



LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

SOCIAL MAINTENANCE OF OPPRESSIVE STRUCTURES:  
RELIGION, CONSERVATISM, AND PARENTING

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To deny people their civil rights is to challenge their very humanity.

—Nelson Mandela

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CHAPTER I  
RELIGION'S CONFLUENCE WITH SOCIAL STRUCTURE

**Religious Belief and Prejudice**

The persistence of religious belief systems calls into question predictions that modern societies become progressively secular. Throughout history, religion has exhibited a remarkable measure of staying power; many new forms of religious expression have emerged over time, despite forces seeking to curtail their influence (Wenzel, 2009).

Somewhat troubling are religious belief systems that correlate with hostility toward out-groups (Beatty, Murphy, and Walter, 1984). In particular, individuals who are part of the LGBTQIA community (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual) are apt to receive disapproval in certain conservative religious denominations (Whitehead, 2010). Several months after the Supreme Court ruling on same-sex marriages in America, dissent remains amongst those who were originally opposed. More research is needed regarding the genesis and transmission of negative attitudes toward persecuted groups if we wish to gain a deeper comprehension of the shifting nature of oppression. Correlations exist between religious belief and prejudice, but *how* exactly does this relationship come about? Specifically, this study intends to explore the ways in which different forms of religious parenting serve as a vehicle for shaping personal attitudes about sexuality.

Throughout history, many groups have struggled to obtain legal rights and recognition. With the passing of marriage equality, the United States witnessed another gradual, yet massive transformation of its trenchant social norms. While formidable, social structures and the oppressive forces embedded within them are not permanent. Negotiations among individual social actors can hold societal structures in place, but they also can arouse conditions that produce large scale changes in perception and policy.

Georg Simmel (1950) emphasizes the connection between individual processes and the totality of societies in stating that "... it is *sociation* which synthesizes all human interests, contents, and processes into concrete units" (Wolff, p. 4). In other words, it is interaction between individuals or groups that establishes the structure of all social institutions. Similarly, in their writing on the social construction of reality, Berger and Luckmann (1966) expand on this, explaining that it is through interpersonal encounters that we fluidly and reflexively fashion and refashion societal norms.

In years prior to the national passing of marriage equality, a major cause affecting denial or support of the legislation was the imposition of personal belief by likeminded parties. But in the course of a few decades, there has been a huge shift in visibility of the issues, alongside an increase in positive opinions on the matter. This begs for an investigation of events between individuals that potentially influence the manufacture of such macro structural developments. But because there would be no sound method to readily confirm conjectures of which social events hold actual weight in the formation of social structures, it is not my present purpose to do so, more so than it is to explore one potential contributor.

The research provided here offers an examination of parental values from conservative religious denominations, and the impact they have on the value development of young individuals so exposed. The data examine how one's likelihood of identifying with sexual prejudices may differ depending on the religious character of their upbringing. Consequently, this study can only validly comment on the transmission of attitudes about sexuality within the microcosm of parent-child dynamics, but in doing so, hopes to help texture our understanding of how large scale societal changes come about, albeit in a speculative light.

### **Defining Religion and its Functions**

Even while having an established global presence, religion never quite performs the same part in two different societies. The magnitude and form of religion's engagement rest upon diffuse elements of a society's sociohistorical context which distinctly shape how individuals physically and psychically encounter religion. Beyer (2003) conducted case studies in five major countries to survey varying perspectives of religion. He found that, cross-nationally, religion is indeed an "operative" and socially "real" category, however the meaning and content is ambiguous and heavily contested (p. 184). Calculating with any certainty how religious forces will continue to evolve is anything but a simple endeavor. Although we can point to numerous instances of religious phenomena around the globe, it appears to be the general consensus among religion scholars that arriving at a clear, singular definition of what religion is, or does, is problematic (Beyer, 2003; Herbrechtsmeier, 2003; Lechner, 2003; Roberts and Yamane, 2011).

It is necessary that I provide this background on my topic so to highlight how religion's reality poses substantial complications for those of us interested in studying it. What is it that we are trying to make claims about? Researchers must be very careful to delineate a finite system to build their analysis around. But as Herbrechtsmeier (2003) cautions, "religion is always more than we can imagine... any attempt to define it is also an attempt to reduce it" (p. 109). Valid as his concern may be, a point of departure *must* be chosen if one intends on conducting research. In order to do research, we select a subset of perspectives to give special focus to while inescapably ignoring or excluding other nuances in the process. We bear in mind that this is but one expedition into a vast territory. Additional perspectives should be accepted as a meaningful opportunity to bring underlying dimensions of religion to view (Herbrechtsmeier, 2003, p. 109).

The way in which religion is framed in the present study illustrates facets of its functional capabilities. Specific religious content, built into parenting, can have a significant bearing on the mindsets of young individuals. Following Simmel once again, interactional opportunities form tangible social structures that have measurable consequences on human lives (Wolff, 1950). Being a key site of worldview manufacture, the interactions that take place within families may have a hand in the reproduction of oppressive mindsets.

There is a current shortage of evidence concerning the actual consequences of conservative parenting practices on the formation of attitudes in children. Conceivably, influences transmitted from parent to child function to suppress the development of alternate personality types, different skill sets, or interests. Pierre Bourdieu (1984)

explained the propensity for class, status, and other social characteristics to imprint a distinct worldview upon its members, producing certain dispositions, attitudes, and preferences. He coined this sum package as one's social habitus. Each of us inhabits a distinct habitus depending on our life experiences. Anything standing outside of one's habitus may confront them as strange, if not threatening and worthy of rejection. If some religious teachings involve persecution of outgroups, infusing those values into parenting could mean creating a powerfully influential environment for children, producing subtle microaggressions or more active forms of disapproval.

Despite having legitimate uses, functionally framed strategies of studying religion attract much criticism. Lechner (2003), for one, maintains that functional definitions tend to incorporate misleading prototheories, glossing over noteworthy details and questions. He posits that functional theories have a tendency not to account for the transforming nature of religious symbols and meanings (Lechner, 2003, p. 70).

Again, the intellectual path chosen for the present study in no way seeks to minimize elements of any religion. This path is undertaken with full awareness that there are a multitude of other possibilities that exist. That being said, this should also not imply that there is limited learning potential from pursuing questions of this design. Social research requires a sustained dialogue and adherence to a singular mode of operation limits our vision overall.

### **Conservative Theology: Fundamentalism and Biblical Literalism**

As demonstrated before, my use of the generalized word religion throughout the paper is merely out of convenience. It is evident that different religious groups have diverse methods of confronting situations. Nevertheless, the present goal is determining probable outcomes for personal belief and attitudes when a particular set of religious values characterize parenting.

Much like the definition of religion, conceptualizations of religious fundamentalism vary. Before proceeding, I will place some guardrails as to what types are involved here. The term fundamentalism originated in 1910 in a series of articles written by conservative Protestant Christian leaders in America. The purpose of the writings was to defend the relevance and inerrancy of biblical doctrines, as well as to attack the “call for reason” brought forth in the Enlightenment era (Shupe, 2009, p. 478). While the term has grown to reflect generally any ultra-conservative groups or movements, its patent lies with sectarian Protestant movements occurring in the U.S in the early 1900’s (Wenzel, 2009, p. 179). The fundamentalist movement was a mass call to action for believers to confront perceived threats against their way of life in the wake of rapid societal changes. American fundamentalists, “...who had once eschewed... political involvement in favor of personal piety... began calling for a ‘taking back’ of the public arena” (Shupe, 2009, p. 479). This was an effort to protect their vision of societal order by means of structuring life according to particular beliefs.

Also underneath the umbrella of conservative theology, closely related to, yet distinct from fundamentalism, is biblical literalism. Ogland and Bartkowski (2014) have

extensively explored the effects of conservative theology on the mindsets of individuals. They classified biblical literalists as individuals who use key verses in the Bible as directives for “godly standards” of human conduct. A literalist schema involves regarding the Bible as the essential, “...authoritative guide for all matters of faith and practice” and rules for personal living and social organization (Ogland and Bartkowski, 2014, pg. 7).

