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ORIGINAL PAPER

The Influences of Religious Attitudes on Volunteering

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Abstract Religiosity has long been known to promote volunteering in the US and elsewhere. Despite the growing body of research examining religious correlates of volunteering, however, few studies have focused on whether and how religious attitudes affect volunteering. With data from the Midlife Development in the United States (MIDUS II), 2004–2006, we examine the influences of religious attitudes, namely, the religiously based feelings of exclusiveness and inclusiveness, and openness to other religious faiths, on volunteering. We find that while religious exclusiveness significantly promotes volunteering only in religious areas, religious inclusiveness promotes both religious and secular volunteering. Moreover, those who are open to other religious faiths are more likely to engage in both types of volunteer work. Implications of these findings are discussed for future research linking religious attitudes to volunteering.

Résumé Aux États-Unis et ailleurs, la religiosité est depuis longtemps connue pour favoriser le bénévolat. Malgré le nombre croissant d'études portant sur les corrélats religieux du bénévolat, rares sont celles qui s'interrogent sur la façon dont les postures religieuses peuvent retentir sur le bénévolat. À partir de données provenant de la base Midlife Development in the United States (MIDUS II, 2004–2006), nous examinons l'influence des postures religieuses, à savoir les sentiments d'exclusivité et d'inclusivité religieuse ainsi que l'ouverture aux autres convictions religieuses, sur le bénévolat. Nous démontrons qu'alors que l'exclusivité religieuse ne promeut le bénévolat de manière significative que dans les milieux religieux, l'inclusivité religieuse favorise à la fois le bénévolat religieux et le bénévolat laïque. De plus, les personnes ouvertes aux autres convictions religieuses

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sont davantage susceptibles de s'engager dans les deux types d'activités bénévoles. Nous envisageons enfin ce qu'impliquent ces conclusions, en vue de recherches futures sur le sujet des liens existant entre attitudes d'ordre religieux et bénévolat.

Zusammenfassung In den USA und anderorts ist seit langem bekannt, dass Religiösität die Ausführung ehrenamtlicher Tätigkeiten fördert. Zwar nehmen die Forschungsarbeiten zu der Wechselbeziehung zwischen Religiösität und ehrenamtlichen Tätigkeiten zu, doch konzentrierten sich bislang nur wenige Studien darauf, ob und wie sich religiöse Einstellungen auf ehrenamtliche Tätigkeiten auswirken. Anhand der erhobenen Daten aus der in den USA von 2004 bis 2006 durchgeführten Befragung „Midlife Development in the United States (MIDUS II)" untersuchen wir, inwieweit religiöse Einstellungen, insbesondere die religiös basierten Gefühle von Exklusivität und Inklusivität, und die Offenheit gegenüber anderen Glauben Einfluss auf ehrenamtliche Tätigkeiten nehmen. Wir stellen fest, dass religiöse Exklusivität ehrenamtliche Tätigkeiten ausschließlich in religiösen Bereichen besonders fördert, während religiöse Inklusivität sowohl religiöse als auch nicht religiöse ehrenamtliche Tätigkeiten fördert. Weiterhin sind Personen, die sich anderen religiösen Glauben gegenüber offen zeigen, eher dazu geneigt, in beiden Bereichen ehrenamtlich tätig zu sein. Die Schlussfolgerungen dieser Ergebnisse werden für zukünftige Forschungsarbeiten zu der Beziehung zwischen religiösen Einstellungen und ehrenamtlichen Tätigkeiten erörtert.

Resumen Siempre se ha sabido que la religión contribuye a fomentar el voluntariado, tanto en EE.UU. como en cualquier otro país. Pese a la gran cantidad de estudios realizados para analizar la relación entre religión y voluntariado, pocos se han centrado en averiguar si la actitud religiosa afecta al voluntariado y cómo. Con datos de *Midlife Development in the United States* (MIDUS II), 2004–2006, analizamos la influencia de la actitud religiosa, es decir, el sentimiento, con base religiosa, de inclusión y exclusión y de apertura a otras creencias sobre el voluntariado. Hemos descubierto que, aunque es cierto que la exclusividad religiosa sólo fomenta notablemente el voluntariado en lugares religiosos, la inclusión religiosa fomenta tanto el voluntariado secular como el religioso. Es más, aquellos que están abiertos a otras creencias religiosas presentan más propensión a comprometerse en ambos tipos de trabajo voluntario. Se debaten las implicaciones de estos hallazgos para futuras investigaciones sobre la relación entre la actitud religiosa y el voluntariado.

Keywords Volunteering · Religious exclusiveness and inclusiveness · Religious openness to other faiths

At a time of major cutbacks in public expenditure on education, health and other social services, volunteers play an ever more important role in the lives of many in our community. Religiosity has long been recognized as a major predictor of the likelihood or level of volunteering in the US (Jackson et al. 1995; Park and Smith 2000; Wuthnow 1991, 1999) and elsewhere (Berger 2006; Bekkers and Schuyt

2008; Yeung 2004). Earlier research tended to find a positive link between frequent religious service attendance and volunteering (Wilson 2000; Wuthnow 1991, 1999), but more recent studies have suggested that other aspects of religiosity, such as private prayer (Lam 2002; Loveland et al. 2005) and involvement in other religious activities (e.g., committee work at church) (Driskell et al. 2008; Park and Smith 2000), equally well or better explain volunteering.[1] Moreover, denominational affiliation may influence volunteering decisions directly or it may modify how religious practice affects volunteering (Driskell, et al. 2008; Park and Smith 2000; Uslaner 2002; Wilson and Janoski 1995; Wuthnow 1999).

Despite the recent attempts by scholars of volunteering behavior to take into account various aspects of religiosity, there is still relatively limited research that links religious attitudes directly to volunteering decisions. With data from the Midlife Development in the United States (MIDUS II), 2004–2006, we examine the effects of religious attitudes, namely, the religiously based feelings of exclusiveness and inclusiveness, and openness to other religious faiths, on volunteering in religious and secular areas. We address the multidimensional constructs of religious exclusiveness and inclusiveness, respectively, by measuring each as a latent variable with multiple indicators.

