Gorsuch and McPherson I/E-Revised extrinsic subscale were not strongly related. Based on our sample, we found evidence of convergent and discriminant validity for both the ROS (Allport & Ross, 1967) and the I/E-Revised Scale (Gorsuch & McPherson, 1989) religious orientation scales.

### **Main Analyses**

In this study, we expected individuals' religiosity (i.e., orientation toward their religious belief) would be predictive of their attitudes toward capital punishment. Because officials in mainstream religions have declared that capital punishment is wrong, members of these religions should have negative attitudes toward capital punishment if these individuals have internalized this value (i.e., have an intrinsic religious orientation). Because they do not internalize the values espoused by religions, people with either an extrinsic, indiscriminately-pro, or indiscriminately anti-religious orientation should have positive attitudes toward capital.

To evaluate these hypotheses, we conducted two one-way ANOVAs. In one of the ANOVAs, the predictor variable was religious orientation as measured by Allport and Ross's Religious Orientation Scale (1967) and our dependent variable was attitudes toward capital punishment. In the other ANOVA, the predictor variable was religious orientation as measured

by Gorsuch and McPherson's Intrinsic/Extrinsic Religious Scale-Revised (1989) and our dependent variable was attitudes toward capital punishment.

When using scores on the ROS to assess participants' religious orientation, we found a marginally reliable main effect of participants' religious orientation on participants' attitudes about capital punishment,  $F(3, 146) = 2.25, p = .08$ . As expected, participants who were intrinsically oriented toward their religion had more unfavorable attitudes toward capital punishment ( $M = 31.00, SD = 4.93$ ) than did participants who were extrinsically oriented toward their religion ( $M = 29.57, SD = 3.65$ ), indiscriminately pro-religious in their orientation to their religion ( $M = 28.44, SD = 4.19$ ), or indiscriminately anti-religious in their orientation to their religion ( $M = 29.23, SD = 4.33$ ). Although people with an intrinsic orientation toward their religion had more unfavorable attitudes about capital punishment than did people with other religious orientations, there were no statistically reliable differences in the attitudes of people with an extrinsic, indiscriminately pro-religious, or indiscriminately anti-religious orientation.

When using scores on the I/E-Revised Scale to assess participants' religious orientation, we also found a significant main effect of participants' religious orientation on participants' attitudes about capital punishment,  $F(3, 146) = 3.07, p = .03$ . As expected, participants who were intrinsically oriented toward their religion had more unfavorable attitudes toward capital punishment ( $M = 31.44, SD = 4.75$ ) than did participants who were extrinsically oriented toward their religion ( $M = 29.09, SD = 3.50$ ), participants who were indiscriminately pro-religious in their orientation to their religion ( $M = 28.52, SD = 4.28$ ), or participants who were indiscriminately anti-religious in their orientation to religion ( $M = 29.30, SD = 4.50$ ). Again, although people with an intrinsic orientation toward their religion had more unfavorable attitudes about capital punishment than did people with other religious orientations, there were no

statistically reliable differences in the attitudes of people with an extrinsic, indiscriminately pro-religious, or indiscriminately anti-religious orientation.

### **Ancillary Analyses**

Previous research has suggested that political ideology and attitudes about capital punishment are correlated (Arthur, 1998; Cochran & Chamlin, 2006; Morgan & Comfort, 1986). That is, individuals who are politically conservative tend to be more in favor of capital punishment compared to those individuals who are politically liberal. In our study, we used scores on Henningham's (1996) 12-Item Scale of Social Conservatism as a covariate in two analyses. First, we did a one-way ANCOVA with religious orientation (using scores from Allport and Ross's Religious Orientation Scale) as our independent variable and attitudes toward capital punishment as our dependent variable. The covariate in this analysis was political ideology. We found that political ideology, as assessed by Henningham's (1996) 12-Item Scale of Social Conservatism, was related to attitudes about capital punishment,  $F(1, 145) = 9.64, p = .002$ . The more conservative participants' political ideology, the more favorable their attitudes were toward capital punishment. Even after controlling for the effects of political ideology, we still found a significant effect of religious orientation on attitudes toward capital punishment,  $F(3, 145) = 4.52, p = .005$ . After adjusting attitude scores for the influence of political ideology, participants who were intrinsically oriented toward their religion ( $M = 31.58, SD = 3.97$ ) had more unfavorable attitudes toward capital punishment than did participants who were extrinsically oriented toward their religion ( $M = 29.55, SD = 1.71$ ), indiscriminately pro-religious in their orientation to their religion ( $M = 27.50, SD = 1.83$ ), or indiscriminately anti-religious in their orientation to religion ( $M = 29.64, SD = 1.80$ ).