Historically, America has possessed an effervescent religious landscape. The growing pluralism conceivably would have given religious denominations with exclusionary principles serious trouble lasting outside of their private domains and in the public sphere. And yet on many levels, conservative values permeate U.S. institutions. Aside from gay marriage, conservatism has also been a reason for restrictions and lack of universality in policy concerning abortion and access to contraceptives among states. Beliefs that the Bible is inerrant and that it contains central guidance on all human problems are both linked to the divide in opinions on the above issues (Marsiglio and Shehan, 1993; Gay and Lynxwiler, 1999; Ogland and Verona, 2011). If religious belief is linked to shades in public opinion, how might conservative theology in parental teachings work to shape psychosocial dispositions in children? To borrow from Bourdieu once more, does the creation of a fundamentalist or literalist “habitus” via conservative religious parenting facilitate the incidence of prejudices in personal beliefs? And if this is apparent in individuals, can we begin to imagine how this might radiate outward to subtly inhibit momentum of progressive change on a structural level?



## CHAPTER II

### A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### **Foundational Religion-Prejudice Research**

Gordon Allport (1967) proposed that there may be two dimensions of religiosity; one's religious behavior either reflects an extrinsic or intrinsic orientation (Herek, 1987). Those with extrinsic orientations use religion for ulterior motives such as security, comfort, status, or social support (McFarland, 1989, p.325). Those with intrinsic orientations are said to engage religion as an end itself, rather than a means to an end. Allport's findings validated that extrinsics displayed a moderately strong and positive relationship with respect to racial prejudice, while their intrinsic counterparts were uncorrelated.

However influential his discoveries may be, the conception of religion as dual orientations leaves much to be answered. Studies like Allport's have primarily been concerned with *if* religion is at all related to prejudice under certain conditions. Answers as to *why* and *how* correlations exist have yet to be sufficiently answered in the current discussion. A certain structural component is what we ultimately must attempt to shed light on; the key apparatus that embeds prejudiced ideology into the social fabric, legitimates it, and invigorates it. Simply dismissing the phenomenon of prejudice as

irrational dispositions held by a decreasing number of individuals obscures the tangible realities of institutional discrimination. This is why an investigation of child rearing strategies among highly religious parents and non-religious parents is a worthwhile endeavor, seeing as it could reveal a root method through which prejudices are formed.

### **Intensity of Religiosity as a Predictor of Anti-Gay Attitudes**

In the decades following Allport's (1967) work, studies regularly used religious orientations as grounds for predicting other types of prejudice. Evidence shows that intrinsic orientations relate positively to prejudice against women and homosexual persons (McFarland, 1989, p. 326). Even though they were believed to be indiscriminately unprejudiced, studies found that intrinsics on average held more negative attitudes against the gay community than extrinsics did. These inconsistencies further question the efficacy of this set of categorizations and prompt us to revisit our comprehension of religious identities.

Herek (1987) offers a solution to this dilemma by suggesting intrinsic orientations do not reflect unequivocal acceptance of others, but instead tolerance toward specific groups accepted in contemporary Judeo-Christian teachings. Since the Bible can be interpreted as condemning homosexuality, conservative congregations may not be as likely to preach tolerance of homosexuals as they do for racial minorities. If parents are strong adherents to the teachings of their religion, and those teachings promote acceptance, they could be likely to deploy child rearing strategies that encourage the development of accepting attitudes in their children. But if religious teachings promote persecution of those who do not obey their beliefs, perhaps child rearing strategies then

play a role in imparting distinct prejudices to children. If parents do not identify with any kind of theological schema, then their values in parenting and their propensities to consciously or unconsciously cultivate specific mindsets in their children are likely to differ as well.

### **Religious Fundamentalism and Right-Wing Authoritarianism**

Hunsberger (1996) suggested that religious fundamentalism could explain away the problems found in the intrinsic/extrinsic distinction. According to Hunsberger, fundamentalism is the belief that there is a single religious philosophy which clearly lays out the essential truths about the relationship between humanity and God.

Fundamentalists believe that those who oppose these truths must be actively persecuted (Hill, 2010). Kirkpatrick (1993) agrees that fundamentalism "...could account entirely for the observed positive correlation between intrinsic religion and discriminatory attitudes toward gays and lesbians" (Kirkpatrick, 1993, p. 257). The fervent need to guard the truths of their religious doctrines may be what leads fundamentalists to discriminate against those with very different beliefs and behaviors from their own.

Parenting guided by a fundamentalist mission might actively structure household rules, values, conversations, and teachable moments with children as to reproduce this specific way of viewing the world. Parents have a crucial role in "social programming" and structuring a child's vision of the world and others in it. Children are by and large submissive to the control of their parents and may not have the capacity to resist some measure of internalization from these world shaping encounters. Parents' actions contribute immensely to habitus configuration. Even well-meaning parenting may

inadvertently inhibit our capabilities to engage, process, and feel comfortable with various social situations or unfamiliar concepts. The contents of each habitus can offer the skills to properly transcend certain barriers, but can also lend the tools for invigorating tensions.

Religious fundamentalism is cited as being strongly tied to right-wing authoritarian personalities (Wink, Dillon, and Prettyman, 2007). Much like fundamentalism, past studies have proposed right-wing authoritarianism to be a determinant of an individual's dispositions (Duck and Hunsberger, 2000). Several components of the typical authoritarian personality include conservatism, profuse respect for authority figures, and hostility toward those who violate the conservative norms they hold in high regard (Flammer, 2001). Authoritarians are characterized by strict, straight, and narrow world-views that are resistant to change.

Flammer (2001) points out that studies have presented relationships between authoritarianism, racist, sexist, and classist attitudes respectively. But quite contrary to expectations, Flammer goes on to say that concerning heterosexism, the relationship to authoritarianism is "not as evident" (p. 26). If authoritarianism was previously cited as "involving hostility and aggression toward a wide range of ethnic minority and other unconventional groups," it is reasonable to infer that this relationship will extend to homosexuals if not be exacerbated under that premise (Altemeyer, 1988, p. 629). It is equally probable that authoritarian religious parenting is a particularly powerful instrument when it comes to structuring childhood worldviews. If conservative religious parents also tend to value hierarchical obedience, freedom of belief and questioning of

authority could be behaviors that they intentionally eliminate in children, thus shielding them from developing alternative mindsets.

### **Attitude Crystallization**

The term “attitude crystallization,” coined by Marvin E. Olsen (1962), refers to the extent to which an individual’s attitudes remain consistent across various categories (p. 19). It is a measure of how one-dimensional one’s attitudes are. For example, Olsen explains “...a highly crystallized person would be consistently liberal or conservative in all areas, while a person of low crystallization would be liberal in some areas and conservative in others.” The relative strength of crystallization is affected as an individual faces social pressures, external forces that influence judgment. These pressures originate from a number of sources, including but not limited to; “...the culture as a whole, from conflicting subcultures, from inconsistent social status, from various formal organizations, and from within one's primary groups” (Olsen, 1962, p. 21).

Olsen’s attitude crystallization theory fits neatly within the discussion of conservative parenting and the formation of distinct social habituses. Parental figures, especially those who strongly posit worldview influence, are clearly a significant source of social pressure. Even as an adolescent begins to develop a unique identity and seems to navigate the social world on their own, the cultural units transferred from parent to child could factor into the resulting personality in some way.

For instance, a conservative religious upbringing may not offer the kinds of learnings crucial to openly confront situations marked as taboo within that habitus. One may truly believe that gays and lesbians are respectable people, but at the same time

cannot erase the deeply ingrained perceptual repertoire that casts them as deviant. Even though an individual may be seeking to move outside the comfort of their habitus, they simply may not have the tools in their arsenal to effectively do so.

Attitude crystallization illustrates how the input of particular beliefs at the hands of parents shapes our abilities to confront numerous social situations. Conservative social pressures, which would be plentiful in fundamentalist households, could limit crystallization of liberal attitude types in individuals exposed to that learning environment. Consistent exposure to conservative pressures in parenting may work to alter the perceptual frames that children and adolescents use to view and analyze the world.

### **Predicting Life Outcomes**

Annette Lareau's (2003) work explores how cultural practices embodied in different social class positions impact children's lifetime trajectories. In her study, *Unequal Childhoods*, Lareau demonstrates for readers the important ways that social class relates to rearing strategies in the home. "Concerted cultivation", purposefully developing a child's autonomy and critical abilities, is a practice characteristic of middle class parents. Lareau explains that from this type of stimulation, "a robust sense of entitlement takes root in middle-class children". On the other hand, parents of working class and poor families "...do not consider the concerted development of children an essential aspect of good parenting" (2003, p. 3). If there is variance in the way parents from different social classes cultivate the minds of their young, there could reasonably be essential differences among parents of different religious intensities.