The Effects of Religious Attitudes on Volunteering

Following previous research (e.g., Gunnoe and Moore 2002; Kwon 2003), we define religiosity broadly as "the practice of being religious" (Gunnoe and Moore 2002, p. 613). This practice ranges from praying, meditating, reading religious texts, and attending religious services, to using religion to reflect and form attitudes on everyday concerns. While considering multiple variables on religiosity, this study focuses on religious attitudes, or more specifically, the religiously-based feelings of exclusiveness and inclusiveness, and openness to other religious teachings.

The Influence of the Religious Exclusiveness

Religious organizations are often highly effective in bringing people together to become active volunteers. As mentioned earlier, religious participation has been found to significantly promote volunteering. By actively participating in religious groups, individual members can develop the social networks and skills (e.g., writing letters, designing and preparing flyers, scheduling meetings, phoning, etc.) that are transferable and useful for volunteer work (Park and Smith 2000; Verba et al. 1995; Wilson and Musick 1997, 1999; Wuthnow 1999). However, evidence is mixed on whether those who are active in religious organizations are also more active in volunteer work outside of their religious communities (Wilson and Janoski 1995).

[1] The studies cited here focus on either the level of volunteering or the number of voluntary association membership types.

Social groups, including religious groups, are made up of people sharing a way of life or a worldview. As such, they provide "a system of orientation for *self-reference* (italic original)" (Tajfel and Turner 1986, p. 16), allowing members to define their place in society in comparison with members of other relevant groups. To the extent to which members of a group strive to achieve or maintain high status, the group is in a constant competition with its rival groups. Social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner 1979, 1986) suggests that social groups attempt to positively distinguish themselves from other relevant groups in various ways, depending on how they see the nature of intergroup relations. Tajfel and Turner (1986) argue that when the group perceives itself to be legitimately superior, its members tend to react in a discriminatory or exclusive fashion to any attempt by members of other groups to change the intergroup status quo. A relevant example is in the teachings of evangelical churches that emphasize the autonomy, or separation, of the local congregation from "the [outside] world" (Wuthnow 1999). Wuthnow argues that this isolationist stance contributed to "the ambiguities of evangelical civic engagement" (Wuthnow 1999, p. 359).

Being part of a close-knit religious network can thus make individuals more likely to perceive those outside their network as alien and hard to reach out to. Uslaner (2001) notes the tendencies of particularized trusters, i.e., those who trust only their own kind, to see "religious others" as a threat to their way of life and shun them. Their skeptical or negative views of religious others are likely to be reflected in their preferences to keep to themselves within their religious community. The Midlife Development in the United States (MIDUS II), the source of data for this study, suggests that those who say they are part of religious community or congregation are also more likely to identify with being a member of their own religious group, favor people of the same religion over others, and find it important to marry within the religion.

These inward-looking attitudes, evoked by shared religious beliefs, values, and practices, can thus generate the feelings of exclusiveness, or religiocentric attitudes, which may in turn downplay individuals' concerns for others outside their own religious circles. The exclusivists see conversion and prosetylization as primary functions of encounters with religious others (Keaten and Soukup 2009), and thus, they may be more likely to act on their concern for others by first co-opting them. By extension, it is hypothesized that religious exclusiveness may facilitate volunteering in one's own religious community, while they may have little effect on, or even discourage, volunteer work in a broader context (Wuthnow 1999).

Certainly, one may instead argue that individuals may be more likely to do charity work if they are part of a close-knit faith group where there is the pressure to conform to the norm of helping those in need. In their comparative cross-national study of charitable donation involving seven European countries, Reitsma et al. (2006) had expected to find support for this argument, but to their surprise, found the opposite for all countries examined: The more friends with similar religious views you have, the *less* likely you are to engage in charitable behavior. (The authors of this study speculated that their unexpected finding could be due to the bystander effect, i.e., our tendency not to help a person in need when there are many others around.)

The Influence of the Religious Inclusiveness

Formal volunteering often compels us to break out of our comfort zones and provide assistance to those who are in many ways (economically, culturally, religiously, etc.) different from us. Indeed, it has been suggested that generalized trust, i.e., trust that we have in those who are different from us (Yamagishi and Yamagishi 1994), significantly promotes volunteering (Uslaner 2001, Wang and Graddy 2008; cf. Wuthnow 1998a). We, as volunteers, are thus challenged to be inclusive, i.e., to be tolerant of strangers, to be open about differences, and to be willing to try out new ideas to solve problems at hand.

Various religions emphasize the responsibility of helping helpless others (Hodgkinson and Weitzman 1990; Wilson and Musick 1997; Wuthnow 1991, 1994, 1999). Many people volunteer, though in different ways, inspired by their religious faiths to serve the needy (Wuthnow 1994). In the religious community, volunteering is often more highly valued than donation perhaps because it better allows individuals to dramatize that they are living up to their religious ideals (Wuthnow 1994).

Batson et al. (2003) empirically tested "perhaps the most universal religious prescription for morality" (p. 1191): "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." They argue and find support for the notion that morality is promoted by "perspective taking" where you mentally place yourself in the other's situation. Specifically, their evidence suggests that as far as dealing with someone (or some group) less fortunate is concerned, perspective taking allows us to turn away from our self-interests, focus on the interests of another person or group, and engage in charitable behavior. The "empathy-induced altruistic motivation" (Batson et al. 2002, p. 436) generated by perspective taking is unlikely to be directed toward just any person or group, however. We tend to be more empathetic for people who are "similar to us, to whom we are emotionally attached, for whom we feel responsible, or whose perspective we adopt" (Batson et al. 2002, p. 436). Nevertheless, the potential is there for empathetic feelings to promote civic attitudes and behavior in the broader society. There is evidence that empathetic feelings developed even just for one member of a stigmatized group (e.g., people with AIDS and the homeless) can evolve into more positive attitudes toward the group as a whole (Batson et al. 1997).

