"Religion at America's Most Selective Colleges: Some Findings From the National Longitudinal Survey of Freshmen (NLSF)"

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ABSTRACT

Using a sample of nearly 4,000 college students from 28 elite American colleges and universities drawn from the National Longitudinal Survey of Freshmen (NLSF), I examine the influence of religion on several measures of college achievement. The most significant finding of the paper is that students who participate in religious ritual once a week or more reported higher college GPAs. In addition, other measures of religiosity had a significant and positive impact on two other outcomes: the number of hours studied and school satisfaction. Students who are more religiously observant reported studying longer hours, and both students who said they are more religiously observant and those who attend religious services once a week or more reported higher satisfaction with their college experience. These findings both confirm numerous studies on religion and high school achievement and suggest numerous avenues for further research on religion at the college level.

INTRODUCTION

Although the literature on religion and education has increased in recent years, we still know little about how religion influences educational outcomes measured at the *college* level. By analyzing data from a stratified sample of college students at 28 of the top colleges and universities in the United States, this paper broadens our understanding of the ways in which religion influences college students' achievement and satisfaction. This avenue of research is particularly significant given the wide-spread presumption that today's college campuses are extremely secular and that a college education is becoming increasingly more important to later income and occupation. Thus, this present research contributes to long-standing interests in what determines educational attainment and seeks to narrow the gap in our knowledge about how religion influences achievement on mostly secular campuses.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Religious Affiliation

Research on religion and education can roughly be divided into three broad lines of inquiry. The first, stemming from work in the 1950s and 1960s, inquired into the influence of religion on education with a focus on differences in educational attainment among Catholics and Protestants. With regards to levels of educational attainment (such as high school and college graduation rates), researchers found that Protestants held a small lead over Catholics. However, some of this difference was likely due to the mass of Catholic immigrants arriving in the United States in the first half of the twentieth century, most of whom settled in urban areas and worked as manual laborers. As the Catholic population grew, the Catholic Church in the United States developed an extensive set of

parochial schools, high schools and universities that promoted their upward mobility. Over, over a few generations, the educational attainment gap between Protestants and Catholics narrowed to the point of nearly disappearing (Homola, Knudsen et al. 1987).

As the levels of educational attainment between Protestants and Catholics converged, another line of research emerged examining differences in educational attainment *within* different tendencies of particular faiths, such as Evangelical or Fundamentalist versus mainline Protestant. Darnell and Sherkat (1997) demonstrated that conservative Protestants had lower educational attainment and lower high school GPAs relative to other Protestants. However, when Beyerlein (2004) separated Evangelical from Fundamentalist Protestants, he found that Evangelicals have one of the *highest* rates of educational attainment among religious groups and non-religious affiliates (except for Jews), but that Fundamentalists continue to have low levels of educational attainment. Beyerlein argues that the influence of religious beliefs and religious participation on educational outcomes depends on differences in worldviews among religious denominations. For example, the emphasis on worldly success stemming from Calvinist tradition has led to increased levels of educational attainment among Evangelical Protestants, whereas the Fundamentalist view of Christianity at odds with the modern, secular world has led to persistently low levels of education among its adherents.

Religoisity

Another line of research on religion and education looks at the effect of *religious commitment and practice* on education. The works in this field broadly concur that increased religiosity increases educational attainment (Dijkstra and Peschar 1996, Regnerus 2000, Regnerus and Elder, 2003, Loury, 2004). Several of these studies have

found a relationship between religion and specific measures of educational achievement, such as standardized test scores and grades, but the evidence for this relationship is somewhat weaker (Zern 1989; Regnerus 2000; Jeynes 2003).

Several theories have been developed to explain how religious commitment influences academic attainment and performance. Some scholars argue that the particular teachings of a religion can create a disciplined life or a general work ethic (Albrecht and Heaton 1984; Jeynes 2003, Regnerus and Elder, 2003). For example, Loury (2004) uses the term "Buffer theory" whereby the teachings and community of the church impart a structured environment that enforces norms that promote education. Jeynes (2003) refers to this as an "internal locus of control" (pp. 119-120), which he says gives believers solace in times of trouble and stress, thereby enabling them to cope better than non-believers. Loury also points to the structural effects of churches, namely belonging to a group that promotes certain norms can sway students "toward more positive social behavior by changing norms of desirable behavior" and by providing "role models and sources of social control outside the family" (2004). In fact, the famous social theorist James Coleman noted the separate effect of belonging to a religious institution and holding religious beliefs in his work on high school completion (1989). As research in this area has advanced, it has become important to separate out the religious effect *per se* from other factors that may be correlated with religiosity, such as family background, parental discipline, and parental involvement in their children's lives.