As a result of strong beliefs regarding the relevance of the bible to human conduct, parents who are adherents of fundamentalism and/or biblical literalism adopt a very specific logic of child rearing (Bartkowski and Ellison, 1995; Ellison, Bartkowski, and Segal, 1996). Perhaps their strategies are conducive to producing children with similar beliefs to their own, especially if biblical literalism is a central aspect of what parents instill in their children. Non-fundamentalist and non-literalist parents are likely to incorporate different content in their child rearing strategies. Whether or not parents seek biblical guidance or deploy authoritarian discipline would foreseeably have a distinct impact on the development of the childhood psyche, directly influencing the contour of the tools which children use to interact with and make sense of the world.

### **Socialization and Religious Parenting**

Altemeyer (1988) draws on Bandura's (1977) social learning theory to make the point that people obtain values and knowledge of norms through observing and imitating others. Parents, peers, and the media are all sources from which children can learn to model attitudes and behaviors. Therefore, when children observe their parents acting in racist or sexist ways, children can come to imitate and even internalize the prejudicial actions (Flammer, 2001). These social interactions contribute to fabricating our individual habituses. Can social learning theory account for learning religious values, or, more specifically, for learning prejudices embedded in a religious context? Some studies insist that "the attempts (if any) made by the family to transmit religious values are easily neutralized by other agents of socialization" such as educational institutions, peer groups, and popular culture (Anthony, Hermans, and Sterkens, 2007, p. 106). Studies also

mention that as a child increases in age, the possibility of transmitting parent's religiosity becomes less effective (Bader and Desmond, 2006). In contrast to the research presenting the difficulties of prescribing parental attitudes to children, several sources mention factors that actually facilitate this process. According to Bader and Desmond (2006), "children from traditional biological families are more likely to mimic their parents' religious behaviors and attitudes" (p. 315). Bader and Desmond also found that parents are best able to transmit their religious attitudes and behaviors to their offspring if both the mother and father belong to the same religion, and if they express equal interest that religion. If parents' religious behaviors diverge from what they "preach" about religion, religious transmission will be less successful.

In a study comparing parenting styles based on social science data with parenting styles rooted in conservative Protestant values, Bartkowski and Ellison (1995) devote attention to four key areas: (1) long-term parenting goals; (2) the structure of parent-child relations; (3) the definition of parental roles; and (4) strategies of child discipline and punishment. They found biblical literalism to be a crucial factor in the divergence of valued parenting strategies across these categories. Conservative Christian parents largely consult the Bible as the primary authority on many of life's issues, including reliable parenting strategies. The conservative Protestant parent input in Bartowski and Ellison's study emphasizes that "...children must be taught to embrace the divinely-ordained principles of authority and hierarchy" as to prepare them for success in adulthood (1995, p. 25). There is a general belief held amongst conservative Protestants of inherent human sinfulness. Therefore, children, who are prone to challenge authority, must be shaped to



submit and assume obedient roles. Because children are expected to exhibit defiance, “parents are told to... respond decisively, often with physical force” which is consistent with scriptures that encourage chastisement (Bartkowski and Ellison, 1995; Ellison, Bartkowski, and Segal, 1996).

On the other hand, those who tend to situate child raising strategies in psychological theory, have profoundly different ideas. This parenting perspective notes the importance of fostering empathy, verbal communication skills, and intellectual curiosity within children. Those who follow psychological parenting theories do not identify obedience as the most important aspect of child rearing and were broadly opposed to corporal punishment. In non-conservative parenting, the structure of parent-child relations is one akin to manager and protégé, contrasted with that of master and subordinate. Parents are advised to encourage desired behavior via positive reinforcement, instead of bending the will of the child (Bartkowski and Ellison, p. 28).

Given the discrepancies outlined between parenting rooted in biblical literalism and parenting rooted in child psychology, the current study’s core idea is sustained; different intensities of religious belief give rise to different parent-child structures. When we have polarized methods of dealing with children, we can expect to produce distinct psychosocial repercussions in either scenario. Children socialized to yield to authority without question will be less likely to form independent beliefs and more likely to model their values after what authoritative figures suggest or perhaps, demand of them. If religious fundamentalist and authoritarian parents are disproportionately self-described, literal interpreters of the Bible, then a large percentage of them is likely to condemn

homosexuality, as well as all other forms of sexuality that challenge heteronormative structures. If they have children, they are likely to implement parenting strategies that instill a strong sense of compliance with these values, or shield them from the development of alternative beliefs.

### **Summary: Exposing Structure and Shaping a Mechanism**

The literature offers many pathways to analyze the interrelations of prejudice and religion. Allport's religious orientations were once thought to accurately predict the conditions in which religiosity gives rise to prejudice. Later it was made evident that additional underlying forces may be at work in this relationship. Religious fundamentalism and right-wing authoritarianism have been found to vary positively with racism, sexism, and with each other (Altemeyer, 1988; Herek, 1987; Hunsberger, 1996; Flammer, 2001). Being socialized by parents that score high on these variables could have substantially different impacts on a child's developmental trajectory with regard to fostering prejudice against LGBTQIA individuals.

Given what the literature presents, the main study hypotheses are as follows: Parents that (1) diffuse a literalist or fundamentalist agenda into their parenting; (2) exhibit authoritarian behavior in parenting; and (3) condemn anything against right wing perspectives, will consequently have an increased likelihood of transmitting those attitudes and behaviors to their children. If anti-gay ideology is a parental value, those children, in adulthood, will have a higher probability of exhibiting anti-gay attitudes themselves and may even be implementing similar parenting to what they once received. Through use of quantitative measures, I intend to verify the proposed hypotheses by

determining if there is a significant difference between prejudice levels of young adults who were raised in increasingly religious conservative households versus those who were not. The complete details of the study methodology are explained in the following chapter.

As a final note, I must again stress that religious belief is in no way the sole factor that measures into the phenomenon of prejudice. I am neither suggesting that religion holds a greater percentage of responsibility for systematic oppression. At the microstructural level, a dizzying culmination of forces overt, discrete, and illusory intertwine to weave a rigorous social fabric. Examining the nuances of conservative religious parenting is tracing but a single thread to the loom.

CHAPTER III  
METHODOLOGY  
**Research Design**

I mentioned before that the research for this thesis is quantitative in nature, although I take into consideration that an examination of differences in child rearing strategies may lend itself to ethnographic research. Lareau's in-depth exploration of families reveals how social class impacts the shape of home life and the diffusion of specific cultural tools to children. The types of tools or benefits which enhance life outcomes for children are unequally distributed, quite clearly among class lines.

While pursuing a qualitative route has many merits, a survey will be capable of producing a sufficient illustration of the concepts I intend to analyze, without an excess of time and commitment that collecting exceptional qualitative field notes demands. Witnessing the process of learning attitudes over time unfortunately is not possible within a short time frame. Interviews could come of use in future studies, but at this stage I am more preoccupied with collecting data to establish baseline patterns, rather than recording in depth individual accounts. Survey methods can directly tap into desired information without having to tease out or construct themes. This is useful for a cursory exploration of parent agency in the structural maintenance of prejudices. The main concern is group comparisons and settling upon a set of factors (if any) that contribute significantly to the sustained divide in opinions regarding non-heterosexuality. The proposed set of factors to test will be decided upon somewhat deductively, based on the literature.

The results, in turn, form a foundation for qualitative cross comparison. Key significant variables in this can analysis can be weighed alongside emergent qualitative codes in future studies, potentially adding many layers to the discussion.

### **Sampling and Study Procedures**

My objective was to build a sample of at least 100 affiliates (students, staff, and faculty) of Loyola University in Chicago, ages 18 and older. This is a vastly convenient population; over 15,000 students, many have a Christian background, nearly 100% are 18 or older. Likely having left the jurisdiction of their parents quite recently, a primarily young demographic reduces the margin of error in recollections of household life and values. Also of note, the college environment is replete with experiences and concepts contrary to values fostered at home. I am given an opportunity to examine how parental influences persevere or falter in this context of rampant “social cross-pressures” (Olsen, 1962). Some faculty and staff were also included in the sample.