To our knowledge, limited research exists that examines how volunteering is affected by the religious feelings of inclusiveness toward others. The closest example is Lam's (2002) study, which, however, finds no evidence that support for the church's role in advocating social justice (vs. personal spirituality) facilitates secular volunteering. Meanwhile, in their study of data from the Netherlands, Bekkers and Schuyt (2008) find altruism to significantly promote volunteering, especially in secular areas. The important role altruism plays in mediating the influence of denominational affiliation on volunteering is also confirmed in a Canadian study (Berger 2006).

While most religious beliefs are similar in stressing the responsibility of caring for others, they may differ in the specifics of "which others" to reach out to, e.g., those who come to the church seeking help vs. those outside the church who are

needy (Wuthnow 1999). Individuals who apply their religious beliefs to empathize with others who are different from themselves in various ways (e.g., religious beliefs, political views, social class) may be more likely to thrive as active volunteers in secular as well as religious fields. In this study, we expect that the level of religious inclusiveness is likely to vary among those with similar levels of religious activities, and that the feelings of religious inclusiveness will positively influence volunteering above and beyond the effects of behavioral religiosity.

Denominational Variation in Attitudes Toward Religious Others

Limited research exists that directly examines how the religious feelings of exclusiveness and inclusiveness affect volunteering. However, some studies have noted significant denominational variation in the level of (secular) volunteering and have attributed this variation to differences in attitudes toward religious others.

It has been noted that while liberal Protestant denominations encourage civic engagement and volunteerism in the larger community, conservative denominations often attempt to limit volunteer activities to those within their faith communities, or discourage them altogether (Uslaner 2002; Wilson and Janoski 1995; Wuthnow 1999; but see also Becker and Dhingra 2001). Similarly, Wuthnow (1999) noted the ability of mainline Protestant churches to unite people from different regions and demographics reflected in their high level of volunteering in secular areas. After controlling for religious participation and demographic variables, Driskell et al. (2008) find Evangelical Protestants to volunteer less compared with those with other religious traditions. Park and Smith (2000), in their study of churchgoing Protestants, find higher levels of general community volunteering among Evangelicals (or "Charismatic Christians"), although this denominational difference disappears when the authors limit their focus to volunteering through a non-church organization.[2]

Evidence on the level of volunteer work among Catholics has been mixed. Catholics may be the least likely to take part in volunteer activities because the Catholic leadership has historically seen civic engagement as a threat to its own authority and thus discouraged it (Putnam 1993, Uslaner 2002; also see Welch et al. 2007). Indeed, Wuthnow (1991, see endnote 11 on p. 322) finds that Catholics volunteer less than Protestants. A similar result is found in Lam's study (2002). Wuthnow (1999, p. 351) finds the positive effect of church attendance on secular volunteering to be smaller for Catholics than mainline Protestants, and larger when compared with evangelical Protestants. Meanwhile, Driskell et al. (2008) find, that net of religious participation and demographic variables, Catholics are civically engaged significantly more than "religious non-affiliates," but this distinctiveness disappears when they limit their focus to volunteering. In their Dutch study, Bekkers and Schuyt (2008) find that Catholics are one of the most active religious groups in secular volunteering. Interestingly, Ruiter and De Graaf (2006), in their cross-national study involving 53 countries, find that when Catholics volunteer for religious organizations,

[2] Uslaner 2002 finds fundamentalists in the US spend significantly more time on secular volunteering. His study is not easily comparable to Driskell et al. (2008) or Park and Smith (2000) as it excludes a control for religious participation.

they are, compared to Protestants, more likely to do nonreligious volunteer work as well, but they find no direct effect of religious denomination.

The effect of religious denomination on volunteering is not our primary focus. While denominational affiliation is likely to shape individuals' world views and moral standards, this does not mean individuals members completely agree with denominational teachings (Lam 2002). We are interested in assessing the effects of the religious feelings of exclusiveness and inclusiveness above and beyond those of other religion variables, including denominational affiliation. We also expect that denominational variation will become more pronounced when the attitudinal religiosity variables are excluded from the analysis.

Openness to Other Religious Faiths and Volunteering

Thus far, we have been concerned with how volunteering is affected by religious exclusiveness and inclusiveness, assuming that religious boundaries are more or less clear-cut. We now turn to the question of how volunteering decisions are influenced by individuals' attitudes toward exploring other religious beliefs and possibly changing (or reshaping) their faiths. This question is highly relevant today, in what has been described as the post-denominational era, as many individuals take what they agree with from different religious traditions and create their own religion "like a patchwork quilt" (Wuthnow 1998b, p. 2).

In their experimental study with 60 introductory psychology students at the University of Kansas, Batson et al. (2008) found that subjects scoring high on quest religion, defined as "religious open-mindedness viewing religious doubts as positive, and readiness to face existential questions without reducing their complexity" (p. 143) were just as likely to help someone with a fundamentalist view, when it was clear to them that the help would not promote religious closed-mindedness. While the design of the study consisting of a small sample of psychology undergraduates makes it difficult to generalize their findings to a broader context, their study nevertheless illuminates how religious open-mindedness can allow individuals to act on their compassion in a universal or non-discriminatory manner.

To the extent volunteering challenges us to step out of our comfort zones, openness to other, unfamiliar religious teachings might help us reach out to those in need no matter what their religious backgrounds. This religious open-mindedness may stem from disillusionment with a current religious affiliation, in terms of the social connections as well as moral teachings it provides (Sherkat and Wilson 1995), which in turn could promote volunteering in a way to fill the social vacuum left by the current religious affiliation. Moreover, as churches of different denominations increasingly form alliances amongst themselves to deal with budgetary and membership pressures, there are more opportunities for individual church members to explore an unfamiliar denomination even while participating in their own church activities.