We did another one-way ANCOVA with religious orientation (using scores from I/E-Revised Scale) as our independent variable and attitudes toward capital punishment as our dependent variable. The covariate in this analysis was political ideology. As before, we found a reliable effect of the covariate on attitudes toward capital punishment,  $F(1, 145) = 12.33, p < .001$ . Even after controlling for the effects of political ideology, we still found a significant effect of religious orientation on attitudes toward capital punishment,  $F(3, 146) = 6.48, p < .001$ . Again, after adjusting attitude scores for the influence of political ideology, participants who were intrinsically oriented toward their religion ( $M = 32.19, SD = 3.97$ ) had more unfavorable attitudes toward capital punishment than did participants who were extrinsically oriented toward their religion ( $M = 28.99, SD = 1.78$ ), indiscriminately pro-religious in their orientation to their religion ( $M = 27.43, SD = 1.79$ ) or indiscriminately anti-religious in their orientation to religion ( $M = 29.98, SD = 1.88$ ).

### **Discussion**

In this study, we evaluated participants' religiosity as a moderator of attitudes about capital punishment. We did so because there seems to be considerable slippage between the position on capital punishment taken by mainstream religions (e.g., Catholicism, Protestantism) and the position on capital punishment taken by members of these religions. Catholicism and Protestantism both have official statements expressing unfavorable attitudes about capital punishment (Melton, 1989). Conversely, members of these mainstream religions seem to report favorable attitudes about capital punishment despite the teachings of these official statements of belief (Melton, 1989).

We propose one reason for this slippage might be different orientations that religious members have towards their religious beliefs. Individuals intrinsically oriented toward their

religious beliefs internalize and live out the teachings of their faith (Allport & Ross, 1967; Donahue, 1985). Intrinsically oriented individuals base their life decisions (e.g., raising a family, voting, serving on a jury) within the framework of the tenets of their religious beliefs. Most mainstream religions oppose capital punishment (Melton, 1989), thus intrinsically oriented individuals would agree with this position.

Individuals extrinsically oriented toward their religious beliefs use the teachings of their faith for social or personal gain (Allport & Ross, 1967; Donahue, 1985; Woznlak & Lewis, 2010). Extrinsically oriented individuals would not hold fast to these tenets of mainstream religion unless these tenets could be used as a means to an end. Extrinsically oriented individuals would base their life decisions (e.g., increased social status, emotional uplifting, and networking opportunities) on a framework of self-benefit. Individuals extrinsically oriented would tend to favor capital punishment to be more in line with current trends about capital punishment (Allport & Ross, 1967; Bohm, 1991; Donahue, 1985; Logmire, 1996).

Individuals indiscriminately pro-religious associate anything religious as a reason to be for or against an issue (Allport & Ross, 1967; Donahue, 1985, Hood, 1978). That is, if a religion is against capital punishment, then an indiscriminately pro-religious individual would be against capital punishment for no other reason other than it aligns with their religion's position on capital punishment. Individuals indiscriminately pro-religious generally tend to choose both intrinsic and extrinsic reasons to be motivated toward their religious beliefs as long as the question is in a religious context (Allport & Ross, 1967; Donahue, 1985, Hood, 1978).

Conversely, indiscriminately anti-religious individuals associate anything religious as a reason to be against an issue (Allport & Ross, 1967; Donahue, 1985, Hood, 1978). That is, an indiscriminately anti-religious individual would favor capital punishment when capital

punishment is in a religious context for no other reason than capital punishment is in a religious context. That is, if a religion is against capital punishment, then an indiscriminately anti-religious individual could choose to be in favor of capital punishment because being in favor of capital punishment does not align with a religion's position on capital punishment (Allport & Ross, 1967; Donahue, 1985, Hood, 1978).

As expected in this study, intrinsically oriented participants (i.e., those who lived out their religious beliefs) had unfavorable attitudes about capital punishment. Also as expected, extrinsically oriented participants (i.e., those who used their religious beliefs for personal or social gain and tend to follow societal trends) had favorable attitudes about capital punishment. Additionally, attitudinal differences were not found between people with an extrinsic, indiscriminately pro-or indiscriminately anti-religious orientation. Additionally, after controlling for political ideology, intrinsically oriented individuals had the most unfavorable attitudes about capital punishment.