Potential participants were either contacted via email, or in person on campus. Those contacted online were selected in a systematic random fashion using the university email directory. Those selected were sent an email consisting of a script which provided general details about the study and requested their participation. Interested parties were prompted to respond to my email. Before a survey was issued, a consent form was emailed to the respondent, which they then signed and returned (scanned or electronically signed) to me in an email attachment. After obtaining consent, the actual survey was emailed to the respondent. The survey is in a PDF format. Respondents were encouraged

to use the “fill and sign” functions (present in the top right corner of a PDF window) to record their responses. Respondents submitted completed surveys via email as well.

I originally planned to build my entire sample through online recruitment. However, this strategy had to be amended after two attempts to field the recruitment script emails (spaced two weeks apart) only generated a sample of about a dozen. Due to time constraints, I had to rely on a convenience sample to gain respondents at a faster rate. These participants were approached in person in student common areas at Loyola University of Chicago’s Lakeshore campus. Those interested signed a consent form and were issued a survey. All respondents completed their surveys on the spot. As they did so, I routinely scouted for other interested individuals nearby, in an effort to grant them some privacy. I returned to pick up surveys when people gestured to me or it was otherwise clear they were finished, typically after about ten minutes of issue. In a few days, approximately thirty more individuals were recruited in this manner.

### **Mechanics of Analysis**

The first several groups of survey items were crafted to gauge semblances of the authoritarian personality and fundamentalist ideals present in parent and respondent attitudes. Survey questions were chosen through adaptation of existing scales in social scientific literature. These questions embodied views on controversial sexual orientations, authority, biblical inerrancy, and obedience. Additional items were included to determine whether or not the respondent internalized their parent’s values or managed to develop their own later in life or from other influences. Other control questions regard age, student grade and major, family structure (two-biological parents vs. single parent),

religious affiliation, sexual orientation, parent level of education, self-rated religiosity, and race. For a list of all questions as they appeared in the study, please refer to Appendix A at the end of the text for the codebook and survey instrument.

Respondent scores on each of the major groupings of questions were summed to compute a corresponding index, resulting in five major quantitative variables to be used for a regression analysis; respondent fundamentalism, parent fundamentalism, respondent authoritarianism, parent authoritarianism, and respondent attitudes about non-heterosexuality. The exact mechanics of the regression are to be outlined clearly in the following section of this chapter and further in Chapter 4.

A logistic regression will be performed in order to determine if distinct attitudes about sexuality are held among individuals growing up in environments of varying religious intensity. Logistic regression analysis is useful when attempting to predict non-continuous phenomena such as attitudes or opinions. Attitudes are considered non-continuous because they tend to be measured with limited responses. In contrast, other measurable categories, like income and time, have an infinite array of possible choices. In those circumstances, standard multiple regression is a suitable analytic strategy. Attitudinal responses will typically reflect “approval” or “disapproval,” or be coded as “yes” or “no” answers. For instance, considering attitudes on abortion, a logistic regression could determine if a proposed set of factors contributes meaningfully to an individual leaning toward pro-life or pro-choice. In a similar fashion, I am interested in using logistic regression to delineate a profile of individuals who are more likely to be approving of different forms of sexuality or not.

Addressing study validity, single survey questions often do not illicit the intended information from respondents. Devising an index is not a failsafe method to gauge an abstract concept either. Compiling too many questions into a single index can make measurement of a concept too ambiguous. The present study compares several measures of adequacy of two models in an effort to arrive at a more refined conclusion. All hypothesis testing was conducted at an alpha of .05. To better situate any findings, both factor analysis and pathway analysis would be helpful supplementary statistical methods to pursue in the future.



## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

#### **Summary of Descriptive Statistics and Correlations**

The final sample contained forty-eight individuals (N=48), about half of the anticipated estimate. All participants were associates of Loyola University in some manner, whether that is faculty, staff, or student. But by viewing the age distribution it is apparent the majority were undergraduate students (min=18; mean=25). The Office of Institutional Research at Loyola University of Chicago maintains all demographic and enrollment data. In the institution's official report for 2011-2012, there was approximately half the number of undergraduate men as undergraduate women. White students represented roughly 60% of the sample, followed by Hispanic students (11%), Asians, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islanders (11%), and black/African American students (.04%) (Erdman, 2011). The current sample is highly representative of these aspects of Loyola's demographic landscape.

Table 1. Summary of Demographic Characteristics

N= 48		N	%
AGE	Mean	25	-
	Min	18	-
	Max	41	-
	St.Dev	5.5	-
SEX	Male	16	34
	Female	31	66
RACE	Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander	6	12.8
	Black/African American	3	6.4
	Hispanic/Latino	5	10.6
	White/Caucasian	29	61.7
	Other	4	8.5
	<i>Arab</i>	2	4.3
	<i>Indian</i>	1	2.1
	<i>Asian/White</i>	1	2.1

\*One missing response for sex.

Shifting focus to the central study variables, 52% of respondents report being at least “somewhat religious” individuals. Slightly more respondents (60%) convey that the way in which they view the world derives chiefly from their parents’ influence, suggesting that both religious and non-religious individuals receive world centering influences from parents. When asked about parental religiousness, 83% of the sample reports their parents are at least somewhat religious. The remaining 17% report parents as somewhat non-religious. No respondent reported having parents who were absolutely non-religious (strongly disagree to parent religiosity).

Table 2. Parent and Personal Religious Values

N= 48		N	%
R'S PARENTS ARE RELIGIOUS/SPIRITUAL	Very true	20	41.7
	Somewhat true	20	41.7
	Somewhat untrue	8	16.7
	Very untrue	-	-
R IS RELIGIOUS/SPIRITUAL	Strongly agree	9	18.8
	Somewhat agree	16	33.3
	Somewhat disagree	11	22.9
	Strongly disagree	12	25.0
R'S WORLDVIEW STEMS FROM PARENTS'	Very true	4	8.3
	Somewhat true	25	52.1
	Somewhat untrue	12	25.0
	Very untrue	7	14.6

Other central study variables include authoritarianism, fundamentalism, and attitudes about non-heterosexuality. Scores for these variables were created by indexing several variables meant to measure the attitude in question. Due to the way in which the variables were originally constructed, it was possible for respondents to obtain a negative score. To enhance readability, only the magnitudes of scores are recorded below. The lowest values from a resulting index were set to equal one and the maximum possible score was set to scale accordingly. For example, if respondent scores ranged from -1 to 11, this was recoded to be 1 to 10.

The values for variables measuring parent fundamentalism and authoritarianism both appear to have relatively normal distributions. An approximately even number of cases fall both above and below the average, which means there are an ideal ratio of high

scoring cases, vs. low scoring cases, and a considerably higher number of cases in-between. Statistically speaking, this is a desired orientation for drawing defensible conclusions about the data. Unfortunately for the respondents' personal scores on fundamentalism and authoritarianism, the distributions are more skewed. Over fifty-percent of cases fall below the calculated average. While there are some people who scored unusually high on the scales, it is clear there has been an oversample of religious minded, religiously inclined individuals who are not overt followers of conservative theology, fundamentalism, or authoritarianism.

There is a comparably skewed distribution for the respondent sexual prejudice variable. The reported average for this variable is inflated due to a few outliers with much higher scores. The average reported below was 3.79 when in fact 70% of respondents' scores fall between 1 and 3. This is a major indication that additional variance is required in the scale. Some questions should focus on law and social policy, for example, should homosexuals have the right to marry? Other survey questions, such as "I would be comfortable if my child had a gay teacher/coach" should tap into social dynamics and interpersonal relationships. Tasks for future studies entail confronting obvious error in how these concepts are measured or reevaluating altogether if they are even meaningful distinctions, or if they embody some other latent factors that literature has yet to readily identify.