Given that switching religious affiliations has long been a common phenomenon in the US (Newport 1979; Wuthnow 1988), a significant number, if not the majority, of Americans are likely to be quite open about exploring other religious traditions. Approximately, one-third of MIDUS respondents said it is good to explore many

different religious or spiritual teachings. Somewhat surprisingly, limited attention has been paid to the influence of openness to other religions on volunteering in the US or elsewhere. One exception, a Finish study by Yeung (2004), considers the effect of the value placed on exploration of several religions, but found no evidence that this type of religious openness differentiates the pattern of volunteering. Yet, Finland has an extremely low rate of religious conversion (Barro et al. 2010), and thus openness to other faiths may not vary enough among Finns to matter in explaining their volunteering decisions. We expect that openness to other faiths has a more distinct positive influence on both religious and secular volunteering in the US. Just as the attitude toward religious others is likely to vary by religious denomination, so is the attitude toward other religions. For instance, based on the MIDUS data, liberal Protestants (56%) are most likely, and conservative Protestants (28%) are least likely, to believe it is good to explore other religions. Our question then is whether openness to other religious teachings promotes volunteering in religious and/or secular fields, net of denominational affiliation and other religion variables.

Methods

Data and Sample

Data for this study come from the main sample of the Midlife Development in the United States (MIDUS II), 2004–2006. The MIDUS survey was first administered in 1995–1996 by phone and mail to a sample of "non-institutionalized, English-speaking adults aged 25–74, selected from working telephone banks in the coterminous United States" (Research Network on Successful Midlife Development 1999, p. 1). The first wave of MIDUS (MIDUS I) had the estimated overall response rate of 61% (Research Network on Successful Midlife Development 1999).[3] Of the original 3,034 individuals from whom data were obtained both by phone and mail for MIDUS I, 1805 were contacted and provided responses 10 years later. It should be noted that the condition for inclusion (i.e., participation in both the phone and mail surveys) limits the representativeness of the sample.

MIDUS includes multiple-item questions on time spent on formal volunteering. Equally important, it asks a variety of questions about respondents' religious behaviors and attitudes that accommodate the broad definition of religiosity used in this study. While both waves of the MIDUS survey include extensive information on respondents' religious attitudes, the items necessary to measure religious inclusiveness are only available in MIDUS II. We thus primarily draw on MIDUS II. After deleting cases with missing data, the final sample included 1,612 respondents.

We compared the respondents who participated in both waves of MIDUS and those who dropped out after the first wave on answers to the questions from MIDUS I that are identical or similar to the ones from MIDUS II that we use in our main

[3] It is not possible to calculate an exact response rate for MIDUS (Research Network on Successful Midlife Development 1999).

analysis.[4] This comparison suggested that the a higher proportion of respondents who remained in the sample at Wave II engaged in volunteering than those lost to follow-up, although the intergroup difference in hours volunteered is statistically insignificant. Means of some of the independent variables also significantly differ between the two groups. The remaining sample has higher means on religious attendance and education. Also, this sample has a higher (lower) proportion of liberal (conservative) Protestants, women (men), and married (never married) persons. The average age at Wave I is significantly older among those who remained. We also ran a probit regression and found that women are more likely to remain in the survey, and so are those who are married (relative to divorced, widowed, or never married persons), older, and more educated. None of the religion variables reached statistical significance at the 5% level, however. This analysis showed that about 96% (pseudo R^2 of 0.0404) of the attrition was random with respect to the model. (Results of the attrition analysis are not tabled.)[5] Because of the possibility of attrition-related bias, our results should be taken with caution. Specifically, the selectivity of the second wave sample is likely to have constrained the effects of religious attendance, age, marital status and education.

Outcome Variables

MIDUS respondents were asked, on average, about how many hours per month they spend doing formal volunteer work for (a) a hospital, nursing home, or other health facility, (b) a school or other youth-oriented facility, (c) a political organization or cause, and (d) any other organization, cause, or charity. Unfortunately, the MIDUS does not allow us to explicitly distinguish between religious and secular volunteering, and we must resort to proxies to make this distinction. Respondents who selected the category "any other organization…" as their volunteering site are more likely to have engaged in religious volunteering. Preliminary analysis suggested that volunteering for "any other organization, cause or charity" is positively and significantly associated with religious participation to a greater extent than either volunteering for a health, education, or political organization. After some adjustment, we aggregate responses across the first three categories, i.e., health care, educational, and political organizations, to measure secular volunteering, and use responses for the final category "any other organization…" to approximate religious volunteering.[6] A score of one was assigned for those who spend any time at all doing volunteer work of each type, and zero otherwise.

[4] Questions on how often the respondent prays or meditates and reads the Bible or other religious literature were not asked at Wave I. Religious inclusiveness cannot be measured with MIDUS I, either. Thus, the probit model was run without these variables.

[5] We also estimated the identical model with data from both waves by excluding the frequencies of praying and reading religious literature and the feelings of religious inclusiveness. Two sets of estimates turned out to be quite similar.

[6] The response of 1 (=yes) on volunteering for "any other organization, cause or charity" was recoded to the response of 0 (=no) for those who reported that they never engaged in activities, other than service attendance, organized by religious groups (e.g., dinners and volunteer work). We reasoned that if the respondent said s/he did not participate in any activity that was organized by a religious group, s/he could not have engaged in any religious volunteering.

Independent Variables

The level of religious exclusiveness, one of our key variables, is tapped with five questions. In these questions, respondents were asked on a 4-point scale ("very" to "not at all") (a) how much they prefer to be with other people who are the same religion as they are, (b) how closely they identify with being a member of their religious group, (c) how important they think it is for people of their religion to marry other people who are the same religion, (d) how important it is for them to celebrate or practice on religious holidays with their family, friends, or members of their religious community, and (e) how important it is for them—or would it be if they had children—to send their children for religious or spiritual services or instruction. The original codes were reversed so that higher scores indicate stronger religious exclusiveness.

We measure *religious inclusiveness* with seven questions. The respondents were asked on a 5-point scale ("strongly agree" to "strongly disagree") how much they agree or disagree with the statements: "Because of your religion or spirituality, do you try to a) be more sensitive to the feelings of others, b) be more receptive to new ideas, c) be a better listener, d) be more patient, e) be more tolerant of differences, f) be more aware of different ways to solve problems, and g) perceive things in new ways?" The original codes were reversed so that higher scores indicate stronger religious inclusiveness.