Religion and the Educational Outcomes of At-Risk Youth

Given the strong relationship between religion and certain elements of family structure and parent-child interactions, a third line of research focuses on how religion may mitigate the well-known *negative* effects of broken families and neighborhood poverty on education. Using data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, Regnerus and Elder (2003) demonstrate that religious involvement has a greater impact on youth in low-income neighborhoods than in higher-income neighborhoods. They report that poor, urban adolescents who are involved with a religious community are more likely to "stay on track" in school, meaning that they maintain satisfactory grades, decent progress and good conduct. Jeynes (2003) also found that grades of high school seniors who are very religious are significantly higher than other students. Similar to Regnerus and Elder, Jeynes also found that the effect of religion is *greater* for inner-city youth than for youth from wealthier areas.

Several explanations have been offered for the apparently greater impact of religion on the educational achievement of poor, urban youth. Both Regnerus and Elder (2003) and Jeynes (2003) attribute the greater size of the effect in poor, urban areas to the unique role of churches in providing a secure environment. In the inner-city, the church is often the *only* organization with any authority or the only one that provides discipline and care for youth, whereas in wealthier areas, many organizations may fulfill this role. Another explanation relates to the impact of religion on families. From their research on youth from two-parent African-American families, Brody, Stoneman and Flor (1996) argue that religious participation positively influences education mainly by creating healthy families, relationships and social control which are all conducive to education.

Although these studies are helpful because they highlight mechanisms through which religion influences education, it is nonetheless notable that even when controlling for other independent variables correlated with religion, religiosity does not lose its significance. In other words, religion can influence important behaviors and norms that affect educational outcomes, but believers still differ from non-believers who share the family structure and habits associated with religion.

Despite these strong findings on how religiosity influences grades and test scores at the high school level, few have explored this relationship at the college level. One reason for this may be that the studies used to examine religion and education at the college level—such as the General Social Survey—do not contain detailed information about grades earned in college. One study, Zern (1989) suggests that religion may indeed continue to impact educational achievement in college. Zern surveyed over 200 students at one college and included detailed questions about their religiosity along with numerous measures of educational achievement. Respondents were asked to rate their degree of religiousness, their degree of in a spiritual being who created the world, and their level of participation in religious rituals. However, because of his small sample, Zern could only establish a correlation between religiosity and college GPA and did not test his findings in a regression model. Interestingly, Zern also measured the change in religiosity during college and found that students who reported an increase in total religiousness, religious belief and practice also reported higher GPAs. Despite Zern's small sample size, the correlations he reports at the very least indicate that the relationship between religiosity and grades in college merits further investigation.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND DATA

Using data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Freshmen (NLSF), I can examine the effect of both religious affiliation and religiosity on numerous measures of college achievement. The NLSF employed a probability sample of students who began attending selective U.S. colleges and universities in the fall semester of 1999. In total, the NLSF researchers invited 35 schools to participate in the study, including all of the institutions Bowen and Bok (1998) surveyed in *College and Beyond*, plus the University of California at Berkeley. The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation provided a grant for this research, and the president of the Mellon Foundation (Bowen) contacted each university administration to request their participation. Of the 35 institutions he contacted, only seven institutions declined the invitation or were unable to participate for other reasons. These institutions were: Duke, Hamilton, Morehouse, Spelman, Vanderbilt, Wellesley, and Xavier. Thus, the institutional participation rate for the survey was 80%. Of these institutions, only two maintain a religious affiliation—Georgetown University and Notre Dame—and both of these are Catholic. Despite the rising national prominence of Evangelical colleges and universities, such as Baylor and Wheaton, these schools were not included in the survey (see Appendix A for a full list of schools that participated in NLSF).