Table 3. Parent and Personal Authoritarianism and Fundamentalism, and Respondent Discomfort with Non-Heterosexuality

**N= 48**

PARENT AUTHORITARIANISM	Mean	4.73
	Min	1
	Max	9
	St.Dev	2.47
PARENT FUNDAMENTALISM	Mean	6.63
	Min	1
	Max	12
	St.Dev	3.54
R AUTHORITARIANISM	Mean	5.75
	Min	1
	Max	13
	St.Dev	3.14
R FUNDAMENTALISM	Mean	4.73
	Min	1
	Max	15
	St.Dev	3.22
R DISCOMFORT WITH SEXUAL MINORITIES	Mean	3.79
	Min	1
	Max	14
	St.Dev	2.87

\*For variables listed, higher scores indicate “more” of that variable/value.

The study correlations are presented in two separate matrices. Table 4 only contains correlations between key study variables that yield a high significance. Also, the variables in Table 4 focus primarily on how respondent fundamentalism and authoritarianism index scores vary with attitudes about non-heterosexuality, whereas Table 5 is more centered on examining the effect of the respondent’s parents’ index scores.

Many of the resulting correlations were in line with the literature. The respondent's scores for fundamentalism and authoritarianism were both found to have direct associations with negative attitudes toward non-heterosexuality ( $\gamma \approx .50$ ,  $p < .001$ ). On the other hand, the respondent's parents' scores on fundamentalism and authoritarianism were not found to be significant correlates of the sexual prejudice variable (Table 5). This may come as more evidence of measurement error. Despite this, it was found that the extent to which a respondent's worldviews stem from their parents has a moderately strong and positive correlation with attitudes about sexual minorities ( $\gamma \approx .475$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Last, in line with the logic so far, the degree to which the respondent identifies as religious, and the degree to which their parents are religious, each carry significant, positive, and moderately strong correlations with sexual prejudice (respectively  $\gamma = .487$ ,  $p < .001$ ;  $\gamma = .370$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

Table 4. Correlation Matrix of Key Study Variables

<i>Variables</i>	Respondent Authoritarianism	Respondent Fundamentalism	Degree R's views stems from parents
Respondent Authoritarianism	1	.497**	.264 <sup>ns</sup>
Respondent Fundamentalism	.497**	1	.381*
Degree R is Religious	.433*	.585**	.493**
R Attitudes Toward Sexual Minorities	.550**	.505**	.475**

\*\*Correlation is significant at .001, \*Correlation is significant at .01, ns = non-significant.

Table 5. Correlation Matrix of Parent and Respondent Beliefs

<i>Variables</i>	R's Parents' Authoritarianism	R's Parents' Fundamentalism	Degree R's Parents are Religious
Respondent Authoritarianism	.126 <sup>ns</sup>	.288 <sup>^</sup>	.328 <sup>^</sup>
Respondent Fundamentalism	.004 <sup>ns</sup>	.355 <sup>^</sup>	.355 <sup>^</sup>
Degree R is Religious	.040 <sup>ns</sup>	.385 <sup>*</sup>	.368 <sup>*</sup>
R Attitudes Toward Sexual Minorities	.054 <sup>ns</sup>	.203 <sup>ns</sup>	.370 <sup>*</sup>

\*Correlation is significant at .01, ^Correlation is significant at .05, ns = non-significant.

### Predictive Model Construction

Given the results of the correlations and the surrounding theories, I was compelled to test two different predictive models. I proposed that “Model 1” for predicting sexual prejudices would contain the fundamentalism score, the authoritarianism score, parent religiosity, and the degree to which their worldview aligns with that of their parents. This model is meant to replicate a theoretical mechanism for the transmission of prejudice. Conceivably, if one’s parents have guarded religious beliefs, and the individual’s own beliefs derive from them, the individual might have a propensity to confront situations in the world with a similar set of ideological resources. If there is an absence of religious teaching in parenting however, or if an individual somehow evades socialization from a parental worldview, we should expect to find a markedly different dynamic of attitudes in formation.

A test of the F-statistic for this model can determine if this set of predictors accurately accounts for the divide in opinions about sexuality. The statistical procedure estimates to what extent a combination of scores on the predictor variables corresponds to

a pattern of variation in responses for the dependent variable. The null hypothesis states that individuals who experienced more religious parenting have no discernible edge in probability of adopting value systems, and possibly prejudices, similar to their parents. In fact, the statistics indicate that the null can be rejected, providing evidence that exhibiting particular beliefs about sexuality is in some way connected to a concerted conservative religious upbringing.

Table 6. Logistic Regression Global F-Test of Model 1

<i>Variables in Model Predicting Sexual Prejudice</i>	DF	Critical/Obtained Chi-Square	Log Likelihood Ratio	P-value	Null Hypothesis
Constant Only Model	1	-	62.557	-	-
Model 1: 1. R Authoritarianism 2. R Fundamentalism 3. Degree R's Parents are Religious 4. Degree R's views stem from parents	4	9.49/11.25 ( $\alpha=.05$ )	51.304	.024	Reject the Null

The second predictive model contained the respondent and parents' respective fundamentalism scores and authoritarianism scores, and the degree to which their worldview aligns with that of their parents. Comparing Table 6 and Table 7, based on the lower Log Likelihood ratio statistic, Model 2 predicts approval or disapproval of non-heterosexuality with greater approximation. A lower statistic indicates a model with more explained variance. However, Model 2 owes its enhanced estimation to the fact it contained more variables.

The next step in the analysis is to see if a particular variable is responsible for explaining more variance relation to the other variables in the model. At a cursory glance,



both of these models illustrate that individuals from more intensely religious environments are likely to be less approving of non-heterosexuality, but finding a more efficient model while maintaining prediction power is ideal. This is where stepwise logistic regressions enter the picture.

Table 7. Logistic Regression Global F-Test of Model 2

<i>Variables in Model Predicting Sexual Prejudice</i>	DF	Critical/Obtained Chi-Square	Log Likelihood Ratio	P-value	Null Hypothesis
Constant Only Model	1	-	62.557	-	-
Model 2: 1. R Authoritarianism 2. R Fundamentalism 3. R's Parents' Fundamentalism 4. R Parents' Authoritarianism 5. Degree R's views stems from parents	5	11.07/13.67 ( $\alpha=.05$ )	48.887	.018	Reject the Null

### Final Predictive Model

As a result of the stepwise regressions, it can be seen below in Table 8 and Table 9 that the fundamentalism and authoritarianism indexes are providing far less predictive power than other variables. Because fundamentalism and authoritarianism failed to reject the null hypothesis when placed together in a single regression step, this demonstrates that they failed to lend predictive power above and beyond what the variables already being considered in previous regression steps. This could be a reflection of their lack of relevance to the matter at hand, which would support literature that states other units of socialization to be far more residual than parents. It is also plausible that substantial

measurement flaws account for unclear findings. Fundamentalism and authoritarianism were not included in the trimmed final model which appears in Table 10.

Table 8. Logistic Regression Stepwise F-Test of Model 1

<i>Variables in Model Predicting Sexual Prejudice</i>	DF	Critical/Obtained Chi-Square	Log Likelihood Ratio	P-value	Null Hypothesis
Constant Only Model	1	-	62.557	-	-
First Block: 1. Degree R's Parents are religious 2. Degree R's views stems from parents	2	5.99/8.02 ( $\alpha=.05$ )	54.542	.018	Reject the Null
Second Block: 1. R Authoritarianism 2. R Fundamentalism	2	5.99/3.23 ( $\alpha=.05$ )	51.304	.198	Fail to Reject the Null

Table 9. Logistic Regression Stepwise F-Test of Model 2

<i>Variables in Model Predicting Sexual Prejudice</i>	DF	Critical/Obtained Chi-Square	Log Likelihood Ratio	P-value	Null Hypothesis
Constant Only Model	1	-	62.557	-	-
First Block: 1. R Parents' Fundamentalism 2. R Parents' Authoritarianism	2	5.99/3.59 ( $\alpha=.05$ )	58.967	.166	Fail to Reject the Null
Second Block: Degree R's views stems from parents R Fundamentalism R Authoritarianism	3	7.81/10.01 ( $\alpha=.05$ )	48.887	.018	Reject the Null

The final model predicting disapproval of non-heterosexuality contains the following: the degree R's parents are religious, R's religiosity, and the degree that R's worldviews stems from their parents. These three variables together managed to reduce the log likelihood statistic more than any other combination of variables that were tested.