Our variables on religious exclusiveness and inclusiveness are measured as latent variables using the two parameter ordinal item response model, which we believe is an improvement over a conventional treatment where scores are simply averaged across items. With this model, we assume that a single unobserved continuous variable (e.g., religious exclusiveness) underlies observed responses, measured at the ordinal level, to a set of multiple items (e.g., "important to marry within the faith," "prefer to be around people of the same religion") to varying degrees while allowing residual variances to differ among items. We also allow different linear transformations of the thresholds for the observed variables. Finally, a normal distribution of the latent variable is assumed.[7]

Lest one wonder if the religious feelings of exclusiveness and inclusiveness can be opposite ends of a single continuum, it should be noted that the correlation between the two variables is 0.333, which is positive and low enough, suggesting that they are likely to be distinct constructs.

Openness to other religious faiths is a binary variable set to one if the respondent believes it is good to explore many different religious teachings and to zero otherwise.

Our behavioral religiosity variables are based on questions where the respondents were asked how often they pray or meditate, read the Bible or other religious literature, and attend religious services. These variables are coded on a 6-point scale, with higher scores indicating more frequent engagement in each type of

[7] Specifically, we estimate an ordered logit model, (or "proportional odds" model) by maximum likelihood with Stata's Generalized Linear Latent and Mixed Models (gllamm) (Rabe-Hesketh et al. 2004).

religious activities. The respondent's religious denominational preference is measured with five categories (1 = conservative Protestant (reference group), 2 = moderate Protestant, 3 = liberal Protestant, 4 = Catholic, 5 = residual category). The residual category includes those with non-Christian affiliations (e.g., Judaism) and those with no religious affiliation. In an additional analysis, we treated these categories separately, but this did not change the main findings.

A few controls are included because of their known or hypothesized links to volunteering and to at least one of the religion variables. First, gender, age, and its squared term are included. In the US, more women engage in volunteer work, although, on average, male volunteers spend slightly more time a year than female volunteers (Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) 2007). Meanwhile, the higher level of religiosity among women has been widely noted (Walter and Davie 1998). Both the levels of volunteering (Gallagher 1994; Wilson 2000) and religious commitment (Argue et al. 1999) may increase with age, except among the very old. Second, marital status (1 = married (reference group), 2 = separated/divorced, 3 = widowed, 4 = never married), and numbers of preschool aged (<6), school aged (6–12), and older (13–18) children are considered. Marriage has been associated with more active volunteering (e.g., Rossi 2001). Having children is also likely to promote parents' volunteering (Caputo 1997; Park and Smith 2000; Rossi 2001; Smith 1975; Wilson and Musick 1997), especially at school, while the effect of children is likely to depend on their age (Taniguchi 2006). These family factors are known to have similar influences on the level of religious commitment (Chaves 1991). Third, education, measured by years of formal schooling, is included as an SES variable. Individuals with higher socioeconomic status are more likely to volunteer (Staub 1995; Wilson and Musick 1997). Higher SES has also been associated with more frequent religious participation, at least among Whites (Beeghley et al. 1981). Education, to the extent to which it exposes us to individuals from various backgrounds, may also be positively associated with openness to other religious faiths.

Model

Consistent with earlier studies, the majority (53%) of respondents in our sample spend no time at all volunteering.[8] Moreover, many values on hours volunteered are clustered near 0. The censored and skewed nature of our data on time volunteered

[8] The proportion of volunteers in our sample (47%) is much higher than the proportion based on the 2006 Current Population Survey (27%) (BLS 2007). As mentioned earlier, respondents who remained for the follow-up survey are more likely than those who did not to have volunteered. Even then, the proportion of volunteers in the original sample of MIDUS is 40%, which is still quite high. The discrepancy may be partly due to the different ways the two surveys define adult population. The MIDUS defines adults as those in their mid 20s and older, whereas the CPS defines them those aged 16 and older. Thus, the MIDUS sample omits the age group 16–24, which according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor 2007), has the lowest volunteering rate. Also, despite their limitations, volunteering questions in the MIDUS are more inclusive than those asked in the CPS. For instance, unlike the MIDUS, the CPS fails to ask about volunteering in the areas of health and politics. Finally, not all of the CPS data are based on self-reports given that the CPS is a household survey (BLS 2007).

Table 1 Descriptive statistics for the key study variables by volunteering status

	Secular volunteering		Other volunteering (including religious)	
	Volunteers ($n = 514$) Mean (SD)	Non-volunteers ($n = 1098$) Mean (SD)	Volunteers ($n = 451$) Mean (SD)	Non-volunteers ($n = 1161$) Mean (SD)
Prayers [1, 6]	4.612 (1.813)	4.576 (1.743)	5.294 (1.284)	4.353*** (1.815)
Reading [1, 6]	3.101 (1.802)	2.865* (1.800)	3.886 (1.733)	2.623*** (1.711)
Attendance—services [1, 6]	3.040 (1.500)	2.681*** (1.448)	3.842 (1.178)	2.443*** (1.382)
Denominational affiliation (%)				
Conservative Protestant	24.2	28.6	28.8	26.8
Moderate Protestant	27.3	24.7	28.1	24.6
Liberal Protestant	8.7	5.5*	9.5	5.5**
Catholic	22.3	23.9	28.7	21.7**
Residual category	17.6	17.2	4.9	21.4***
Feelings of exclusiveness [−5.136, 4.287]	0.082 (2.425)	−0.152 (2.278)	1.284 (1.894)	−0.532*** (2.258)
Feelings of inclusiveness [−10.921, 6.183]	0.398 (3.006)	−0.145** (2.924)	0.913 (2.744)	−0.276*** (2.952)
Openness to other faiths (%)	42.7	35.4**	36.8	37.8

Note: Significance based on two-tailed t tests. * $P < 0.05$, ** $P < 0.01$, *** $P < 0.001$

makes the application of standard regressions problematic. In our preliminary analysis, we addressed this problem with the tobit model of volunteering while assigning the natural logarithms of actual hours volunteered for volunteers and zero for non-volunteers. We then estimated logit models for a comparison. Because results were very similar between the tobit and logit models, below we report the logit estimates that have the advantage of providing simpler interpretations.