At the 28 colleges and universities, the NLSF researchers approached a total 4,573 randomly selected students, of whom 3,924 completed face-to-face interviews, for an individual response rate of 86% on the first wave (Massey et al. 2003). This first wave of data collected baseline information about each student's family, school, and neighborhood conditions at age 6, 13, and 18. Because one of the main concerns that inspired NLSF was the so-called achievement gap between members of different ethnic

groups, NLSF interviewed roughly equal numbers of white (998), Asian (959), Latino (916), and African-American (1,051) students. Massey et al. (2003) provide a detailed description of the sampling methodology employed in NLSF, including a list of their 28 institutions and their characteristics, such as size and average SAT scores.

After the baseline surveys, students were followed through a series of shorter telephone surveys conducted in the spring semesters of 2000-2003. These waves asked questions about courses taken, grades received, extra-curricular activities, and social interactions. Overall response rates in the four follow-up surveys were 95%, 89%, 84%, and 80%, respectively.

Dependent Variables

The three dependent variables I use to construct my models are college GPA, satisfaction with school, and hours studied. The first dependent variable, college GPA, was assessed using the grades earned during all semesters from freshmen to senior year (except spring semester senior year, as grades were received after the final survey was conducted). We believe these self-reported grades are accurate, given finding from a pilot survey carried out in 1998 at the University of Pennsylvania that matched self-reported grades and official records and found the two to be very similar (Massey et al. 2003). For this dependent variable, the research question is simple: *does religion improve students' GPA?*

INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

Because of the breadth of the NLSF data, I can begin to examine some of the possible mechanisms through which religion might influence college GPA. The second

outcome I look at, hours studied per week, allows me to answer the question: *do religious students study more than other students?*

Although most studies of religion and education have focused on objective measures such as GPA and graduation rates, the NLSF dataset allows me to test important subjective measures of students' college experience. Earlier studies have shown that religion can improve certain measures of happiness and control. By creating a dependent variable for satisfaction with college, I can ask: *are religious students more satisfied with their college experience?*

Independent Variables on Religion

All of the independent variables on religion are constructed using variables from the baseline survey, which was conducted during students' freshman year. Of the full list of religious faiths asked on the NLSF questionnaire I created five categories. In Table 2, we see that approximately 40% of the sample reported a Protestant background and 33.36% Catholic. As noted above, much research to date has focused on differences between theologically conservative Christians or denominations compared to theologically liberal Christians or denominations. Unfortunately, the NLSF does not allow us to make such a differentiation, as no questions were asked about the authority of Scripture or about beliefs about particular moral issues. After Protestants and Catholics, the next largest category was comprised of those students who claimed no religious background or said they were agnostic (11.8%), followed by other religions (9.2%) and Jewish (5.8%). Because the "other religious faith" category includes faiths as diverse as Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism, this category does not lend itself to a meaningful interpretation.

INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

In addition to religious affiliation, I construct independent variables measuring religious participation and religious observance. As earlier work has shown, although these measures are clearly related, they nonetheless can have an independent impact on college achievement. Another reason to measure religious observance and participation separately is that non-Christian religions or even some small Protestant denominations may not find a place to attend services on college campuses, but those students may still be religiously observant.

Despite the wide-spread perception that most of today's college campuses are extremely secular, we see widespread evidence of religious faith and religious practice among students at the most selective colleges and universities in the United States. As seen in Table 1, the mean for the religious observance variable is 5.6, indicating religious beliefs are still prevalent among college students. In addition, as I was interested in identifying students who regularly attend religious rituals, I recoded the question about religious attendance to a dummy variable, where 1 equals students who reported they attended religious services once a week or more. As seen in Table 1, just under one-fourth of all students reported attending religious services once a week or more. Variables measuring religious observance and religious attendance showed a correlation of .47, indicating that although the two measures are clearly related, we can nonetheless examine them separately.