### **Possible Limitations and Alternative Explanations**

As in all research, our study had limitations. With regard to internal validity, causal inference was a concern (Shadish, Campbell & Cook, 2002). Our predictor variable was religiosity. Religiosity was measured, not manipulated, thus making the design for this study correlational, not experimental. Therefore, we cannot make cause-and-effect inferences about the connection between religiosity and attitudes about capital punishment in this study.

With all correlational designs, researchers face two problems, and these two potential problems existed in our study. First, temporal order must be established to identify causes versus effects (Brewer, 2000; Wilson, Aronson, & Carlsmith, 2010). That is, researchers using correlational designs may not know the order in which events occurred. In our study, we do not

know if the participants had established their attitudes about capital punishment before their identified orientation toward their religious beliefs or if participants identified religious orientation toward their beliefs came first and thus influenced their attitudes toward capital punishment.

Second, third variables can exist in correlational designs and can cause a spurious correlation (Brewer, 2000; Reis & Judd, 2000). That is, there might be a variable other than a researcher's independent variable and dependent variable that has an effect on the relationship between the independent and dependent variable in a study. In our study, we statistically controlled for political ideology as a potential third variable. However, other possible third variables (e.g., sex, age, and race) could have influenced our results (Bohm, 1991; Longmire, 1996; Wood, 1990).

Sex, age and race are potential third variables in our study only if they are correlated to both religious orientation and attitudes about capital punishment. Our participants were college students who were predominately female (75%) from a southern university. We found females were more likely than males to have negative attitudes about capital punishment but there were no significant differences between females and males in religious orientation. Most of our participants (63%) were between the ages of 18 and 22. Participants 18 to 22 held the most negative attitudes about capital punishment; there were however no age differences in religious orientation. The majority of our sample was Caucasian (59%). In our study, we found evidence that race was related to participants' religious orientation and participants' attitudes about capital punishment. Specifically, People of Color were more likely than Caucasians to indicate negative attitudes about capital punishment. Additionally, in our sample, People of Color were more likely than Caucasians to have an extrinsic rather than intrinsic orientation to their religion.

Thus, the relationship we found between religious orientation and attitudes about capital punishment might be the result of race as a third variable. Because we had so few People of Color (22%), we could not statistically control for this variable. Our findings about race and attitudes about capital punishment were, however, consistent with the findings of other researchers (Bohm, 1991, Unnever & Cullen, 2007).

Additionally, race, sex, and age may have been limiting factors in generalizing the results of our study thus effecting external validity (for a review see Bohm 1991; Longmire 1996; McKelvie, 2006). That is, can the results of our sample be generalized with a larger population? Because our sample was not more diverse (e.g., more females [75%] than males [25%]; more 18-21 [63%] year olds than other age groups [24 yrs to 50 yrs combined]; more Caucasians [59%] than People of Color [22%]), our external validity could be suspect.

More negative attitudes about capital punishment are likely to be held by women rather than men (Bohm, 1991, Gallup, 2010 Oct 6-9; Honeyman & Ogloff, 1996, Longmire, 1996), People of Color rather than Caucasians (Applegate, Wright, Dunaway, Cullen, & Wooldredge, 1993; Bohm, 1991; Cochran & Chamlin, 2006; Longmire 1996; Young, 1992), and by younger people than older people (Gallup, 2011 Oct 13). Given the nature of our sample, our results therefore may not generalize to the larger population.

### **Future Directions**

Some scholars question the utility of the construct of religious orientation (e.g., Hood, Morris & Watson, 1990). In reaction to the critique of this construct, other scholars re-conceptualized the meaning of the construct. Other scholars suggest that religious orientation might function like a cognitive schema (McIntosh, 1997). A cognitive schema is a mental representation of knowledge organized around a specific domain to include details about its

characteristics (Allport, 1954; Fiske, 2004; Gardner, 1985; Jost & Major, 2001; Taylor & Crocker, 1981). For example, McIntosh pointed out that religion as a schema allows for a broader look at why individuals behave or react to social issues or ways of coping in certain social situations. The complexity or elaborateness of an individual's religious schema might predict how that individual would react to social issues. If religious orientation functions like a schema, then some of the effects observed for schemas (e.g., resistant to change) should be observed for religious orientations.