Findings

Table 1 shows the weighted means or frequencies, standard deviations (for continuous variables), and ranges of our key predictors by volunteering status.[9] To reiterate, we rely on a proxy to approximate religious volunteering, and thus in the table this outcome variable is labeled as "other volunteering (including religious)." For the sake of simplicity, here we use the term religious volunteering. Between-group comparisons of means are made with the t tests, and those of frequencies are made with the χ^2 tests. Based on both religious and secular volunteering status, volunteers show higher behavioral religiosity than non-volunteers. Volunteers pray or meditate in private, read the Bible or other religious texts, and attend religious services more often than non-volunteers. These differences between volunteers and

[9] Sampling weight, B1PWGHT2 (gender × age × education), was used.

non-volunteers are for the most part significant. One exception is the difference in the frequency of private prayers between those who do and do not volunteer in secular areas. Among liberal Protestants, the proportions of volunteers in religious and secular areas are significantly higher compared to the proportions of non-volunteers in the respective areas. Among Catholics, the proportion of those who engage in religious volunteering is significantly higher than the proportion of those who do not.

Either by religious or secular volunteering status, volunteers on average score higher than non-volunteers on the levels of religious exclusiveness and inclusiveness. These differences are generally significant with the exception of the difference in religious exclusiveness by secular volunteering status. Secular volunteers are significantly more likely than others to be open to exploring other religious faiths, while the proportion of those who are open to other religions does not vary by religious volunteering status.

Table 2 shows summary statistics on volunteering and religiosity variables by religious denomination. Between-group comparisons of means are made using the t-tests, and those of frequencies are made with the χ^2 tests. In both religious and secular fields, significantly higher proportions of liberal Protestants than conservative Protestants volunteer. Also, the proportion of participation in secular volunteering is significantly higher among liberal Protestants than among Catholics. Clearly, conservative Protestants score significantly higher than any other denominational group on all measures of behavioral religiosity. Conservative Protestants on average also have significantly stronger religious feelings not only of exclusiveness but of inclusiveness. Meanwhile, conservative (liberal) Protestants are least (most) open to exploring other religious faiths. Moderate Protestants are significantly less likely than liberal Protestants to be open to other religions, but otherwise these groups are similar. In terms of behavioral religiosity, the difference between moderate Protestants and Catholics is not clear-cut. While moderate Protestants score significantly lower on the frequencies of private prayers and service attendance, they spend significantly more time reading the Bible. In terms of attitudinal religiosity, compared to Catholics, moderate Protestants score significantly lower on religious exclusiveness, and they are also significantly more open to exploring other religions. Liberal Protestants score significantly lower than Catholics on the frequency of private prayers and the level of religious exclusiveness.

To reiterate, our variables on religious exclusiveness and inclusiveness are measured as latent variables. Table 3 presents parameter estimates for these variables. For each variable, a strong underlying dimension is indicated by the large z-statistic for the estimated variance of the latent construct. The factor loadings for each variable suggest that all items considered substantially contribute to the measurement of the latent construct.[10]

[10] A high factor loading indicates that an item is a good measure of the latent variable. Specifically, the factor loading larger than one indicates that the item is more strongly associated with the latent variable than the referent. The factor loading close to zero indicates that the item does not measure the latent variable.

Table 2 Descriptive statistics for the religiosity variables by denomination

	Conservative ($n = 389$) Mean (SD)	Moderate ($n = 420$) Mean (SD)	Liberal ($n = 128$) Mean (SD)	Catholic ($n = 390$) Mean (SD)	Other ($n = 285$) Mean (SD)
Volunteering variables					
Other volunteering (including religious) (%)	26.2	27.4	36.4[b]	30.4	7.1[d,g,i,j]
Secular volunteering (%)	26.8	32.4	40.7[b]	28.7 [h]	30.7
Religion variables					
Prayers	5.373 (1.093)	4.668[a] (1.614)	4.428[b] (1.948)	4.944[c,f,h] (1.531)	2.808[d,g,i,j] (1.898)
Reading	4.165 (1.557)	2.949[a] (1.768)	2.708[b] (1.927)	2.635[c,f] (1.580)	1.477[d,g,i,j] (0.975)
Attendance—services	3.402 (1.352)	2.778[a] (1.399)	2.872[b] (1.506)	3.078[c,f] (1.380)	1.423[d,g,i,j] (0.844)
Feelings of exclusiveness	1.219 (1.868)	−0.019[a] (1.962)	−0.384[b] (2.344)	0.250[c,h] (1.834)	−2.556[d,g,i,j] (2.115)
Feelings of inclusiveness	0.795 (2.596)	−0.103[a] (2.452)	−0.241[b] (3.161)	0.179[c] (2.925)	−1.141[d,g,i,j] (3.681)
Openness to other faiths (%)	28.3	39.5[a]	55.5[b,e]	31.6[f,h]	50.8[d,g,j]

[a] Significant difference between conservative and moderate Protestants

[b] Significant difference between conservative and liberal Protestants

[c] Significant difference between conservative Protestants and Catholics

[d] Significant difference between conservative Protestants and "Other"

[e] Significant difference between moderate and liberal Protestants

[f] Significant difference between moderate Protestants and Catholics

[g] Significant difference between moderate Protestants and "Other"

[h] Significant difference between liberal Protestants and Catholics

[i] Significant difference between liberal Protestants and "Other"

[j] Significant difference between Catholics and "Other"