Within religious groups, Table 3 shows that Protestants reported the highest rate of weekly attendance or more (30.4%) compared to 25.3% of Catholics, 10.4% of students in the "other faith" category and 7.7% of Jewish students. Not surprisingly,

among students who claimed no religious background or said they were agnostic, not a single student reported weekly attendance at religious service.[1]

INSERT TABLE 3 HERE

Control Variables

The models I develop also include independent variables that represent factors previously identified as impacting college achievement. As numerous articles have documented differences in college achievement across ethnic groups, I include variables indicating the student's ethnic group as White, Black, Asian or Hispanic, as identified by the college or university. I also include variables that measure family structure, parents' education, immigrant origins, and two separate measures of family income. Finally, I control for high school achievement using measures of the students' self-reported SAT scores, high school GPA, and number of AP classes taken in high school.

RESULTS

Table 4 shows the results of the model run on all three dependent variables: college GPA, hours studied and school satisfaction. Confirming previous studies conducted with NLSF, I find that one's ethnic group has a statistically significant effect on GPA. Compared to white students, black and Hispanic students reported lower college grades, although the magnitude of the coefficient is greater for blacks (-.14) than Hispanics (-.08). I also find that being male decreases GPA, whereas parents' education increases GPA. Not surprisingly, several measures of high school academic success improve GPA: the number of AP courses taken in high school and high school GPA.

[1] Although I am not focusing yet on religious fervor within groups, it is interesting to note that in a table not shown here, African-American and Asian students reported similar rates of religious attendance—28%—than whites (18%) or Hispanics (22%). In addition, black students were most likely to rate themselves as highly religious. These descriptive statistics point to an unexplored differentiation: looking at ethnic groups within religious groups, such as Asian, African-American, and white Protestants or Catholics.

Attending religious services once a week has a significant and positive effect on GPA, whereas one's self-rating of religious observance does not have a statistically significant effect on GPA. With regards to religious affiliation, Catholics and those who reported no religious background did have statistically significant differences in grades compared to Protestants (the reference category), but Jewish students did. Interestingly, the magnitude of the coefficient for being Jewish is greater than for attending religious services (.08 compared to .04), and the Jewish coefficient significant at the .01 level while the religious attendance variable is significant at the .05 level.

INSERT TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE

The finding that Catholics do not differ from Protestants contradicts an earlier finding with the NLSF data, which found that Catholics had lower GPAs than Protestants (Massey, Charles and Mooney 2005). These seemingly contradictory findings could be explained by two things. First, as our earlier paper only compared whites to blacks, the effect of being Catholic or Protestant could differ when all four ethnic groups are included in the model. Second, this earlier work only had 3 categories for religion—Catholic, Protestant and other. Given that this current paper finds a significant effect of being Jewish, the difference between Catholics and Protestants could disappear when the "other" is further broken down, as in this present paper.

The second regression shown in Table 4 sheds some light on a mechanism through which religion may influence college achievement: hours studied. Ethnicity had the weakest effect in these models, as only the Hispanic coefficient—1.34—was significant at the .10 level. Being male decreases the number of hours studied per week, which may partially explain why males have lower GPAs compared to females. Students

of immigrant background exhibit greater effort in college, as measured by the number of hours studied. Interestingly, no socio-economic measures were significant in the regression on hours studied.

The variables on high school academic achievement seem to present a paradox: those students with higher SATs studied less while those who took more AP classes and who had a higher high school GPA studied more. Although we need more information to interpret this result, one possible explanation could be that students with high SAT scores may study less because they have good test-taking skills, whereas taking AP classes and high school GPA may be better indicators of weekly effort at school.

In this model, religious observance has a significant and positive effect on the number of hours studied weekly. However, the magnitude of this effect is quite small--.19. None of the categories for religious background were significant in this model. Thus, as measured by hours studied, it does not appear that one religious group exerts greater effort in college.

The highly subjective nature of the third outcome I test—being satisfied with college—is demonstrated by the lower R-squared in this model. Nonetheless, many of the same variables that had a significant effect in the first two models also have an effect here. I find strong ethnic effects, as Blacks and Asians reported lower school satisfaction compared to Whites and both of these variables were significant at the .01 level. Although men do not report lower satisfaction with college than women, several measures of parents' background and high school academic preparation influence college satisfaction. Those who are children of immigrants are less satisfied with college, whereas the higher parents' education, the more their children are satisfied with college.