The null hypothesis was rejected, supporting the notion that the coefficients for the tested variables are not zero in the population. That is to say, these elements have a distinctive pattern of variation with attitudes about sexuality reported in this survey, enough so that it cannot be considered mere coincidence. Thus, if one's parents are religious, and one's religiousness comes from them, then the data predict that such individuals have an increased likelihood of adapting sexual prejudices.

Table 10. Final Model F-Tests

<i>Variables in Model Predicting Sexual Prejudice</i>	DF	Critical/Obtained Chi-Square	Log Likelihood Ratio	P-value	Null Hypothesis
Constant Only Model	1	-	62.557	-	-
First Block: 1. Degree R's Parents are religious 2. Degree R's views stems from parents	2	5.99/9.27 ( $\alpha=.05$ )	53.292	.010	Reject the Null
Second Block: 1. Degree that R is religious	1	3.84/6.55 ( $\alpha=.05$ )	46.742	.018	Reject the Null
Global Model: (All variables above tested at once in one model)	3	7.81/15.82 ( $\alpha=.05$ )	46.742	.001	Reject the Null

An interpretation of the beta coefficients for each variable expresses how they each impact the odds of an individual being approving or disapproving toward non-heterosexuality. The regression equation and the values for each coefficient appear in Table 11. Using the regression equation, we can predict what stance individuals are likely to have based on their characteristics in the independent variables. According to the data, odds of approving non-heterosexuality decrease by a factor of .335 (33%) for individuals

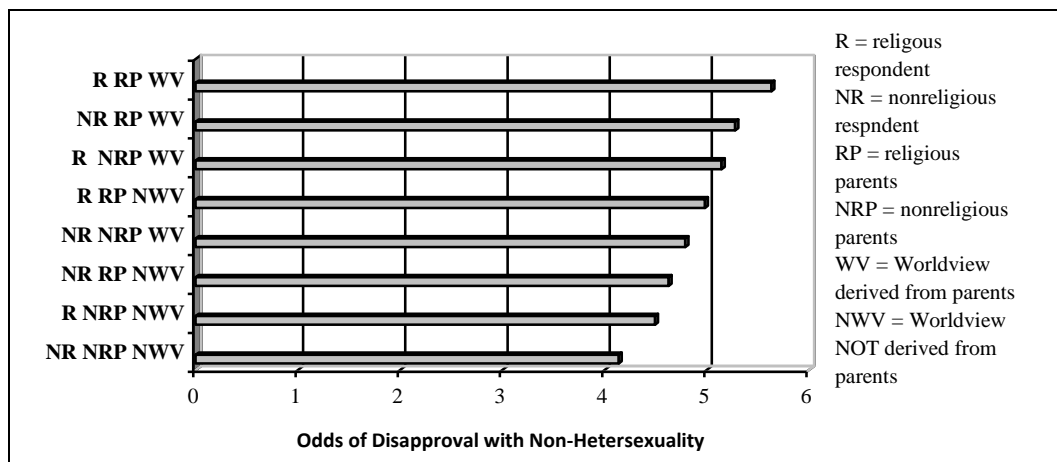
who claim to be religious, compared to those who do not. In addition, odds of approval are nearly decreased by half if one has religious parents as well. Finally, odds are reported to be .65 times lower (65%) if the respondent's worldview derives directly from parental influences, in relation to those who claim to derive their worldviews from other sources. Figure 1 depicts the total variation in odds visually.

Table 11. Final Model Regression Coefficients

<i>Variables</i>	Beta	Standard Error	P-value	Odds
Degree that R is religious	1.037	.442	.019	.355
Degree R's Parents are religious	.716	.574	.212	.488
Degree R's views stems from parents	.427	.538	.427	.652
Constant	4.14	1.639	.012	62.85

\*Regression equation for predicted odds:  $Y = 4.14 + .355(Rrelig) + .488(Prelig) + .652(wview)$

Figure 1. Bar Chart of Predicted Odds for Sexual Prejudice



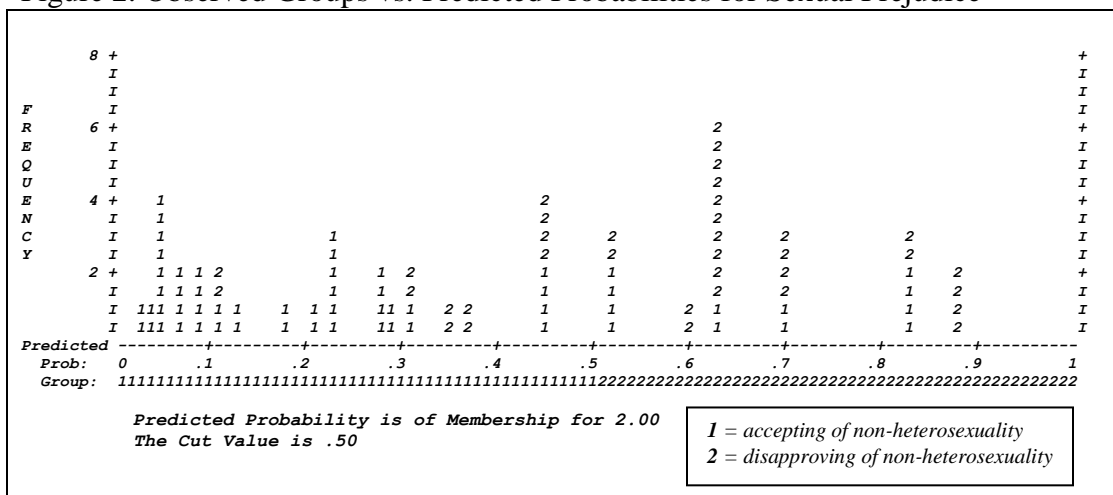
### Adequacy of Fit Measures

There are several ways to assess the quality of findings produced from a logistic regression. Under the SPSS options while running a logistic regression, selecting “classification plots” creates a histogram of predicted probabilities as part of the output, also called a “classplot.” A U-shaped distribution is desirable on this plot, as opposed to a normal curve. A normal curve indicates that many cases fall toward a central tendency. In a logistic regression, a researcher is trying to prove quite the opposite; that a given factor gives rise to polarization in a given phenomenon. The distribution of Figure 2 is not exactly parabolic, yet it is far from a normal curve. The model passes this check for adequacy but certainly has room for improvement.

Another desirable trait for a classplot is a low amount of incorrect estimations. Figure 2 also functions to predict the probability that a respondent holds sexual prejudices. Predicted probabilities range from zero to one and, as demonstrated before, are calculated based on respondent scores to the variables in that specific model. For example, in Figure 2, all cases listed directly above a probability of .5 theoretically have a 50% chance of disapproving of non-heterosexuality. Therefore, if this model was a good estimator, about half of the cases listed at .5 should be accepting, and half should be disapproving. Likewise, around probabilities of .8 and .9, far more cases should be disapproving if this model was a good fit. Looking at the actual results, this proposed model does well at predicting values with low probabilities but has trouble approximating the complete characteristics of disapproving individuals on the high probability end. This is most evident in Figure 2 at a predicted probability near .8 where four of six cases listed

were improperly estimated. The individuals marked as “1” in reality hold quite positive or accepting attitudes with regard to non- heterosexuality, but this model falsely predicts their stances based on other characteristics which tend to be associated with disapprovers.

Figure 2. Observed Groups vs. Predicted Probabilities for Sexual Prejudice



### Summary of Results

The study sample was largely representative of the Loyola community, but due to being a convenience sample, is not ideal when attempting to make strong generalizations about a population. Additionally, the sample size was a bit wanting and also detracts from raw statistical power. As would be expected surveying a Catholic university, the sample was comprised of many religiously touched individuals; slightly over 80% of respondents report having religious parents; self-reported religiosity was roughly split fifty-fifty. Participant responses were less authoritarian and embodied a weaker connection to conservative theology when compared to their parents. Even so, over 60% have worldviews that derive from their parents.

At least with regard to personal belief, the data replicate known correlations between fundamentalism, authoritarianism, and negative feelings about homosexuality. However, there was no evident connection between parent scores and the respondent's level of homosexual prejudice.

Other studies have asked participants to self-report if they classify as fundamentalist, or have used fewer survey items to comprise a fundamentalism index. It is also possible that while conservative theists may take issue with the idea of homosexual unions in some fashion, it is not given that they hold other negative interpersonal dispositions. These dimensions of prejudice should be separated into two separate indexes in future studies.