Table 4 presents the logit models of religious and secular volunteering. For a comparison, we also include the model of global volunteering (i.e., with no distinction of religious and secular volunteering) under the last column. Inconsistent with past research (Lam 2002; Loveland et al. 2005), we find no significant influence of private prayers and meditations. The discrepancy is likely to be due to differences in model specifications. For instance, Lam (2002) does not include religious attendance when she examines the effect of prayers on volunteering. (In our additional analysis, we ran our models without the attendance variable, and found the effect of private prayers/meditations turn significant and positive, regardless of the type of volunteering considered.) The frequency of reading the Bible or other religious literature has no influence, either. Meanwhile, consistent with previous research (e.g., Wilson 2000; Wuthnow 1991, 1999), we find that more

Table 3 Latent scores for items used to construct variables on religious attitudes

	No. of categories	Loading	SE
The religious feelings of exclusiveness			
(a) How much do you prefer to be with other people who are the same religion as you?	4	1 (fixed)	
(b) How closely do you identify with being a member of your religious group?		1.457	(0.073)
(c) How important do you think it is for people of your religion to marry other people who are in the same religion?	4	0.869	(0.034)
(d) How important is it for you to celebrate or practice on religious holidays with your family, friends, or members of your religious community?	4	0.952	(0.042)
(e) How important is it for you—or would it be if you had children now—to send your children for religious or spiritual services or instruction?	4	0.885	(0.040)
Latent variable variance	6.194 (0.395), $z = 15.681$		
Reliability coefficient	0.862		
The religious feelings of inclusiveness			
Because of your religion or spirituality, do you try to…?			
(a) be more sensitive to the feelings of others	5	1 (fixed)	
(b) be more receptive to new ideas	5	0.819	(0.031)
(c) be a better listener	5	1.531	(0.066)
(d) be more patient	5	1.359	(0.055)
(e) be more tolerant of differences	5	0.816	(0.031)
(f) be more aware of different ways to solve problems.	5	0.993	(0.040)
(g) perceive things in new ways.	5	0.901	(0.036)
Latent variable variance	10.398 (0.621), $z = 16.744$		
Reliability coefficient	0.934		

Note: We estimated the variance of the latent variable while constraining the first factor loading to 1

frequent religious attendance significantly promotes volunteer work not only in religious fields, but also (though to a lesser extent) in secular fields.

The likelihood of volunteering significantly varies by denominational affiliation. Catholics are significantly less likely than liberal Protestants or those in the residual category to engage in secular volunteering. (The significance of these intergroup differences is not tabled.) Compared to conservative Protestants, those in every other denominational category (except for the residual category), are significantly more likely to do religious volunteer work. Conversely, compared to liberal Protestants, those in every other denominational category are significantly less likely to do religious volunteer work. (The significance of the difference in the coefficients between liberal and moderate Protestants, between liberal Protestants and Catholics, or between liberal Protestants and those in the residual category is not shown in the table.) As was expected, the denominational variation becomes more pronounced when the variables on religious attitudes are excluded from the analysis (not shown). Our results of the relatively low level of volunteering among

conservative Protestants are consistent with Driskell et al. (2008), while our results of the low level of volunteering among Catholics are consistent with Wuthnow (1991) and Lam (2002).

As we predicted, religious exclusiveness has a significant positive influence on volunteering only in religious areas. Meanwhile, religious inclusiveness is significantly and positively associated with both religious and secular volunteering, consistent with our hypothesis. Also as expected, those who are open to exploring other religious faiths are significantly more likely to volunteer in both of the areas ($P < 0.01$). Had we used only a global measure of volunteering, i.e., without distinguishing religious and secular volunteering, no significant influence of religious exclusiveness would have been revealed (see the last column of Table 4).

Table 4 Logit models predicting secular versus other (including religious) volunteering ($n = 1612$)

	Secular volunteering	Other volunteering (including religious)	Volunteering
Religion variables			
Prayers	−0.063 (0.045)	0.027 (0.059)	−0.085† (0.044)
Reading	−0.028 (0.052)	0.057 (0.056)	−0.006 (0.051)
Attendance—services	0.274*** (0.067)	0.571*** (0.076)	0.467*** (0.067)
Denominational affiliation			
Conservative Protestant (referent)	–	–	–
Moderate	0.222 (0.174)	0.426* (0.192)	0.267 (0.171)
Liberal	0.420† (0.242)	0.932** (0.271)	0.713** (0.253)
Catholic	−0.102 (0.185)	0.388* (0.197)	0.011 (0.178)
Residual category	0.333 (0.229)	0.045 (0.311)	0.454* (0.225)
Feelings of exclusiveness	−0.015 (0.041)	0.179*** (0.049)	0.049 (0.041)
Feelings of inclusiveness	0.046* (0.021)	0.055* (0.026)	0.070** (0.021)
Openness to other faiths	0.380** (0.124)	0.479** (0.146)	0.546*** (0.123)
Other variables			
Female	0.418** (0.125)	−0.069 (0.144)	0.223† (0.122)
Age	0.096* (0.047)	0.161** (0.053)	0.180*** (0.045)
Age squared	−0.001* (0.000)	−0.001** (0.000)	−0.001*** (0.000)
Marital status			
Married (referent)	–	–	–
Divorced/separated	−0.191 (0.162)	−1.076*** (0.219)	−0.548** (0.160)
Widowed	−0.427† (0.249)	−0.219 (0.253)	−0.256 (0.224)
Never married	0.234 (0.228)	−0.052 (0.275)	0.355 (0.232)
Young children (<6 years)	−0.106 (0.179)	−0.376† (0.225)	−0.108 (0.174)
School-aged children (6–12 years)	0.894*** (0.135)	0.062 (0.159)	0.834*** (0.143)
Older children (13–18 years)	0.496*** (0.106)	0.225† (0.124)	0.488*** (0.113)
Years of formal schooling	0.154*** (0.024)	0.202*** (0.028)	0.220*** (0.024)
−2*Log likelihood	1812.03	1426.85	1866.01
LR $\chi^2(20)$	206.22	484.15	364.52

Note: † $P < 0.1$, * $P < 0.05$, ** $P < 0.01$, *** $P < 0.001$ two tailed

On the other hand, the effects of religious inclusiveness and openness to other faiths become more pronounced when the global measure of volunteering is used (see the last column of Table 4).