Higher SAT scores and higher high school GPA also increase school satisfaction. This may be because, as we have already seen, they increase college GPA, and we can presume that students who earn higher grades would experience satisfaction from this achievement.

With regards to measures of religiosity, we find that both religious observance and religious attendance have significant and positive effects on school satisfaction. The coefficient for religious attendance is higher than for religious observance—.24 compared to .06—but this could be because the former is a dummy variable whereas the second is continuous. In other words, attending religious services will increase your satisfaction with school by a factor of .24 over not attending religious services, whereas for each increase in the 10-point scale of religiosity, satisfaction increases by .06. Thus, the difference between the least and the most religious students could in fact be greater than the difference between those who do and do not attend religious services. With regards to religious affiliation, Catholic students reported lower measures of school satisfaction compared to Protestants.

DISCUSSION

Using data from a random sample of nearly 4,000 students at 28 of the most selective college and universities in the United States, I find that two separate measures of religiosity—a 10-point scale of religious observance and a dummy variable measuring attending religious services once a week or more—have significant effects on three separate outcomes measuring college achievement, effort and satisfaction. These findings are robust even when controlling for other variables we know influence college experiences, such as parents' income and education, sex, and high school academic

achievement. As previous authors have noted, the fact that coming from a Jewish background improves GPA—even when controlling for measures of family background and high school achievement—indicates that some unobservable ethno-religious affect is at play, such as greater aspirations for post-college students, which would motivate one to attain a higher GPA. Consistent with previous studies, I find that Jewish students report higher college GPAs. On one measure—satisfaction with school—Catholics score lower than Protestants. However, to interpret results indicating differences between members of different religious groups, further information could be included such as psychological well-being, social networks, and post-college aspirations.

Perhaps the most significant finding of this paper is that, when controlling for other factors, religious attendance increases college GPA. This important finding confirms other studies undertaken at the high school level. Similar to Loury (2004), Regnerus and Elder (2003) and Jeynes (2003), I interpret this finding as meaning that regularity of attending a church, synagogue, or other religious services may provide students with structure and guidance. The effect of religious observance on hours studied indicates that religious beliefs may provide a motivation to take their studies more seriously than students who are less religious. Although I find that Jewish students have higher GPAs compared to Protestants, my research does not find that the most secular students—those who said they had no religious background or who were agnostic—enjoyed an advantages over the most religiously observant group, Protestants. The finding that religious observance increases the number of hours studied indicates one possible mechanism through which religion may influence achievement.

Although GPA may be the most objective measure of college achievement, I find the strongest results for the influence on religion on the one *subjective* measure in my models: satisfaction with college. In this model, two separate measures of religiosity—religious observance and religious attendance—have significant effects. This finding indicates that we should not limit our analysis of the influence of religion on the college experience to just measures of GPA or effort. Because being religious can impart individual meaning to believers and provide them with a supportive community, we should expect religious people to be happier in college, provided they find a supportive religious community similar to the one they were familiar with in their background.

IMPLICATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

One area of future research we could examine with the NLSF data are hypotheses about the differential effect of religious faith by ethnic group. As Massey et al. (2003) have shown, black and white students at America's top universities come from vastly different social backgrounds. Much, but not all, of the differences in college achievement between blacks and whites can be explained by controlling for socio-economic indicators and the types of school and neighborhood environments students experience when children. Work by Regnerus and Elder (2003) and Jeynes (2003) have shown that religion can often have a stronger effect on the less advantaged than on middle-class students. Thus, future work with the NLSF data could explore how religion interacts with race, and more specifically, whether religion mitigates the negative effects on college achievement associated with the social environments created by racial segregation.

My findings also support an approach that investigates the impact of religion on college experiences by using measures of religious tradition, attendance at services, and

strength of religious beliefs or observance, as I find significant effects for measures of each of these independent variables. Each of these variables could function in slightly different ways: being from Jewish background could indicate a higher premium on grades, whereas students who attend services have a religious inspiration to achieve, and students who observe religious traditions have a locus of control. In other words, religious affiliation, practice and belief may all impact education, although in slightly different ways. Future research with the NLSF could test whether, for those students who reported experiencing a traumatic life event during college, such as the death of a close relative, parental divorce, or dramatic changes in parental income, does religion lessen the negative the impact on GPA and the likelihood of graduating?