If religiosity is a schema about religion-related matters, then individual differences in religiosity might be related not just to resistance to persuasion but also to different routes to persuasion. Why an individual would or would not change their mind might involve two different routes (central versus peripheral) of persuasion (cf. Briñol, & Petty, 2012; Cacioppo & Petty, 1981, 1986; Chaiken, 1980; Lambert & Clark, 2001; Petty & Briñol, 2010; Unnever, 2005). Different cognitive processes are involved in each route (i.e., elaboration versus heuristic processing), and different factors are involved in persuasion in each route (e.g., persuasiveness of arguments versus expertness of communicators). In the future, researchers could consider how an individual with a specific religious orientation (i.e., intrinsic, extrinsic, indiscriminately pro-religious or indiscriminately anti-religious) responds to persuasive attempts involving the central route versus those in the peripheral route.

Intrinsically oriented individuals who internalize the tenets of their faith might be more persuaded than extrinsically oriented individuals by messages in the central route to persuasion (e.g., strong arguments relating religious values to positions on religion related issues like capital punishment), whereas extrinsically oriented individuals who use their faith to satisfy social needs might be more persuaded by messages from the peripheral route of persuasion (e.g., current polls

indicating popular opinion on religion-related issues like capital punishment). Conversely, intrinsically oriented individuals for whom faith is an end in itself might be more persuaded by messages in the peripheral route of persuasion from certain communicators (e.g., religious authorities), whereas extrinsically oriented individuals for whom faith is a means to an end might be more persuaded by messages in the peripheral route of persuasion from other communicators (e.g., popular celebrities). Consistent with this idea, some researchers have found that people respond differently to persuasive messages based on information versus messages based on affect (Lambert & Clarke, 2011). In sum, individual differences in religiosity may be a moderator of persuasion produced in the central versus peripheral route. Simultaneously considering both religiosity and routes to persuasion may enhance our understanding of the views people have concerning capital punishment.

Tapping into modern culture's definition and worldview of religion might add to our understanding of religious orientation. Researchers studying attitudes about capital punishment have noted the significance of determining a participant's definition or worldview of religion (Unnever, 2009, 2010). As noted by Pargament (1999), several traditional definitions of religion have been offered in the psychological study of religion: a system (e.g., Argyle & Beit-Hallahmi, 1975), a reaction (e.g., Batson, Schoenrade & Ventis, 1993), an experience (e.g., Clark, 1958), or a combination of all three (e.g., James, 1902/1961). According to Pargament (1999), a shift in the definition of religion has occurred in the field of psychology. Religion had been conceptualized in two ways: belief in tenets and practices and how we feel about them versus how we use those tenets and practices in all areas of our life to cope with life's questions and problems (Pargament, 1999). In brief, religion was defined in broad terms and conceptualized as synonymous with spirituality. Now with Pargament's re-conceptualization, how we think about

sacredness opens a new lens in which to look at people's religious/spiritual attitudes toward life and death issues. Religion and the study of being spiritual and religious are now being actively researched.

One reason for a shift in definition is a change in American religious and spiritual life. Organized religion has been labeled irrelevant and a decline in Baby-Boomer religious involvement in organized religion has been reported (Roof, 1994). With this decline, people's desire for individuality has increased their interest in individual spirituality rather than religiousness (Pargament, 1999). For example, other researchers found scores from some college students revealed they were more likely to identify themselves as spiritual but not religious versus just not religious (Zinnbauer et al., 1997). Additionally, during debriefing in our study many of the participants voiced a concern they did not feel our "religious questions" (i.e., the ROS and I/E-Revised scales) captured their true spiritual identity. When asked for clarification, many students voiced they were spiritual not religious. They did not subscribe to mainstream religious dogma or ritual but felt they did have a connection to something greater than themselves (sacred). This connection could be what Pargament referred to in his definition of religion as "a search for significance in ways related to the sacred" (Pargament, 1977, p.32). Children of Baby-Boomers may feel they are connected to the sacred but not in the traditional definition.