The results of the logistic regressions show religiosity to be a major correlate of attitudes about homosexuality. Both personal and parent religiosity (reported on four point Likert scales) factor into sexual prejudice. Odds of rejecting homosexuality were 35% greater for religious individuals and 48% greater for those with religious parents. The degree to which respondents report having a worldview derived from their parents also significantly impacts likelihood of having sexual prejudices by a factor of .65, according to the data. Taken together, the predictor variables allowed for rejection of the null hypothesis: that a combination of religious ideology and parental influence does not account for any observed distinctions in attitudes about homosexuality. The data here show that the development of specific attitudes about non-heterosexuals *is* more salient in a context where families believe strongly in the truth of religious doctrines, and the synchronization of parent-child worldviews is high. However, the survey question that

proved significant asked the degree to which they agree with the statement “I am a religious or spiritual individual.” Since the data cannot distinguish what religious content gives rise to the observed differences in each case, assessing the validity of an analysis based on my hypothesis would be problematic. More on this matter in the discussion.



## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

#### **Revisiting Study Hypotheses**

The purpose of this study was to verify whether or not there is a distinct development of attitudes about sexuality among individuals who were raised in households with increasing degrees of biblical adherence. The main hypotheses state: parents that (1) diffuse a literalist or fundamentalist agenda into their parenting; (2) exhibit authoritarian behavior in parenting; and (3) condemn anything against right-wing perspectives, will consequently have an increased likelihood of transmitting those attitudes and behaviors to their children. Furthermore, (4) if anti-gay ideology is a parental value, those children, in adulthood, will have a higher probability of exhibiting sexual prejudices.

Ultimately, only some aspects of the original hypothesis were confirmed. Contrary to expectations, instances of fundamentalism and authoritarianism in parent values did not accurately predict similar values in respondent answers. The respondent fundamentalism and parent fundamentalism variables yield a correlation of moderate strength, but it was disregarded due to low significance ( $\gamma = .355, .01 < p < .05$ ). The correlation between respondent authoritarianism and parent authoritarianism was neither particularly strong nor significant, indicated by a low gamma and a high p-value ( $\gamma = .126, p > .05$ ). Likewise, parent fundamentalism and authoritarianism scores were not

convincingly linked to variance in respondent views on sexuality (respectively,  $\gamma = .054$ ,  $p > .05$ ;  $\gamma = .203$ ,  $p > .05$ ).

As a result of their lack of significance, the fundamentalism and authoritarian variables for respondents and their parents were not selected for use in a final predictive model for sexual prejudice. Although the research centers on conservative theology as a key instrument in parenting, self-reported religiosity and reports of parent religiosity were both found to be significant correlates of sexual prejudice and were accepted as comparable substitutes (respectively  $\gamma = .487$ ,  $p < .001$ ;  $\gamma = .370$ ,  $p < .01$ ). In the final predictive model, statistically significant differences in acceptance of non-heterosexuality were indeed observed between “religious” and “non-religious” individuals, as well as those with different worldview origins.

According to the regression results, respondent odds of rejecting homosexuality were 35% greater for religious individuals in this sample than for the non-religious. Odds of rejection were 48% greater for those with religious parents as opposed to those with non-religious parents. Though it is not discernible here the exact role that conservative theology plays, the data demonstrate that at least some aspects of religiosity and parenting carry weight in the formation of perspectives about sexualities. Non-religious counterparts presumably adhere to the Bible relatively little and as a result have noticeably distinct outcomes. In effect, these results still capture the notion that increasing the intensity of one’s religious environment can account for differences in tolerance of non-heteronormative sexualities.

### **Analysis of Findings**

As discussed in the literature review, Flammer (2001) warns of peculiarities regarding the authoritarianism and gay prejudice relationship. Moreover, sources argue that parenting holds less importance than other influences in the development of values and attitudes in others (Anthony, Hermans, and Sterkens, 2007). It is a possibility that the reason why my findings on fundamentalism and authoritarianism are not particularly strong is simply a reflection of such discussions in previous literature. In light of evidence that parents are not the most powerful influence on attitudes in their children, I proposed that a combination of certain conservative religious values, coupled with a strict focus on such values in parenting, would have novel effects not captured in prior methods of evaluating the relevance of parenting on one's values. But looking at the data, even this particular mechanism did not appear to successfully clarify the impact of parenting on the formation of an individual's dispositions.

There are many limitations interpreting the data, but there is a chance that a ghost of actual effects may have been captured. SPSS did after all predict with impressive accuracy where respondent opinions fell based on a rather limited combination of various social characteristics. Individuals claiming to be more religious, or claiming to have more religious parents, observed a tangible increase in probability of having sexual prejudices. This fact substantiates the need for humanity to be aware of the power that social habituses possess. The findings here can be used as a platform for refining how we understand the actual of effects of religious parenting on childhood outcomes.

### **Improvements for Measurement and Sampling**

Error in measurements and sampling are two other reasons that may help explain why the study findings were not as strong as hypothesized. Factor analysis is another quantitative statistical method that helps researchers gain a more precise estimation of abstract measurements. It can assist in the selection of a new set of elements to embody authoritarianism or fundamentalism respectively. In contrast, perhaps a less complex representation of these variables would be of better use. Ellison and Bartkowski (1996) use sharp distinctions to categorize respondents. Asking respondents directly, “do you believe everything in the bible happens exactly as written?” unambiguously dichotomizes literalists and non-literalists. It is because the fundamentalism and authoritarian variables did not emerge as significant that I had to rely on an overtly simplistic “degree of religiousness” variable in my final predictive model. In the way that it was measured, there is now no genuine way to discern liberal and conservative religiosity and to say definitively whether either one is the basis of fluctuation in the outcomes for sexuality prejudice.

In supplementary studies, it would be worthwhile to focus more on including a variety of questions about religious adherence. The data illustrate that directly asking participants about their religiosity on a four point Likert scale was a far more reliable measurement than the index. Religious service attendance, time spent in family prayer, and how much respondents agree with specific passages in religious texts, would all be pertinent figures to collect. The dependent variable in this study, attitudes about sexuality, could be measured with more finesse by separating political forms of disagreement with homosexuality with interpersonal prejudices. Next stages of study

should begin to incorporate interviewing so respondents can give full-bodied accounts of their worldview genesis.

With regard to the study sample, in retrospect, the very institution of Loyola may have brought about unintended effects. Over 70% of respondents displayed tolerance of different sexual orientations, a prominently left-leaning distribution. The university's Jesuit ideals and social justice mission could attract individuals who are more sympathetic toward oppressed groups. It is highly probable that this would affect responses on the sexual prejudice scale. Moreover, if the Loyola community or the sample contains a disproportionately high number of Catholics, this may have impacted the utility of the fundamentalism variable. Catholics, who do not follow biblical prompts as characteristically as other denominations, would not necessarily have religious identities that embody fundamentalism. This would help explain why the fundamentalism variable proved insignificant. Collecting religious denomination information as an added control measure would be useful in future studies.

Increasing the sample size is also a necessary improvement. In any quantitative study, a large sample size is ideal for more statistical power. The sample itself was mostly built through convenience. The online systematic sampling proved ineffective for the allotted timeframe. Because this is not a pure random sample, it is difficult to justify that these findings are due to more than mere chance. Furthermore, any faculty and staff in the sample should have been removed prior to analysis. A sample of only students might have shown stronger effects. Also to that end, a survey of students still living at home with their parents could tell an entirely different story. The act of attending church with one's parents or engaging in prayer together may function to weave values in a

stronger manner than in people living separately from parents. Supplemental studies have the potential to elucidate a much richer analysis if efforts are taken to effectively address these points.