My findings also have practical implications for college administrators. If more religious students are more satisfied with college, study more, and have higher college GPAs, school administrators should consider ways to make voluntary religious activities more accessible to students. Secular student groups of many sorts (such as newspapers, theater, and athletics) rightly enjoy space on campus for meetings, and some such groups even have a dean (such as athletics or student life). Similarly, universities can facilitate the use of on-campus space for religious services, fellowships and meetings, and such services should not be considered discriminatory but could actually help bring together religious minorities or ethnic minorities, such as African-Americans, that are highly religious. For example, my own institution, Princeton University, established a Dean of Religious Life who, among other things, coordinates among all the chaplains of the university and helps religious groups find space on campus for their meetings. If students can attend religious services without having to walk far, take a bus, or drive, this may

increase their attendance and observance. Another possibility is that, as with excused absences from class for athletic competitions, secular universities could follow the lead of universities like Yale and Princeton that grant students permissible absences from class or postpone exams that fall on important religious holidays, such as Rosh Hashanah. In fact, such a practice could be conceived as more tolerant of minority religious groups, as most academic calendars coincide more with Christian holidays—in particular Christmas—than religious holidays of other groups.

Conducting further research on religion and higher education certainly would help shed light on both the factors that influence college achievement and those that impede it. Given the higher percentage of Americans attending college today compared to previous generations, given the persistent religiosity of Americans (including college students), and given that education at America's most selective colleges and universities is more available today to diverse ethnic and religious groups, such research would be important to understanding education in American society.

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NATIONAL LONGITUDINAL SURVEY OF FRESHMEN
APPENDIX A
LIST OF COLLEGES

<1> Barnard College
New York City, NY
<2> Bryn Mawr College
Bryn Mawr, PA
<3> Columbia University
New York City, NY
<4> Denison College
Granville, OH
<6> Emory University
Atlanta, GA
<7> Georgetown University
Washington, DC
<9> Howard University
Washington, DC
<10> Kenyon College
Gambier, OH
<11> Miami University
Oxford, OH
<13> Northwestern University
Evanston, IL
<14> Oberlin College
Oberlin, OH
<15> Penn State University
State College, PA
<16> Princeton University
Princeton, NJ
<17> Rice University
Houston, TX
<18> Smith College
Northampton, MA
<20> Stanford University
Palo Alto, CA
<21> Swarthmore College
Swarthmore, PA
<22> Tufts University
Sommerville, MA
<23> Tulane University
New Orleans, LA
<24> University of California, Berkeley
Berkeley, CA
<25> University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
Ann Arbor, MI
<26> University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
Chapel Hill, NC
<27> University of Notre Dame
South Bend, IN
<28> University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, PA
<30> Washington University
St. Louis, MO
<32> Wesleyan University
Middletown, CT
<33> Williams College
Williamstown, MA
<35> Yale University
New Haven, CT

Table 1: Description of Variables

Name	*Operationalization*	*N*	*Mean*	*SD*	*Min*	*Max*
Cumulative GPA	Grades Reported from Freshmen-Senior Year/Number of Courses Taken	3815	3.25	0.43	0.33	4
Satisfaction	Self-Reported Rating of School Satisfaction	3368	11.34	2.16	0.00	14
Hours Studied	Number of Hours Spent Studying on a Weekly Basis	3727	26.58	12.58	0.00	50
Black	Race/Ethnicity from School Records	3924	0.27	0.44	0.00	1
Asian	Race/Ethnicity from School Records	3924	0.24	0.43	0.00	1
Hispanic	Race/Ethnicity from School Records	3924	0.23	0.42	0.00	1
Male	Sex	3864	0.42	0.49	0.00	1
Two-Parent Household	Both Parents Present in Household Senior Year	3864	0.72	0.45	0.00	1
Foreign-born Parent	At Least One Parent Born Outside U.S.	3864	0.51	0.50	0.00	1
Parent's Higher Education	Number of College and Graduate Degrees Earned by Both Parents	3856	1.74	1.45	0.00	4
Welfare	Family Ever Received Public Assistance	3821	0.11	0.32	0.00	1
Family Income	Total Family Income	3864	0.50	0.50	0.00	1
SAT	Student's SAT Scores	3056	1309.67	152.01	800.00	1600
Number of AP Courses	Number of AP Courses Taken in High School	3864	3.10	2.00	0.00	10
High School GPA	High School GPA	3860	3.71	0.33	1.67	4