Pargament, (1999) also explains that spirituality is the search for the sacred in which sacred is defined as those things worthy of reverence (e.g., concepts of God, the transcendent or things associated with or represent the holy). Adding a spirituality measurement to our study would benefit as a counter balance to those who do not identify with the traditional standard used in the ROS and I/E-Revised scale. Bertocci (1972) likened the study of religion/spirituality to

fishing in that you need a variety of means (bait, hook) for any one kind of fish. Zinnbauer et al. (1999) echoed the importance of going beyond the use of one method of measurement and using scales sensitive to different group ideologies. Although the ROS scale has been shown time and again to be a valid measure of religious orientation, it has also received criticism because it was originally designed and used with a Christian religious audience in mind (Hood et al., 1990)

A modern cultural definition of religion has thus emerged. Researchers have tried to narrow their definition by separating religion from spirituality. Some scholars have contrasted religion as a fixed system with little opportunity for individuality with spirituality in which there is a great deal of freedom of expression (Koenig et al., 2001; Wulff, 1996). Researchers (Zinnbauer et al., 1997) have warned against this for two important reasons. A broadband definition of religion and spirituality provides a common thread (tradition) in research with a choice of self definition. With the broadband definition, researchers might be less likely to polarize the two constructs of religiousness and spirituality. For example, some individuals might look at religion as dogmatic or old school and thus negative, but see spirituality as individualized expression or new age and thus positive. Ironically, both these definitions can be seen as positive or negative depending on the individual's view. By not simplifying the distinction between religion and spirituality, scholars might be better able to resist the urge to change their research interests with cultural changes that may have a short shelf life (Zinnbauer et al., 1997). With this in mind, a comparison of differences if any in the attitudes held by those intrinsically oriented to their religion with the attitudes held by those who see themselves as spiritual but not religious is a natural next step.

In sum, the world we live in still thinks religion is important in day-to-day living despite Gallup's recent 2010 May 21 poll showing a "slight uptick" in the other direction. Additionally,

most Americans identify themselves as religious or spiritual (Pargament, 1999), and the vast majority of people in the world are members of one religion or another. In an age of worldwide communication and international politics, understanding the dynamics of religion is more important today than perhaps it has ever been.

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## Vita

Heather Johnston was born on \_\_\_\_\_ in Eustis, Florida where she was raised by her parents – Ellen and Frank Harrelson. Heather graduated from Lake Weir High School in Candler, Florida in 1985. As an SK2 in the United States Navy stationed in Florida, Heather was awarded two Navy Accommodation Medals and named Sailor of the Year in 1991. In 2003, Heather married Jeremy Johnston and in 2004 they had a son, Steven. Heather has more than seventeen years of experience working as a youth minister in Fort Pierce, Orlando, Key West and Jacksonville, Florida as well as 10 years budgetary experience through the military, private and state run companies. Currently she is employed at the University of North Florida as the Office Manager for the Honors and Scholars Program. From 2007 to 2009, Heather attended Florida State College of Jacksonville where she earned her Associates of Arts degree with Honors.

Heather went on to pursue a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology with a minor in Social Welfare at the University of North Florida where she graduated Summa Cum Laude with Honors in Psychology in 2011. While at the University of North Florida, Heather was secretary for the University Scholars Honor Society, a member of Psi Chi National Honor Society in Psychology, a member of the Association for Psychological Science, and a member of the Association of Fundraising Professionals. During her education at the University of North Florida, Heather was awarded several scholarships including the Phi Beta Kappa Scholarship and the Elizabeth Edgar Hall Scholarship. Heather was also selected as an Advanced Research Intern by the Office of Undergraduate Research. Heather was recognized for her service to others as a finalist for the Albert Earnest Jr. Caring Award.

Heather was also awarded a research SMART grant from the Office of Undergraduate Research at the University of North Florida for work on her thesis. Heather completed her Honors Thesis exploring the impact of religiosity and religious orientation on attitudes about capital punishment. Heather was engaged in research as a member of the Person by Situation Interaction Research Team. She was selected by her faculty-mentor as Coordinator of the Religiosity Research Team (PxS) and in this role she guided new researchers as they too embarked on research examining religiosity. Heather was also instrumental in digitizing all research data for the PxS research team. Heather played a leading role in researching and presenting information for a new online survey tool (Qualtrics) which enabled UNF to save \$6,000 a year in technical support fees. Additionally, Heather participated in a 152 hour internship with United Way through her minor in Social Welfare.

Heather plans to obtain a Master's degree in Social Work. She intends to pursue a career in the not-for-profit sector where she can make a positive impact on the lives of families.