APPENDIX A  
SURVEY INSTRUMENT AND CODEBOOK

**Religion, Conservatism, and Parenting Survey**

1. **Major(s) / Area(s) of study:** \_\_\_\_\_ or N/A
2. **Student Year:** a. Freshman   b. Sophomore   c. Junior   d. Senior   e. N/A
3. **Age:** \_\_\_\_\_
4. **Gender:** a. Male   b. Female   c. Other
5. **Sexual Orientation:**
  - a. Gay/Lesbian
  - b. Heterosexual
  - c. Bisexual
  - d. Not sure
  - e. Prefer not to answer
  - f. Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
6. **What is your primary racial/ethnic background?**
  - a. American Indian or Alaska Native
  - b. Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander
  - c. Black/African American
  - d. Hispanic/Latino
  - e. White/Caucasian
  - f. Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
7. **Who were you raised by?**
  - a. Two biological parents
  - b. Single biological parent
  - c. A Biological & Stepparent
  - d. Foster parents
  - e. Other Guardian(s) (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
8. **Parent/Guardian Highest level of Education:**
  - a. Some High School
  - b. High School/GED
  - c. Some College
  - d. Bachelor's Degree
  - e. Graduate Degree
  - f. Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_



**9. State the degree to which the statement below applies to you:**

*“I am a religious/spiritual individual.”*

- a. Strongly Agree
- b. Somewhat Agree
- c. Somewhat Disagree
- d. Strongly Disagree

**10. State the degree to which the statement below is true:**

*“My parents are religious/spiritual people.”*

- a. Very True
- b. Somewhat True
- c. Somewhat Untrue
- d. Very Untrue

**11. State the degree to which the statement below is true:**

*“My worldviews mainly come from the influence of my parent(s)/guardian(s)”*

- a. Very True
- b. Somewhat True
- c. Somewhat Untrue
- d. Very Untrue

**12. Rate the extent to which the following statements are true:**

**1 = very untrue, 2 = somewhat untrue, 3 = somewhat true, 4 = very true**

My parents taught me to adhere to social standards.	1	2	3	4
While living in their household, my parents strictly monitored my peer groups.	1	2	3	4
My parents would say that discipline isn't the most important virtue to instill in youth.	1	2	3	4
In the past, if I disobeyed my parents, I was often given corporal punishment.	1	2	3	4

**13. Rate the extent to which the following statements are true:****1 = very untrue, 2 = somewhat untrue, 3 = somewhat true, 4 = very true**

My parents do not believe that a single religious text contains all the fundamental truths about life.	1	2	3	4
My parents do not believe that there is only one true religion.	1	2	3	4
My parents valued sacred scripture over science.	1	2	3	4
“God created the universe” is a statement my parents would agree with.	1	2	3	4

**14. State the extent to which you agree:****1 = strongly disagree, 2 = somewhat disagree, 3 = somewhat agree, 4 = strongly agree**

Our country should explore different forms of government	1	2	3	4
Violent crimes, such as rape and murder, deserve more punishment than mere imprisonment.	1	2	3	4
Sexual deviants are one of the biggest threats to our country’s security.	1	2	3	4
People should not be too critical of authority figures.	1	2	3	4
Children should be free to form their own opinions.	1	2	3	4

**15. State the extent to which you agree:****1 = strongly disagree, 2 = somewhat disagree, 3 = somewhat agree, 4 = strongly agree**

Homosexuality is an abomination.	1	2	3	4
Same sex couples should not be allowed to marry.	1	2	3	4
It would make me uncomfortable if a gay couple moved in next door to my household.	1	2	3	4
I would be delighted if a close friend revealed to me that they are LGBTQIA (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual).	1	2	3	4
Same sex couples should have the right to civil unions.	1	2	3	4
Homosexuals should try harder not to flaunt their sexuality.	1	2	3	4

**16. State the extent to which you agree:****1 = strongly disagree, 2 = somewhat disagree, 3 = somewhat agree, 4 = strongly agree**

There are some teachings in the Bible should not be considered completely, literally true.	1	2	3	4
I believe that God created the universe.	1	2	3	4
More than one religion can be true at the same time.	1	2	3	4
Belief in God is less important than being a good person.	1	2	3	4
No single religious text contains all foundational truths of pertaining to life.	1	2	3	4

**17. State the extent to which you agree:****1 = strongly disagree, 2 = somewhat disagree, 3 = somewhat agree, 4 = strongly agree**

Child rearing is a woman's primary role in social life.	1	2	3	4
Men who earn more than women in the workplace probably deserve to.	1	2	3	4
It is acceptable for women to choose making a career over having a family.	1	2	3	4
Women are generally less effective leaders than men.	1	2	3	4

**18. State the extent to which you agree:****1 = strongly disagree, 2 = somewhat disagree, 3 = somewhat agree, 4 = strongly agree**

It's really a matter of some people not trying hard enough; if blacks would only try harder they could be just as well off as whites.	1	2	3	4
Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for blacks to work their way out of the lower class.	1	2	3	4
Blacks are responsible for creating much of the racial tension that exists in the United States today.	1	2	3	4
In this day and age, discrimination no longer limits minority chances of getting ahead in life.	1	2	3	4

## Codebook

### Independent variables

*Parent Authoritarianism and Parent Fundamentalism.* Possible responses include 4 = *strongly agree*, 3 = *somewhat agree*, 2 = *somewhat disagree*, or 1 = *strongly disagree*.

To measure *Parent Authoritarianism* (Adapted from Theodor Adorno's "Authoritarian Personality", 1950)

1. My parents taught me to adhere to social standards.
2. While living in their household, my parents demanded that I stay away from rebellious peers.
3. My parents would not say that discipline is the most important virtue to instill in youth.
4. In the past, if I disobeyed my parents, I was often given corporal punishment.

To measure *Parent Fundamentalism* (Adapted from Bob Altemeyer's RF Scale, 2006)

1. My parents do not believe that a single religious text contains all the fundamental truths about life.
2. My parents believe that Satan is the root of all evils.
3. My parents did not believe that there is only one true religion.
4. My parents valued sacred scripture over science.
5. "God created the universe" is a statement my parents would agree with

Dependent Variables

*Sexual Prejudice in Adulthood, Gender Bias, Racial Bias, Fundamentalism in Adulthood, and Authoritarianism in Adulthood.* Possible responses include 4 = *strongly agree*, 3 = *somewhat agree*, 2 = *somewhat disagree*, or 1 = *strongly disagree*.

To measure *Fundamentalism in Adulthood*:

1. There are some teachings in the Bible should not be considered completely, literally true.
2. I believe that God created the universe.
3. No single religious text contains all foundational truths of pertaining to life.
4. I believe that there is only one true religion.
5. Belief in God is less important than being a good person.

To measure *Authoritarianism in Adulthood*:

1. It is acceptable to challenge social standards.
2. Violent crimes, such as rape and murder, deserve more punishment than mere imprisonment.
3. What children today need most is strict discipline
4. Deviants are the biggest threat to our country's security.
5. People should not question figures of authority.
6. The most important value for a child to learn is obedience.

To measure *Sexual Prejudice* (Adapted from Baylor Religion Survey Wave II, 2007):

1. Homosexuality is an abomination.
2. Same sex couples should not be allowed to marry.
3. It would make me uncomfortable if a gay couple moved in next door to my household.
4. I would be delighted if a close friend revealed to me that they are LGBTQIA (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual).
5. Same sex couples should have the right to civil unions.
6. Homosexuals should try harder not to flaunt their sexuality to the world.

To measure *Racial Bias* (Henry, P. J., & Sears, D. O. Symbolic Racism Scale, 2002)

1. It's really a matter of some people not trying hard enough; if blacks would only try harder they could be just as well off as whites.
2. Generations of slavery and discrimination have created conditions that make it difficult for blacks to work their way out of the lower class.
3. Blacks are responsible for creating much of the racial tension that exists in the United States today.
4. In this day and age, discrimination no longer limits minority chances of getting ahead in life.

To measure *Gender Bias*

1. Child rearing is a woman's primary role in social life.

2. Men who earn more than women in the workplace probably deserve to.
3. It is acceptable for women to choose making a career over having a family.
4. Women are generally less effective leaders than men.



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## VITA

Gabourel was born in the Central American country of Belize. In 1991, when he was one year old, his family immigrated to the United States. They settled in Skokie, Illinois, a northern suburb of Chicago. Before attending Loyola University Chicago, he attended Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana where he earned a Bachelor of Science in Sociology and was awarded Academic Honors in Writing in 2013.

Currently, Gabourel is a Research Fellow at Loyola's Center for Urban Research and Learning. He aspires to continue his education at Loyola, pursuing a Doctor of Philosophy Degree. His career ambitions are a mixed basket of teaching, research, academic and creative writing, and film-making, and he believes he will find a means to tame each of them.