Religious Attendance	Attends Religious Services Once a Week or More	3491	0.24	0.43	0.00	1
Religious Observance	Self-Rated Scale of Religious Observance	3486	5.59	2.75	0.00	10
Catholic	Student Has Catholic Background	3924	0.33	0.47	0.00	1
Jewish	Student has Jewish Background	3924	0.06	0.23	0.00	1
No Religion	Student has No Religious Background/Agnostic	3924	0.12	0.32	0.00	1
Other Religion	Student has Other Religious Background	3924	0.09	0.29	0.00	1

Table 2: Religious Affiliation of NLSF Respondents

	Frequency	Percent
Protestant	1,530	39.84
Catholic	1,281	33.36
Jewish	221	5.76
No religious background/agnostic	453	11.8
Other religion	355	9.24
Total	3,840	100

Table 3: Frequency of Attending Religious Services by Religious Affiliation

Religious Affiliation	Less than Once a week	More than Once a Week	Total
Protestant	1,065	465	1,530
	69.61%	*30.39%*	*100%*
Catholic	957	324	1,281
	74.71%	*25.29%*	*100%*
Jewish	204	17	221
	92.31%	*7.69%*	*100%*
No religious backgroud	31	0	31
	100%	*0%*	*100%*
Other religion	318	37	355
	89.58%	*10.42%*	*100%*
Total	2,575	843	3,418
	75.34%	*24.66%*	*100%*

Table 4: Religion and College Achievement *(SE in italics)*

	Cumulative GPA	Hours Spent Studying	Satisfaction
ETHNICITY			
White	*ref. category*	*ref. category*	*ref. category*
Black	-0.142**	1.24	-0.689**
	-0.021	*-0.769*	*-0.13*
Asian	-0.032	-1.044	-0.397**
	-0.025	*-0.901*	*-0.152*
Hispanic	-0.084**	1.341^	0.011
	-0.022	*-0.802*	*-0.136*
GENDER			
Male	-0.116**	-1.798**	-0.013
	-0.013	*-0.489*	*-0.083*
FAMILY BACKGROUND			
Two-Parent Household	0.007	0.27	-0.077
	-0.016	*-0.591*	*-0.1*
Foreign-born Parent	0.006	2.136**	-0.234*
	-0.017	*-0.627*	*-0.106*
Parent's Higher Education	0.027**	0.107	0.067*
	-0.005	*-0.179*	*-0.03*
Welfare	-0.025	-0.276	-0.048
	-0.022	*-0.782*	*-0.134*
Family Income	0.023	-0.081	0.117
	-0.015	*-0.533*	*-0.09*
HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMICS			
SAT	0.001**	-0.003^	0.001^
	0	*-0.002*	*0*
Number of AP Courses	0.004	0.346*	-0.038
	-0.004	*-0.138*	*-0.023*

High School GPA	0.355**	7.065**	0.576**
	-0.023	*-0.844*	*-0.144*
RELIGION			
Religious Attendance	0.040*	0.41	0.236*
	-0.017	*-0.636*	*-0.107*
Religious Observance	-0.001	0.192^	0.061**
	-0.003	*-0.1*	*-0.017*
Protestant	*ref. category*	*ref. category*	*ref. category*
Catholic	-0.01	-0.891	-0.176^
	-0.016	*-0.596*	*-0.101*
Jewish	0.077**	-1.06	0.195
	-0.029	*-1.065*	*-0.179*
No Religion	0.04	1.115	-0.343
	-0.065	*-2.352*	*-0.399*
Other Religion	0.029	1.301	0.215
	-0.025	*-0.924*	*-0.157*
N	2,663	2,615	2,623
R-Squared	0.35	0.06	0.05

** p<0.01; * p<0.05; ^ p<0.10 two tailed