For the most part, our control variables have expected effects. One unexpected finding is the influence of marital status on volunteering. While we expected that marriage is positively associated with volunteering in general, our results suggest that those who are married are significantly more likely to volunteer in religious areas only compared to those who are divorced/separated. No comparable pattern exists for secular volunteering. The divorced are also significantly less likely to engage in religious volunteering compared with the widowed or the never married (the statistical significance of each of these differences is not shown in the table). For secular volunteering, the only significant difference (not shown) is between the widowed and the never married. The widowed are significantly less likely than the never married to volunteer.

Discussion

Religiosity has long been recognized as a significant facilitator of volunteering in the US and elsewhere. As research on the religiosity-volunteering link has evolved, it has become clear that aspects of religious life other than attending services equally well or better explain commitment to volunteer work. Our study builds on this stream of research by focusing on how volunteering is influenced by religious exclusiveness and inclusiveness, and openness to other religious faiths. Prior research, for the most part, has addressed the issue indirectly by revealing significant denominational variation in the level of (secular) volunteering and speculatively attributing this variation to differences in attitudes toward religious others and/or other religions. Our attempt is to directly measure these religious attitudes and assess their effects on volunteering.

Our results about the effects of religious exclusiveness and inclusiveness on volunteering are as expected. On the one hand, those with a higher level of religious exclusiveness are more likely to engage in religious volunteering, while these feelings have no influence on secular volunteering. On the other hand, the level of religious inclusiveness is positively and significantly associated with both types of volunteer work. That a significant effect of religious exclusiveness emerges only when volunteering in religious fields is considered indicates the importance of specifying contexts in which volunteering takes place. Given our use of a proxy for religious volunteering, future research is necessary to more precisely distinguish between the religious and non-religious contexts of volunteer work.

Our finding that openness to other religious faiths significantly promotes not only religious but secular volunteering, above and beyond the effect of denominational affiliation, is in line with the broader literature linking volunteer work and social resources (see Wilson 2000, for a review). To the extent to which volunteering challenges us to step out of our familiar territory, openness to other, unfamiliar religious traditions might indeed help us reach out to those in need no matter what their religious backgrounds. As mentioned earlier, this openness could come from

dissatisfaction with a current religious affiliation, in terms of the social connections as well as moral teachings it provides, which in turn could promote volunteering in a way to cultivate social networks elsewhere.

Today, in the so-called post-denominational era, leaders of religious communities face the challenges of not only obtaining new members but retaining current members, an increasing number of whom are constantly "checking out" other religious faiths and willing to piece together parts of different teachings (Wuthnow 1988, 1998b). This type of openness can undermine the ability of traditional religious communities to secure volunteers for their own needs, while making interfaith communities more attractive sites for volunteering. A strong desire has been expressed on the part of most church members to engage in joint projects with other denominations (Wuthnow 1988). Indeed, inter-denominational alliance may well assist religious leadership to secure their volunteers. An alternative and opposite approach is for congregations to develop volunteer activities that are so unique and distinct that their members can find no similar experiences elsewhere, as is proposed by Becker and Dhingra (2001). Either way, the issue of competition with other organizations, both religious and secular, has to be taken seriously if congregations are to secure members' time and commitment for volunteer work.

This study has some limitations. As mentioned earlier, we draw data primarily from the second wave of the MIDUS data. The sample attrition rate is higher than ideal. While the sensitivity analysis suggested that the results from our models of volunteering are likely unaffected by the attrition in a serious manner, they should nevertheless be interpreted with caution. Moreover, the cross-sectional nature of the analysis limits our conclusions about causality. In this study, we focus on religious exclusiveness and inclusiveness as predictors of volunteer participation, but these religious attitudes can rather be consequences of volunteering. For instance, it is possible that as a result of gaining volunteer experience over time, individuals acquire increasingly inclusive religious attitudes. In an additional analysis, we replaced our original independent variables with the comparable ones drawn from the first wave to predict volunteering ten years later, and obtained similar results. However, not all covariates are available when we take advantage of the longitudinal nature of the MIDUS survey. Future research with better longitudinal data will need to address the problem associated with the contemporaneous measurement of independent and dependent variables if we are to explore the causal relationship between religious attitudes and volunteering decisions.

Clearly, this study's exclusive focus on the US limits generalizability of its findings. Comparative cross-national studies have suggested that the national religious context significantly matters in explaining individuals' volunteering decisions (Lam 2006; Ruiter and De Graaf 2006; Salamon and Sokolowski 2001). Ruiter and De Graaf (2006), for instance, find that volunteering is promoted not only by frequent religious attendance, but also just by living in a "devout" country. Moreover, the function of volunteer work varies across countries. Salamon and Sokolowski (2001) note that in countries with social democratic traditions where the state provides generous social welfare services, volunteer activities are largely to facilitate citizens to express their values or preferences, such as through "pursuit of artistic expression, preservation of cultural heritage or natural environment, political

mobilization and advocacy" (p. 15). By contrast, in countries with liberal traditions where the state only provides limited social services, volunteer activities are more likely to play a key role in responding to unmet social welfare service needs, i.e., helping the helpless. Our US-based study concerns how individuals' perceptions of "religious others" influence volunteering more in the latter than the former role. Therefore, findings from our study should be more relevant to countries with liberal welfare traditions. Yet the role of the voluntary sector in each society is not set in stone. Population aging is likely to impose strains on government funding of social services, which may in turn increase the service role of volunteering, regardless of the type of welfare regime (see Pekkanen and Tsujinaka (2008) for the case of Japan). Meanwhile, attitudes toward religious others are hardly irrelevant to the expressive role of volunteering. Today we live in an ethnically, culturally, and religiously diverse society, whether in Europe, North America, or elsewhere. Open-mindedness about religious others and other religions can significantly facilitate advocacy volunteering, for instance, in social justice for refugees and immigrants.

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